

Walsh Property Community Planning Committee (WPCPC)

Summary for Meeting #5

July 19, 2021 | 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Zoom Webinar

Meeting in Brief

The Walsh Property Community Planning Committee (WPCPC) met virtually on July 19, 2021, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM on the Zoom webinar platform. This fifth meeting of the WPCPC included a debrief of the committee's site visit of the Walsh Property, a presentation of the upcoming Truro Talks virtual engagement platform, and a discussion to finalize outreach materials for an initial round of community conversations.

Action Items

Who	What
WPCPC Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send comments / corrections for this (July 2021) meeting summary to Maggie Osthues, CBI by Tuesday, August 24, 2021• The Sub-Committee on Community Outreach & Engagement will revise the flyer and discussion questions for the initial round of community conversations
Planning Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once approved in the August 2021 WPCPC Meeting, post this meeting summary on the Town of Truro website along with the recording of this meeting (available to watch here)• CBI will circulate final engagement materials, including a sign-up sheet to document locations, days, and times and a web form for entering input received.• Update the WPCPC Operating Protocols with new guidance about Co-chairs speaking on behalf of the Committee to the media• Address the Town Charter requirement that town committees contain an odd number of members by adding a high school member• Town staff will look into a viability and cost assessment for the existing buildings on the Walsh Property• Town staff will reach out to Eastham to learn more about their community survey approach

Find details on upcoming WPCPC meetings, as well as prior agendas and materials at <https://www.truro-ma.gov/walsh-property-community-planning-committee-0>

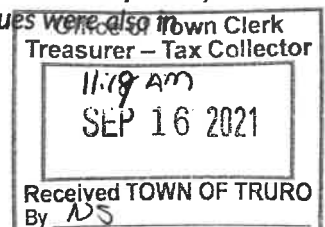
WPCPC Members in Attendance

Russ Braun
Eileen Breslin
Morgan Clark
Fred Gaechter
Betty Gallo

Susan Howe
Jane Lea
Christine Markowski
Craig Milan
Kenneth Oxtoby

Ryan Schmidt
Todd Schwebel
Paul Wisotzky
Steve Wynne

Town of Truro Select Board Liaison Stephanie Rein; Town of Truro staff Barbara Carboni and Kelly Clark; and Consensus Building Institute (CBI) facilitation team Stacie Smith and Maggie Osthues were also in attendance.



I. Welcome

Due to impacts from COVID-19, Governor Charlie Baker issued an executive order on March 10, 2020, suspending certain provisions of Massachusetts's Open Meeting Law, allowing for online meetings open to the public in lieu of in-person gatherings. Meeting #5 of the WPCPC took place on the Zoom online webinar platform, with access information shared in the agenda posted with the public meeting notice on the Town of Truro's website.

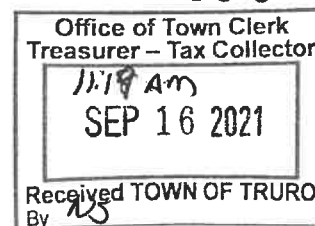
Following a brief review of how to engage effectively on the Zoom webinar platform, WPCPC Co-chairs, Fred Gaechter and Paul Wisotzky, opened the fifth meeting of the WPCPC, welcoming attendees, calling roll, and calling a vote to approve the meeting summary from the fourth meeting on May 26, 2021, available to view on the Town website [here](#). The co-chairs acknowledged a shift in committee membership, sharing gratitude for Kevin Grunwald's service on the committee and welcoming Betty Gallo as a new member.

CBI Facilitator, Stacie Smith, reviewed the topics to be addressed in the meeting, meeting guidelines, and action items from the May 26 WPCPC Meeting. Regarding committee membership, Town staff shared an update that they are actively working to recruit a high school member to serve on the WPCPC but have not yet had a response. Town staff noted that it will be essential to fill the position, and they may need to look beyond students to do so, but that the WPCPC is not in jeopardy by operating without that position filled.

II. Discussion: Debrief Site Visit

WPCPC Members attended a site visit of the Walsh Property on July 19, from 8-10 AM ET. Members toured two locations on the property, one near the existing buildings on the property and one in a more wooded area (site tour posting, with map, [here](#)). Stacie Smith, CBI facilitator, opened a committee discussion for members to share their impressions and takeaways from the earlier site visit. Below is a brief synthesis of member inputs, broken out by topic.

- **Existing buildings:**
 - Members recommended that the Town conduct a cost comparison between repairing / restoring versus demolishing / removing the existing buildings on the property. Town staff agreed with the need to conduct such a study, and noted that they are exploring funding approaches and refining a scope of work.
 - When asked about the presence of asbestos on the properties, Town staff clarified that they have not confirmed asbestos in the buildings, but there is presumption that it exists due to the year the buildings were constructed and materials in use at that time. Members flagged that the cost of removing asbestos would need to be factored into that cost analysis.
 - Members raised other potential costs to consider, including septic systems.
 - Some members highlighted that the buildings are cute and have good character, which would be something to consider if they could be restored. One suggested that, if the buildings could be restored, perhaps they could be moved to another location on the property, as needed.
- **Natural beauty:** Members noted the beauty of the wooded area and that they only saw a small portion of the land on the property.
- **Topography:** One member commented that there do not appear to be any topographical challenges to pursuing the uses that the committee could recommend for the land.
- **Abutters:** Another member highlighted the importance of the Town engaging abutting land-owners in this process.



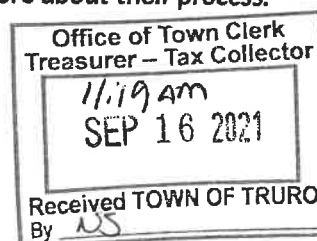
- **Traffic:** Members noted that any plan for the property would need to carefully consider how community members would access and travel to and from the property, with the aim of minimizing negative impacts to traffic patterns.
- **Potential water storage:** One member proposed that the committee consider a use for the property related to water storage to help mitigate public water constraints in Truro.

III. Presentation: Truro Talks Platform

Kelly Sullivan-Clark, Assistant Town Manager, presented a brief overview of the new online engagement platform that Truro is preparing to launch – Truro Talks. This new platform, hosted by Bang the Table, will serve as a one-stop information hub and allow for robust, two-way virtual engagement of the Truro community for a multitude of ongoing activities in the Town. Ms. Sullivan-Clark noted that the WPCPC would have its own page on Truro Talks to host online engagement opportunities, and that the committee could direct Town staff to design the activities. She described how project pages could be designed, and gave an overview of a range of engagement tools available on the platform, including surveys, discussion forums, mapping activities, and more. She also noted that another Town resource to help with virtual engagement is the Alert Truro system for a quick, one-question poll that would be sent to residents remotely.

Below are member clarifying questions and comments posed throughout Ms. Sullivan-Clark's presentation. WPCPC member questions are **bolded**, answers from Truro staff and/or CBI are *italicized*, and any further comments or questions made by members are in regular text.

- **What would the registration process look like for people signing up to engage? Would we be able to know if they live in Truro, part- or full-time?**
 - *We can customize the registration to ask specific questions, but we want to make sure that registration does not become a burden or barrier to people engaging. We can make it so that people are not engaging completely anonymously.*
- **Many in the Truro community are not particularly tech savvy or don't have internet access to adequately engage virtually. When we have done virtual engagement previously, the Town has set up sites where people can come and use the online platform with assistance nearby. We should consider setting up something like that.**
 - Yes, and we will also still need to offer face-to-face engagement opportunities. We will need to rely on a variety of approaches for community engagement.
- **Will the platform be administered/moderated?**
 - *The platform is monitored 24/7, and there are criteria for the types of comments that can be posted. There are tools to set parameters that require a staff moderator to approve comments before they are publicly posted. We will need to find balance between ensuring quality comments and not being a barrier to community discussion.*
- **If we are going to be conducting a survey of the community, I would want it to be scientifically designed with strategic sampling, not just passive posting.**
 - The data collection and organization strategy of capturing and storing community inputs is still unclear to me. It is not clear who of Town staff is serving this committee. Before we talk about data collection, we need to determine how we will be storing and organizing data.
 - Eastham has recently conducted a robust survey for their planning initiative that could be a good model for this committee.
 - *Town staff will reach out to Eastham to learn more about their process.*



IV. Discussion: Finalizing Initial Community Engagement Approach

Following the May 26 WPCPC Meeting, a Sub-committee on Community Engagement & Outreach that met twice to design and refine an informational flyer, questionnaire to guide conversations between committee members and community members, and a sign-up sheet for locations for conversations. The draft materials were circulated to WPCPC members for review and comment prior to the July 19 meeting. Stacie Smith, CBI facilitator, opened up a committee discussion to finalize the WPCPC's initial community engagement approach and materials. Below is a brief synthesis of member inputs, broken out by topic.

- **Informational flyer:**

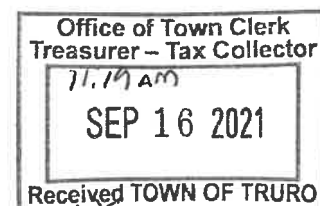
- Members suggested changing language on the flyer to remove a question about "concerns with cost, scale, and timing" to be more open-ended and say, "What are the best uses for the Walsh Property? What needs could be met?"
- Members recommended removing the labels from the assessor's map of the property and surrounding area to make it less busy and avoid confusion.
- Members raised that "needs" and "uses" are not interchangeable words, with "needs" having a much narrower interpretation. They suggested using "uses."
- Members questioned why this effort was moving forward prior to Truro Talks platform being launched, rather than in parallel, noting that it would be ideal to be able to link to the online platform directly from the flyer.
 - Stacie Smith, CBI facilitator, noted that this would only be the first round of engagement for this project, designed to let people know that the committee is active and starting up its work. The link on the flyer drives to the project's website, where people can learn more and sign-up to receive updates.
- One member raised a concern that having trees in the background of the flyer could lead towards bias for more open spaces uses; others noted that the property is heavily wooded now, so it would be appropriate.
- Members raised concerns that the colors on the flyer were too dark and could be challenging when printing. The group agreed to lighten up the colors.

- **Questionnaire:**

- Members again noted the need to replace the word "needs" with "uses."
- Members raised concerns about the number of questions and length of each conversation, and the specificity of concerns named in question 5. They suggested combining questions 3 and 4 and rewriting question 5 to be a more open-ended, general question about people's concerns regarding the property.
- Members also raised concerns about consistency of conversations, with no guarantee that each member will be able to address each question in each conversation and that members could bring in certain perspectives or biases to conversations. Members suggested that the committee be very clear that these are only initial engagement conversations, not a scientific tool. Outcomes from these conversations could be used to inform a more scientific survey design later.

- **Sign-up sheet:**

- Members highlighted that some of the locations recommended by committee members are private businesses, and recommended that the Town request permission for committee member presence in advance.
- One member raised the importance of reaching out to folks in more tenuous living situations, noting that August and September are busy times for many working in Truro, and this may not be the most appropriate time to engage everyone. However, it will be important that this process is inclusive and represents a diversity of voices and perspectives from the Town.



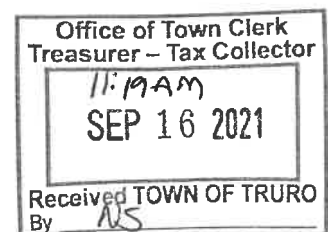
V. Public Comment

- I made a list of the plants I could remember seeing today [on the site visit]. One is a form of heather that is not endangered but is threatened and should be either identified to avoid disturbing or moved to a different place to avoid being trampled. There are plants on the property that were brought there by people, and those can be trampled if needed. But there are wildflowers, some blooming today, and those should be protected and potentially transferred to another location to avoid disturbance. Another concern to raise is the dumpsite in a kettle hole on the property, a depression collecting water. There were no wetland plants present, but the fact that there is a dump there and minerals are leaching into the water table is not good. I recommend a survey be done of that dumpsite, and it should be addressed. That's what I saw today. If I had another invitation to go back to the property, I could do more looking at the wildflowers and identify other plants as desired. *[The list of plants shared is included as Appendix A.]*

VI. Next Steps

Stacie Smith, CBI facilitator, described the next steps for the group. The next meeting of the WPCPC is Wednesday, August 25, from 6:30-8:30 PM ET. Town staff will look into and follow up on the assessment and cost analysis project for the existing buildings on the Walsh property. Town staff will also connect with Eastham to learn more about their community survey effort. The planning team and volunteer sub-committee will finalize the materials for the initial round of community conversations. WPCPC co-chairs adjourned the meeting, thanking WPCPC members for their time and participation.

Respectfully submitted,



Appendix A: List of Plants Identified by Site Visit Attendee

WALSH PROPERTY SITE VISIT 07/19/2021

Initial Flora Inventory

WILDFLOWERS

Golden Heather *Hudsonia Ericoides* [uncommon]
Wintergreen (Checkerberry) (Teaberry)
Spotted Wintergreen
Common St. John's Wort
Eastern Starflower (not Indian Cucumber Root)
Canada Mayflower
Partridgeberry
Bearberry (Hog-Cranberry)

CULTIVARS

English Plantain
Sheep's Bit *Jasione montana* L. [recent immigrant]
Yucca *Yucca filamentosa* (Bear-grass)

GRASSES

SHRUBS

Sweet Fern Bush
Bayberry
Lowbush Blueberry

TREES

Black Cherry
Pitch Pine
Scrub Oak
Sumac
Black Locust

FUNGUS: MUSHROOMS

Boletus [many edible varieties, popular with collectors]
Amanitas [edibility unknown to poisonous]
Lactarius
Turkey Tails *Polyporus versicolor* L. ex Fr.

FUNGUS: LICHENS

Slender Reindeer Moss *Cladonia tenuis*

