

Town Center Plan Committee
Public Forum Minutes
October 17, 2013

Town Center Plan Committee members: Stephanie Carver, Chair, Peter Curry, Skip Murray, Steve Parkhurst, Lee Ruddy, Mary Townsend, Jamie Wagner

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

Mrs. Carver opened the public forum. Each committee member introduced him/herself. Mrs. Carver reviewed the committee charge from the Town Council and the draft vision statement for the Town Center. She explained that a survey would also be circulated and the committee agreed to also post the survey on the town website.

Ms. O'Meara reviewed the area of the town center and a brief overview of the town center zoning. She also presented a visual preference survey where attendees viewed pictures from other town centers and ranked them on cards distributed by committee members.

Mrs. Carver opened the meeting to public comment.

Laura Ker, 312 Ocean House Rd - She would like a slower speed on Route 77.

Suzanne McGinn, 1180 Shore Rd - The current town center is sufficient. The 1995 plan had 37 recommendations and one Town Councilor said about 60% of the recommendations had been implemented. The remainder should be the focus. None of the 37 recommendations say to increase the town center zone. The 2005 Critical Insights survey shows support for protecting rural character and improving the town center is second to last. There is congestion at the Route 77/Shore Rd intersection and it is the most dangerous intersection in town but the traffic light went in at the school intersection. The town didn't want the Route 77/Shore Rd intersection light. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan does not recommend a change to the town center zone. If data is out of date, ask the Town Council to conduct the same survey using the exact same language. I like sidewalks and support more bikes, including by the school campus.

Imad Khalidi, 19 Pilot Point Rd - He is trying to join the Town Council and learn from tonight's meeting. What is wrong with the town center? What is the position of the committee members? Maybe there should be buses for kids and for mothers. The town center is already vibrant. He then asked each committee member to state their position on the town center. Each committee member made a statement.

1
2 Skip Murray, committee member - He said that the town center is stale. It needs
3 more pedestrians and more creative thinking between Buzz 1 and Buzz 2. He
4 wants more places for more people to be able to gather as a community.
5
6 Lee Rutty, committee member - We're not here to make changes. We are here
7 because the Town Council asked us to look at the current plan. I don't have an ax
8 to grind. I like Cape Elizabeth and the town center, but I am not sure it should
9 stay exactly the way it is.
10
11 Mary Townsend, committee member - She is interested in the school campus and
12 safe connections for pedestrians. As a property owner, she is content with the
13 town center and would like more green space, like a town green.
14
15 Steve Parkhurst, committee member - His expectation tonight is to listen, not to
16 give my opinion. I want to find out what the townspeople want.
17
18 Mrs. Carver, committee member - She agrees with Mr. Parkhurst that tonight's
19 purpose is to hear from the public. She agrees that it would be nice to have
20 community space but has no preconceived opinions. The town center will change
21 whether we say yes or no due to the typical transfer of buildings, such as the
22 bank leaving. It makes sense to re-examine and she wants to hear from others.
23
24 Peter Curry, committee member - The town center exists. Is it all that it could be?
25 He would like to hear what people want.
26
27 Jamie Wagner, committee member - He almost didn't move here because there is
28 little in the town center. He had to open a coffee shop to have some place to meet
29 in the town center and he has a great landlord. The town center is a little bit ugly
30 and could be more visually appealing. He does not want to go to Portland. He
31 has no interest in expanding the physical size of the town center, but would like
32 more commercial activities such as shops, restaurant. With the empty lot, Skip's
33 lot, town property, Key Bank property, there is some way to be vibrant.
34
35 Terry Ann Scriven, 18 Old Ocean House Rd - She is a physician in the town
36 center and agrees there are lots of opportunity for development within the town
37 center. Do not expand the zone. We should have careful development in existing
38 town center areas. She would like to look at the speed limit as she walks her kids
39 across Route 77 to school and there is speeding through town. It would be good
40 to look at sidewalks through the full extent of the town center.
41
42 Mark Kiefner, 5 Julie Ann Lane - He was attracted to the rural Cape atmosphere
43 and values the proximity to the ocean, farms, ponds and trails. He has lived in

1 bigger cities. He supports walkability, bikeability, and professional consultation
2 on appearance. The current town center is unattractive and you should make it
3 more attractive. He is opposed to changing the town center boundaries or higher
4 density housing close to town center, which will increase traffic and decrease
5 walkability/bikeability. Thank you for this effort.

6
7 Gerry Murray, town center resident from 0-73 years - He was on the previous
8 town center committee. A lot has been done and he agrees the speed limit should
9 be reduced because someone will get hurt. He does not see any consideration for
10 elderly housing in town center. There are sidewalks here and we have land
11 waiting for more residential to move into the existing town center area. My wife
12 won't move out and wants to walk to the bank, hair dresser, etc...

13
14 Frances Haywood, 1220 Shore Rd - She questions the status of the lot next to
15 [north of] town hall.

16
17 Ms. O'Meara responded that the lot is privately owned. A site plan for a 3-story
18 mixed use commercial/apartments was approved. That approval has expired,
19 however, the zoning has not changed much since the approval and the plan was
20 well received at the time, so it is likely that plan could be reapproved. The town's
21 approach has been reactive, where we put the zoning in place and wait for
22 property owners to move forward. In other communities, a more proactive
23 approach is taken and the town could consider a more active role partnering
24 with property owners, and folks could comment on that.

25
26 Woman, Broad Cove Rd - She suggested encouraging the lot to be developed by
27 raising taxes on it to its full potential value.

28
29 Craig Cooper, business owner, 30 year resident - He served on the FOSP
30 committee and it is a thankless task. He doesn't think we need to be concerned
31 with changing from rural because the town is already small. Some restrictions in
32 the town center make it impossible/expensive to develop the existing lot next
33 door. It is ok to slow down the speed, but the main focus in the 1960's strip mall,
34 which is not very attractive. We need to attract more business, people. The town
35 is not very business friendly; we lost two businesses to get the current
36 community center building. He is ok with the high school driveway light. The
37 Route 77/Shore Rd intersection is not as busy as intersections in other towns. We
38 should encourage business people. He supports some architectural review and
39 some open space. This side of Route 77 [east side] is pretty dead. With no new
40 bank, it will be another empty lot. With some new business, it won't be the
41 maine mall, just some more people here and then we can improve the walkways.

1 Mr. Wagner asked Mr. Cooper to send an email with specific restrictions he
2 would recommend changing. Mr. Cooper responded that the sidewalks and trees
3 are too costly.

4
5 Sara Lennon, 54 Cranbrook Dr - She lived in Lincoln, Massachusetts. Unlike
6 Weston, Lexington, the town decided to stay rural village. They voted money to
7 make the shopping center pretty with parking in back. The town is gorgeous
8 with preserved beauty and property values are high. Cape Elizabeth is like that.
9 Every town around us made the town vibrant, but people don't want Falmouth,
10 Scarborough. We should have a town green, sidewalks, new building for a cafe
11 but not for housing. We should embrace what we are. She also commented on
12 the process. If the town council had to vote on this, all but 2 of the town center
13 committee members would have to recuse themselves because of a public
14 conflict. The Appointments Committee should not have selected persons with
15 vested interests in the town center, including a real estate agent, business
16 owners, town center resident, planner. You have a strong bias. Do you want a
17 vibrant town center because you will make money? She does not want to be
18 insulting.

19
20 Mrs. Carver said she appreciates that we should be careful about personal
21 interests, but anyone with kids in the school or an elderly parent should also be
22 interested in the town center.

23
24 Byron Castro, 188 Fowler Rd - The hard facts are this is a small town and there is
25 a very low traffic count, with little traffic except for 2 times a day. Any major
26 change needs to consider the traffic volume. He agrees we should have more
27 business, but the big picture is that you would have to spend 1 million to build a
28 building and you have to sell a lot of cups of coffee to pay for that. We need more
29 than townspeople. We are a dead end and need something special to draw
30 people. We can have small businesses, grow the tax base, but if we get too big,
31 will also need to look at traffic. This is a good discussion.

32
33 Janel Voelker, 251 Ocean House Rd - She lives and runs a business in the town
34 center. She represents Coastal Wellness and the Cape Business Alliance (CBA).
35 She walks her son across the street from the Methodist Church and would like a
36 slower speed on Route 77. She moved here 7 years ago and can drive to other
37 communities for needs. As a business owner, this is a "drive-to" community. She
38 opened her business expecting cape residents, but people are driving here from
39 other communities to her business. She supports beautifying the town center and
40 filling the empty spaces. The CBA has 25 business members and she encourages
41 people to support Cape businesses. She loves the town hall look, the schools and
42 library and wants to keep the New England feel.

43

1 Paul Seidman - He wants to lower the speed limit. Don't add congestion and no
2 high density housing. He rides his bike on Shore Rd and likes the pastoral land
3 only a few hundred feet from the town center. No other coastal town has that
4 and it is a high priority for him. He moved here precisely for its rural character
5 and can go to the other end of Shore Rd for other things. Its uniqueness is what
6 draws people here.

7

8 Amy Lombardo, 11 Leighton Farms Rd - She grew up here and likes the small
9 town, but it can use some beautification. There is no place to gather, protest, have
10 a coffee. She and a friend used to sit on a bench in the town center when she was
11 a teenager. There is no bench now and she supports a town green. She would
12 like a community board for announcements, sidewalks, bike racks, holiday tree.

13

14 Jon Donnelly, 5 Pearl Street - He appreciates the work of the committee and the
15 meeting. The meeting minutes suggest that an agenda has been moved forward
16 and he hopes we are heard. We don't want condo complexes and we don't want
17 second story housing over commercial. We want a village green, pretty, simple.
18 There are ways to partner to make a village green. His vision is that the Key Bank
19 building is torn down and a grassy park is created with the Joan Benoit statue
20 moved there, with a town sign. There could be a 3-piece band on Saturday night.

21

22 Bill Proom with Heidi, 11 Oakhurst Rd - We are new residents who moved from
23 New Hampshire. Falmouth was unsatisfying. We support beautification,
24 walkways, bikeways, safe route to school. It is a far cry from the town center to
25 Route 1. Is 2-story building enough or 1/4 mile of new land. What is the end
26 game? The town center, within its confines, done appropriately, will be
27 embraced. The notion of expanding the town center zone with high density
28 housing is not ok.

29

30 Frances Haywood, 1221 Shore Rd - There is a lot of open space in the center of
31 town. I am inclined to approach the property owner, repurchase it as it is perfect
32 for open space. Fort Williams is our town park. It would be nice to have a green
33 in town with benches, guitar players, coffee. Maybe there could be a charitable
34 sale of property for not much money. We should not expand the area of the town
35 center. Why is Pearl Street in the town center when it is residential houses? Time
36 to clean that up.

37

38 Hulda Khalidi, 19 Pilot Point Rd - It is great to keep the public apprised. In a
39 small town it is too easy for rumors to spread. The horse farm is not for sale.
40 People are disallusioned.

41

42 Imad Khalidi, 19 Pilot Point Rd - He tried to negotiate with Key Bank. There is a
43 rumor that TD Bank is trying to negotiate to take over the bank. It should be

1 public. It is an important part of town. The Town should tell of their negotiations
2 between the town and TD Bank. Sorry Key Bank. Who is taking over? If it is the
3 town, I want to know as I am a taxpayer.

4
5 Dick Gilbane, 226 Bowery Beach Rd - I live on property where we moved a barn
6 in 1987. I consider taking the Haywood property and replacing it with
7 development horrific.

8
9 Mrs. Carver stated that, as a group, that is not a recommendation this committee
10 should make. We should move on.

11
12 Mr. Gilbane said he is glad the library was voted down. The design was heavy.
13 The beauty of the town hall was lost on the library.

14
15 Steve Mohr, registered Landscape Architect, with friend Peter Haffenreffer - He
16 has worked with Peter Haffenreffer for 30 years and Peter owns 4 acres next door
17 [south of town hall]. The draft vision and town ordinance is positive because the
18 vision is implemented by the zoning. The ordinance self-sorts potential
19 development to meet the standards and intent of the committee. He suggests that
20 the town follow through with some fine-tuning. The ordinance keeps down
21 development scale and emphasizes design. If there is political will on open space,
22 you might refine the zoning so that you can get the green space and give
23 something back on existing land, rather than a town purchase. Specifically, on
24 the two 4-acre lots south of town hall, there are RP2 wetlands not deemed
25 significant by DEP. They are an impediment to development on those lots. Please
26 look at the RP2 language in the commercial zone and perhaps adjust to allow
27 development in the town center.

28
29 Mr. Wagner asked to clarify land in question and Mr. Mohr described the 4 acre
30 parcel, the owner's interest in developing the parcel, and the wetland obstacle.

31
32 Craig Cooper, 150 Ocean House Rd - He referred to the survey being distributed
33 and noted that the meeting attendees is a small sample and it should be put on
34 the internet.

35
36 Mrs. Carver noted that and the committee agreed to post it on the town website.

37
38 Nancy Bogg, 5 Julie Ann Lane - What is the purpose of the survey?

39
40 Mrs. Carver said it will be used to inform the committee.

41
42 Mrs. Bogg asked about the deadline?

43

1 Mr. Ruty said the committee will look at them at the next meeting. He noted that
2 many people who attended tonight did not speak and this survey is another way
3 for people to provide comments.

4

5 Mrs. Carver thanked everyone for coming and invited them to attend the
6 committee meetings, which are open to the public. Agendas are posted on the
7 town website.

8

9 The forum ended at 8:30 p.m.

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