

MINUTES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE

November, 9 2017

7:00 p.m. Town Hall

Present: Timothy Thompson, Chair
Peter Curry
Elizabeth Goodspeed
Kevin Guimond
Penelope A. Jordan
Sara W. Lennon
Susana Measelle Hubbs
Victoria Volent

Absent: Harvey Rosenfeld

Also present: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order and asked for public comment.

Public Comment

Jane Boulos of Edgewood Road wants the Committee to consider infill lots in these established neighborhoods. She and her husband own a lot on Stone Drive which is just under 8,000 sq. ft. It is well within the size of other lots in the neighborhood. There is existing infrastructure and they could build an affordable house there for one of their children.

Paul Seidman wants to know whether a workshop should be recorded or when specific ordinances would be assessed in terms of whether it fits into the new plan.

Approval of minutes: October 23, 2017

The minutes of October 23, 2017 were approved, 8-0.

Housing Chapter first review

Ms. Volent wants the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 3 to be deleted. She does not think tourism, seasonal rentals and seasonal housing have a positive impact.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed to just take out the word positive.

Ms. O'Meara said she had been asked to add more categories to the income levels, but was unable to do so because the sample size was too small, and with the data she had available, the error rate was nearly 100%.

When the goals for the housing chapter were to be considered, Ms. O'Meara said this would be the place to consider if large house conversions, infill, cooperative housing are in the plan. She did not add to the draft goals, because the Committee has said they do not wish to be led. She said there is nothing in the ordinance to prohibit the conversion of large homes, except the density requirements. You need 20,000 sq. ft. per unit, so it takes a very large lot to convert a large home into smaller units. The Committee could make a recommendation to increase the density if they chose to.

Ms. O'Meara said she has done some research into cooperative housing. Since it is an ownership structure rather than a new type of construction, the type of buildings that are operated as housing cooperatives are already allowed in the ordinance.

As to infill, she said if the Committee wants to drop the minimum lot size to below 10,000 sq. ft., there would be an opportunity to develop some infill lots. She did recommend that if they chose to allow such lots to be developed, it should only be on sewered lots. The meeting package includes previous analyses of infill lots.

Mr. Guimond said that he would prefer the infill option. He is concerned about the neighborhood associations and setting up two classes of neighborhoods.

Ms. O'Meara said that building size requirements in the subdivisions are in deed restrictions, not town ordinance.

Mr. Curry said the lots under discussion are scattered around and he thinks they present a real opportunity, especially for affordable housing. He wants to see what kind of housing will be permitted.

Mr. Thompson hoped that it would take the pressure away from building big projects and building smaller, more affordable houses.

Ms. Goodspeed is in favor of the infill, but does not think it will remove the pressure to build big projects, especially while the market is hot. She also wanted to know how these lots are being taxed.

Ms. O'Meara explained how they are being taxed, and if it is a standalone lot of less than 10,000 sq. ft., it is taxed as unbuildable. She agreed that if it were built upon, it would probably mean more revenue for the town.

Ms. Lennon asked why the various boards have denied this in the past. Ms. O'Meara said that from a municipal planning standpoint it makes sense, and the Planning Board has supported it, but it is very unpopular politically.

After further discussion, it was agreed that they would choose to include a goal to reduce the lot size, of lots on sewers, below 10,000 sq. ft. They would like to include a clause that would make those lots subject to the affordable provisions, and include design standards. Ms. Volent made the motion, and was seconded by Mr. Curry and it was approved 7-1.

Ms. Lennon offered a motion to make the title of the goals to be possible goals. There was no second, so the motion failed.

Mr. Guimond said the 5th recommendation says it all and we are just nibbling around the edges to try to make more affordable housing.

There was a discussion of co-operatives and Ms. O'Meara said that you can do that now under the current ordinance. There was a suggestion to make them affordable.

Mr. Guimond made a motion to leave this issue alone and Ms. Goodspeed seconded. It passed, 6-2.

The conversion of large houses was discussed. The problem is density requirements. It would take an increase in the density provisions to allow multiplex housing on smaller lots. That has been very controversial in the past.

Mr. Curry wondered if anyone was even wanting to do this.

Ms. Jordan made a motion to allow the opportunity to convert large houses. To endorse the policy to make it possible. Ms. Hubbs seconded and it passed, 7-1.

Ms. Jordan wants to see a neighborhood of tiny houses.

Ms. O'Meara said she has researched this and it could look like a mobile home park.

Mr. Guimond made a motion to accept the housing chapter with the exception of the goals to be reviewed at the next meeting. Ms. Jordan seconded and it was approved, 8-0.

Transportation Chapter first review

There was a comment that traffic has declined over the last 15 years. It was not an expected fact. A discussion of the possible reasons for this fact ensued.

In a discussion of connectivity, Ms. O'Meara said that it is a public safety issue. If a tree falls across a dead end road, it can cause a serious problem for emergency vehicles. When you have developments, the neighbors are very anti connectivity because they over estimate the impact the new traffic will have on the neighborhood. There was a referendum approved in 2006 that said you could not create a connection that was shorter than the main road. They may have an emergency access gate.

Ms. Jordan would like to look at the gate at Jordan Farm Road.

The committee asked about neighborhood traffic concerns. Ms. O'Meara noted that the roads in Broad Cove are very straight, so that encourages speeding. She would suggest tempering that by narrowing the roads and planting more trees. She said this is an issue that could be dealt with under the current ordinances. If there is interest in changing the ordinance adopted as part of the 2006 referendum, there needs to be a strong basis in the Comprehensive Plan to underpin the zoning ordinance.

Ms. Hubbs made a motion to look at the traffic congestion at the schools. Ms. Jordan seconded and it passed 8-0.

Ms. Volent proposed a motion to revise 19-7-16 to encourage connectivity. Ms. Jordan seconded and it passed, 8-0.

Ms. Jordan started a discussion of the intersection of Route 77, Scott Dyer Road and Shore Road.

Ms. O'Meara gave the history of the intersection and how it has been studied and funded at least 4 times. There is not enough room to create a roundabout without tearing down some buildings. She also spoke about the traffic calming measures that are in process along Route 77 from that area to Fowler Road.

Ms. Lennon said she was on the Council when a traffic light was proposed and there was huge public opinion against it.

Mr. Guimond made a motion that they encourage traffic calming measures in the town center. Ms. Lennon seconded and it was approved, 8-0.

Ms. Hubbs started a discussion about adding sidewalks on Mitchell Road. After a brief discussion, she made a motion to expand sidewalks on collector roads on the basis of the highest priority to lowest. Mr. Guimond seconded and it passed, 8-0.

Mr. Curry requested more information about the complete streets policy. Ms. O'Meara said she would provide it.

The Committee then discussed the issue of the overload of traffic from tourism on neighborhoods. Ms. Lennon was especially concerned about the traffic around the Lobster Shack and asked how to make the Lobster Shack address the problems. Ms. O'Meara said the Lobster Shack a grandfathered use, so there isn't any mechanism to bring the Lobster Shack before the town. Other areas, such as Kettle Cove and Casino Beach were also mentioned. Ms. O'Meara suggested a Goal 3.

Ms. Lennon made a motion to add Goal 3. to study and mitigate the impacts of traffic in neighborhoods from tourism. Ms. Goodspeed seconded and it was approved, 8-0.

Ms. Goodspeed is concerned about the effects of sea level rise on roads, such as at Pond Cove and the Spurwink Marsh.

Ms. O'Meara said she has thought about this and has not yet determined which chapter of the Plan it would fit into. The issue of sustainability and resiliency are topics that should be in this study. She will do some work on this and bring it back to the Committee next month.

Public Participation

The committee briefly discussed the online forums and upcoming topics and leaders.

The Committee discussed the Community Group presentations. They reviewed a printed version of the presentation so they can be familiar with it. They need for each member to sign up to give a presentation. It will be in a Power Point format. The required technology was also discussed.

Committee Member items

None were raised

Public Comment

No one came to speak

Next Meeting Wednesday, December 6, 2017

The fire Chief will speak
Survey Results

Community Meetings
Public Forum preparation

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hiroshi Dolliver
Minutes Secretary