

WALSH PROPERTY COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 30, 2022

6:30 P.M.



Members present: Paul Wisotzky and Fred Gaechter, co-chairs; Christine Markowski; Craig Milan; Kenneth Oxtoby; Russ Braun; Betty Gallo; Steve Wynne; Morgan Clark; Todd Schwebel; Susan Howe; Violet (student member); Stephanie Rein (Select Board liaison).

Members absent: Jane Lee; Ryan Schmidt; Eileen Breslin.

Also present: Barbara Carboni, Town Planner and Land Use Counsel; Town Manager Darrin Tangeman; and Jarrod Cabral, Director of the DPW.

Chair Wisotzky read the remote meeting access instructions.

Committee members identified themselves.

Chair Gaechter reviewed the agenda and suggested moving the Weston & Sampson report to the second item on the Agenda so there would be time for discussion. The Agenda was approved.

There was no public comment offered during the Public Comment time of the agenda.

The meeting proceeded with the first item on the Agenda:

1. Updates on Reports and Consultant's Work (Presenters: Darrin Tangeman, Town Manager; Barbara Carboni, Town Planner and Land Use Counsel)

- Tighe & Bond Analysis of Talk to Us: Community Survey
- Hiring Master Planning Consultant Service

Town Planner Carboni reported that the consultant Sharon Rooney of Tighe & Bond was preparing a presentation on the Survey results, which will be shared with the committees that participated in creating the Survey.

Town Planner Carboni reported that she is preparing an RFP for a Master Planner Consulting Services and that she is in communication with the Town of Eastham which hired a Master Planner and had a positive experience.

The next item on the agenda was: Presentation, Review and Discussion of Weston & Sampson Report on the Existing Structures (Presenter: Darrin Tangeman, Town Manager).

Town Manager Tangeman thanked John, who is the lead from Weston & Sampson (WS). The WS report was developed over several months and addresses the viability of the existing structures on the Walsh Property.

WS reported that the eight cottages in the Walsh Property have been vacant for the past five years with sporadic maintenance. For the most part, the cottages have been neglected for the past decade.

The WS team evaluated foundations, asbestos (3 samples came back positive, mostly for sheet flooring—it is suspected that a more extensive asbestos study will need to be undertaken with any renovations or removals), rooflines, etc.

A general overview of the Walsh cottages: The cottages are Sears & Roebuck cottages, ordered from a catalog and shipped. The cottages were constructed atop prepared foundations and those foundations are substandard, with no frost walls. The original (300-500 sq. ft.) box structures were then enlarged by porches, additional rooms, and expanded living areas.

Three options for the Walsh cottages were presented:

1. Renovate the cottages in place; keep the footprint. Each cottage would need a new septic system, a new foundation, recladding, insulation, and upgrades to heating systems. You may not be required to bring everything up to code, but the list would be extensive.
2. The second option is to build all cottages as new.
3. The third scenario is a hybrid. Two of the newer cottages would be renovated, while the other six would be demolished and rebuilt as new, with an increased footprint to 900 Sq. ft.

A cost estimate was developed.

Member Howe asked if there was any possibility of moving the cottages to another location.

At the moment, the cottages are in bad condition, and it would be a challenge to move one even a few feet without shoring up the structure.

Member Braun said that the key to affordability in housing is density and the cottages on the Walsh property make no sense, especially given the size of the cottages.

Further, if the cottages are to be lifted from their foundations, they can be moved hundreds of feet and perhaps clustered within new build. Also, who will own these houses? The Town? The Housing Authority? A builder?

Town Manager Tangeman responded that after researching that question from similar workforce housing on the cape and islands, the houses are best run by a nonprofit.

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WS responded to the question on density, stating that new septic systems could support @thirty-four (34) bedrooms, on the 7.29 acres.

Town Manager Tangeman said one idea had been discussed: Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs) being phased in over time to increase density.

Member Gallo asked if any of the buildings were habitable in the short term for seasonal workers, etc.

Town Manager Tangeman said that 10 & 13 are in the best condition, and they would need some work.

Possibility of renovating 10 & 13 enough to house seasonal workers while the Committee works on a Master Plan? Cost of such renovation would be @\$400,000 per unit, \$800,000 for both units.

Member Wynn said that the cottages inhabited the best piece of property within Walsh, with roads, and access. What could be possible if the cottages were demolished? What could be built?

WS estimates the cost of demolition would be @\$20,000 per unit; \$160,000-\$200,000 for all eight units. Outbuildings and asbestos removal off Cape would add to the cost.

Member Oxtoby said that the existing structures do not seem salvageable, particularly to put 34 bedrooms on the lot, perhaps with shared septic, and upgraded water delivery.

Chair Wisotzky thanked Weston & Samson for the report and said it was a vital part of the Walsh Property Master Plan, and said there was at least an Option 4, which is: What can we do on that piece of property to maximize its use for housing?

Chair Gaechter asked if the estimates for renovation and/or rebuild including bringing the access roads up to code.

The roads are not included in the estimates.

Chair Gaechter asked, with the problems described by WS, how the cottages could be under 50% renovation. WS explained that building codes change on things like “use” and what is being renovated.

Member Braun pointed out that 34 bedrooms on that plot would result in two units an acre, which is relatively small. He said that he agrees it is prime property and it should be something special, so maybe the property could showcase the historical cottages in some way.

Member Howe suggested selling the cottages for \$1 and make ADUs on purchaser's property.

Chair Wisotzky asked about municipal uses of the buildings and adherence to ADA and other required accommodations for municipal buildings.

WS responded that federally funded buildings would have to be retrofitted for accessibility (i.e., reinforced shower wall in case bars need to be installed).

Jarrold Cabral, Director of the DPW, stated that the existing buildings would not have to be made accessible; it would be at the Town's discretion.

Member Howe encouraged all plans for buildings include universal design (wider doorways, hallways, etc.).

Town Manager Tangeman was then asked to present on Truro's Municipal needs. Horsley Witten is scheduled to speak with the Committee at a future meeting about water needs of the property, Town water, and a water tower/storage tank.

Town Manager Tangeman spoke about the need for seasonal housing, that Truro is competing with the National Seashore (which can provide some housing) for lifeguards, that summer staff for the Town and local businesses is a big challenge because of this lack of seasonal housing. There is an immediacy to this need.

Chair Gaechter stated that Truro needs housing, the question is: what type of housing? The Committee seeks a Needs Assessment (seasonal, senior, rental, accessible). Member Gallo said the Truro Housing Authority plans to have a draft of a current needs assessment by June. The Ryan 2015 Needs Assessment is informative.

We must be careful when addressing immediate housing needs, that we do not sabotage future housing needs, said Chair Gaechter.

The next Walsh Committee meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2022.

Motion to adjourn was made by Member Oxtoby, all members in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Markowski

