

**Town of Westwood
Islington Center Task Force Meeting
December 10, 2015
7:00 PM Islington Community Center - 288 Washington Street**

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Task Force Members Present:

Michael Walsh, Trevor Laubenstein, Nancy Donahue, Mary Beth Persons, Helen Gordon, Trish Tucke, Nora Loughnane, Abby McCabe, Tricia Perry, Nicole Banks, Danielle Sutton, Michael Reardon, Paul Sicard, Rabih Shanshiry, Kela Klosi.

Members Absent: Jack Patterson, Pam Dukeman, Todd Korchin, Michael Jaillet, Albert Wisialko, George Hertz.

Trevor Laubenstein was selected as the Task Force Chairman.

Update on Pending FMUOD Special Permit Application for 301-323 Washington Street

The proposal for a mixed use project at 301-323 Washington Street was reviewed. The hearing opened on December 1 and was continued to the January 12 meeting, which will be held at the library. The proposal included first floor commercial and 16 apartment units above on the second and third floors at 317 & 323 Washington Street. The existing building at 301-315 Washington is proposed to remain with the existing business with façade improvements and shared parking. The biggest concerns at the hearing were the parking and the request for a waiver from providing the 20 foot landscape buffer in the rear behind the proposed new building. This was the first public hearing and the applicant was given a list of concerns and items to address at the next hearing in January.

Inventory of Islington Center Commercial Properties

A slide show showing the properties in Islington was presented. Washington Street used to be state owned with only two lanes, which provided room for on-street parking. Approximately 10 years ago the parking was removed to expand the driving lanes and this area of Washington Street was turned over to the town. The Town purchased the old gas station lot to create the municipal parking lot to serve the businesses in the Magaletta buildings (currently owned by Petruziello Properties) after the loss of adjacent on-street parking. The Roche Brothers store was constructed in the 1970s, the Barber Shop has been there for 30 years but many of the buildings haven't changed in the last 20-30 years.

Discussion of Desirable Commercial and Community Uses

Preserving the historical buildings such as the Blue Hart Tavern (current site of Sullivan Construction) and Wentworth hall (current site of the Islington Branch Library) were discussed as important elements of Islington. The library was the site of the original Town Hall and also held classrooms. The Islington Community Center was also discussed as a significant building. While this building is often presumed to be a historic building, the current structure was constructed in the 1960s. A village community green or gathering space area to create a node was suggested as an important aspect of successful villages. Coffee shops, cafes, children's book store, were suggested as business that may do well in Islington. Parking was identified as one of the major concerns especially during sporting events at Morrison Park. It was suggested that improved pedestrian routes, shuttles and transportation could help.

Winter Meeting Schedule

For the next meeting the Task Force will begin to prepare a request for proposals to consider opportunities to the town-owned properties. Staff will check on the availability of members to set the January – March meeting schedule with one a meeting a month suggested.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.