

Walsh Property Community Planning Committee (WPCPC)

Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2022 | 6:00 p.m.



Members Present

Co-Chairs Paul Wisotzky and Fred Gaechter; Members Russell Braun, Eileen Breslin, Morgan Clark, Betty Gallo, Jane Lea, Christine Markowski, Ken Oxtoby, Steve Wynne, Raphael Richter, Jeff Fischer

Members Absent

Todd Schwebel

Also Present

Brian, Caller 01, Caller 05, Catherine Potenza, Town Manager Darrin Tangeman, Ellen O'Connell, Genevieve Morin, Hank Keenan, John Bloom, Karen Ruymann, Kevin Grunwald, Robert and Tatyana Knight, Susan Areson, Wendy Lurie, Mark Gerbhardt, Violet Rein, Stephanie Rein, Anne Greenbaum, Nancy Medoff, Chris Lucy, Consultants (Carole Ridley, Allie Koch, Sharon Rooney)

Welcome, Roll Call and Agenda Review

Co-chair Wisotzky read the remote meeting access instructions.

Co-chair Gaechter read the roll call and committee members present identified themselves.

Co-chair Gaechter led discussion of the minutes of November 30, 2022. Motion to approve meeting minutes as written by Member Oxtoby, seconded by Co-Chair Wisotzky. Unanimously approved.

Tonight's agenda was reviewed.

Brief Select Board Updates

At a recent meeting, the Select Board voted to reduce the overall number of WPCPC members to 11, and as such, alternates will stay as they are.

Public Comment

No additional public comment.

Recap of Outreach Event

Ms. Rooney provided a summary of the WPCPC outreach event on December 8th, thanking committee members for their participation in the outreach event that was well attended. She reviewed results of a dot exercise on three posters. Results generally indicated preferences for cottages and multiplexes in more traditional styles, townhouses in more traditional styles; for duplexes, both contemporary and traditional styles were preferred. Member Braun noted confusion of density graphic and styles for selection. Using the density diagram at the top of the poster, people liked the idea of single-family houses on smaller lots. Ms. Rooney noted that an upcoming online survey will provide opportunity for greater flexibility in selection of housing types, with further opportunity to examine density as well. Member Braun indicated positive feedback for mixing and matching housing types. Committee members recommended including photos depicting senior housing. Open Space & Recreation preference feedback included summer camp facility, hiking walking trails, fitness circuit trail, multi-use event space, tennis courts, climbing wall or tower. Other suggestions included a community pool, community center, bike paths. Mixed-Use preference feedback includes selections for mixed-use style building forms. Preference trends included ground floor retail/commercial, apartments above close to street edge, buildings set back from the street, and buildings similar to Salty's Market. Attendees were encouraged to select aesthetic preference. One attendee added a community kitchen label that gained some support. Questions arose on commercial, retail, or industrial

mixed-uses. Index card feedback was reviewed with committee members. Mixed use comments were divided, some in support, some preferring no mixed use on the site, suggestions on recreation/open space uses for the site, and residential use feedback including elderly and sheltered housing availability. Other comments recommended water resource protection. Additional feedback included concern on access/egress from Quail Ridge Road residents.

Generally, suggestions for next WPCPC outreach event include the following ideas: Organize and promote the event in advance to allow enough time for sufficient planning, scheduling, content creation, and outreach; perform alternative outreach (hard copy notices, more flyers, etc.) to reach non-computer/tech community members; create effective posterboards that are clear on the intent of the information they are trying to get across. Overall, committee members recommended more opportunities for feedback.

Summary of Housing Production Plan (HPP) Update

Mr. Grunwald provided a brief overview of HPP and the housing needs assessment. The housing committee is still in the process of accepting feedback from community. The most recent HPP was prepared in 2018, and is typically updated every 5 years. The HPP included feedback from a series of focus groups, interviews, community forum, and data collection (surveys, etc.). A wide range of platforms were used for data collection. The WPCPC is an important component of the 5-year plan. The housing committee is advisory and can provide input and guidelines for housing needs of the community. Member Gallo noted the vision of Truro fed into the needs assessment and strategies developed (22) in different areas – the first 3 were strategies for the Walsh property. The prior housing needs assessment and HPP anticipated a slight decrease in population (1,090 full time housing units), however, 2020 Census estimated increase of population by 23%. Currently, there is a gap between high and low income, and there is limited opportunity for middle income housing. 2/3rd of the population are families that share households, but Town is losing young people that create vibrancy in the community and support schools. HPP extended review range through 2035. HPP includes recommendations on strategies to get housing needed to support the community and prosper.

Member Wynne inquired on HPP strategy for North Truro Air Force Station that was included in the HPP update. He noted that given the size of the property, it's an enormous opportunity. Member Gallo responded there have been numerous conversations with the Seashore about acquiring this property, however, the Seashore has not been interested. At this time, the Cape Cod National Seashore under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service is not open to this idea. 15-20 years ago, similar attempts to coordinate with the Seashore met with no interest. Co-Chair Gaechter asked if the HPP considered phasing for interim periods in addition to the projections for 2035. Member Gallo responded that the Town is encouraged to move quickly and address immediate needs. Mr. Grunwald noted the housing committee wants to be in a position to respond to opportunities and the action plan will help Town prioritize phasing efforts. He noted that the median price for a house in Truro is \$1.3 Million, and wages and incomes are disproportionate at this time. The HPP identified areas of housing need. Committee members also discussed illegal apartments and there opportunities to bring these illegal apartments to code. Member Braun noted apartments are prohibited via zoning.

Mixed-Use Discussion

Nancy Medoff provided an overview of the economic development strategy for Truro. EDC has had several roundtables and summit discussions. The number one challenge to business owners was housing. Results of public summit and feedback have indicated a lack of affordable housing that in turn leads to a lack of support for facilities, people, and services. Additionally, there are a lack of trade services to support select businesses. Workers cannot afford to live here, and folks can't get staff. Other feedback included unpredictability of visa

process, lack of affordable child care, business permit difficulty, etc. Storage facilities and climate-controlled areas are difficult to find, and if the Town built more facilities, they would be filled quickly. Despite challenges, she noted positive feedback including business owners love being in Truro, its economy is resilient, there's a strong sense of community, and strong non-profit sector. Currently, 1 or 2% of properties in Truro are mixed-use. Town might be able to have overlay district to get more commercial use, or better planned commercial use, however, discussions and decisions are forthcoming. Additional discussions and Town Center feedback: South Truro with post office and Jams could have a few more retail shops and housing; the same conversation happened regarding North Truro Center – could we plan development here differently, or turn these areas into a nice area for people to walk around, and have a little more retail business? Additional discussion on mixed use in upcoming weeks. Final EDC report hasn't been published. Informally, the EDC recommendation thus far has been to maximize housing at the Walsh Property, in support of the Truro Housing Committee.

Truro Community Kitchen Request

Ms. Lurie provided an overview of the Truro Community Kitchen (TCK) request for consideration on the Walsh property. TCK is looking forward to opportunities to support a significant increase in need for food security and housing. There is an ongoing need for food supply in Truro, and there is no formal arrangement in the local church to continue providing for the community. The current setup is not a long-term strategy. The need for food supply and support has been determined to not be COVID related, and TCK wants to establish a stronger community presence and have a dedicated building for operation where staff and/or volunteers can serve in person meals. Ms. Lurie noted that TCK's vision is to provide community support and reduce stigmas around food and community support. Additionally, Ms. Lurie clarified that they don't want the potential of a community kitchen to detract from housing that could be built. Her proposal is strictly to provide food at no cost for people who need it, without taking away from housing. Committee members discussed access/egress and transportation issues.

TCS Space Needs

Committee members discussed whether consensus could be reached on 7 acres of land to be set aside for possible future uses at TCS. Mr. Tangeman noted that TCS is already on land owned by the Town so a simple transfer of land/ANR plan could set aside the land. There was discussion about the location of the 7-acre property relative to the Walsh site. It would be a portion of the property that abuts the school and the Walsh Property, away from Route 6, near the NW portion of the Walsh site. Committee members discussed whether the 7 acres could be used in the more immediate future for alternative uses (sports fields, etc.) and transitioned back into a school function if needed, 5, 10, or 15 years from now. Currently, future school needs are unknown at this time. Member Richter noted future conversations with School Board members should take place. Consensus was not reached on a commitment to include the 7 acres in the master plan.

Municipal Uses

DPW cost analysis will be presented in January. There will be a virtual tour of the facility, and the select board will make a decision on the location of the future DPW facility.

Content for Visual Survey & Future Outreach

Ms. Rooney noted that over the next few weeks, photographs, density info, design ideas will be collected, and questions will be crafted for an online visual survey to be released in January. Content will be shared with the committee before the survey goes public. Member Wynne inquired if there is an opportunity for hard copy surveys at Town Hall, Post Office, etc., for folks that don't use the internet. The visual survey will be a broader outreach effort on community preferences for residential building forms and mixed use. Member Clark and

Town Manager Tangeman voiced concerns with survey efforts that are unscientific, and importance of prefacing why the feedback is being collected and for what purpose.

Recap

Ms. Ridley provided a recap; to date, WPCPC has gathered a fair amount of information on possible site uses. A committee workshop in January is proposed to take the next steps in the master planning process to make some decisions on density and uses. Co-Chairs recommendation is to post-pone next weeks' meeting (12/21) and create a more robust meeting agenda for the first WPCPC meeting in early January.

Public Comment

Tatyana Knight expressed concerns with presentation format for some posters at the outreach event. She also asked if there was data on 25-37 year olds for the HPP, noting that when businesses close, there's a significant drop in these age groups in town.

Mark Gebhardt: Considering the impact of the community and neighborhoods around this property, the thought of 300-400 units packed into this area is daunting; however, he is fully in support of more affordable housing. Hopeful that as discussions continue the committee considers access/egress, traffic impacts.

Ellen O'Connell: Provided thanks for all the work to date. Would there be additional cost to the taxpayer should an accident or public safety emergency occur at a public pool, climbing wall, or tower? Concerns on secondary access on Shorts Lots Lane and Quail Ridge Road; concerned with 0 Quail Ridge Road access, as there are fees in place for maintaining this private road. She expressed concern with an increase in the number of people within such a small area; will TCS need even more acreage should the student body number rise as density increases and asked how the police and fire departments will respond. Provided a reminder that the 23% increase of population in Truro could be COVID related and questioned whether the 2020 Census is really a good benchmark to go by.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn meeting by Member Oxtoby, seconded by Member Fischer. All in favor. Adjourned at 8:17pm.

