

**Town of Westwood  
Islington Center Task Force Meeting  
Wednesday, January 18, 2017  
7:00 PM  
Thurston Middle School, Cafeteria, 850 High Street**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present:**

Helen Gordon, Trevor Laubenstein, Nancy Donahue, Trish Tucke, Nora Loughnane, Abby McCabe, Trish Tucke, Mary Beth Persons, Danielle Sutton, Michael Reardon, Michael Jaillet, George Hertz, Rabih Shanshiry, Michael Walsh, Kela Klosi, Tricia Perry, Albert Wisialko, Todd Korchin and Pam Dukeman.

**Members Absent:** Paul Sicard and Nicole Banks.

Also present was Jim McCarthy, the town's Facilities Manager.

Chairman Helen Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM, summarized the agenda and explained the meeting procedures to the people present. Ms. Gordon reported that since the Task Force's last meeting, the town facilitated a meeting between representatives for the MMO (Mother's Morning Out Nursery) and Petruzzello Prosperities and conversations are underway.

Ms. Loughnane added that work has yet to begin on the new gas station and convenience store approved by the Planning Board for 390 Washington Street. She also told the task force that two zoning amendment articles were submitted by citizen petition proposals. Ms. Loughnane explained that one proposal would remove the allowed housing uses from the Washington and High Street FMUOD districts and to the other proposal would alter the calculation of minimum project area for any FMUOD special permit project within either the Washington Street or High Street districts. She noted that these two proposals were placed on the Warrant for consideration at the Annual Town Meeting on May 1st.

Chairman Gordon explained that all Task Force members had been asked to review each of the six options since the last meeting, and to indicate their preferences. She said that the two most popular options – Options 2 and 6 – would be reviewed in greater detail tonight, and that the group will discuss Options 4 and 5 in detail at the next meeting.

**Task Force Review and Discussion of Capital Needs Assessment of Wentworth Hall – Islington Branch** (Study made part of record in Exhibits and available on Task Force webpage)

Chairman Gordon acknowledged receipt of the needs assessment for Wentworth Hall (aka the Islington Branch Library) which was provided to the Task Force electronically for discussion at tonight's meeting. She noted that this report was prepared by the same consultant who prepared the needs assessment for the ICC Building, which the task force reviewed at its November meeting. Mr. McCarthy summarized the Needs Assessment for the library and noted that the consultant found that the building was in generally good condition but will have specific capital needs over upcoming years as systems age. He said that the study suggests a 20-year plan to meet the property's capital needs, which are currently estimated to cost \$199,345 with a one-time capital payment of \$100,000 in year one.

**Task Force Review and Discussion of Layout proposals**

**Discussion on Option 2:**

Ms. Gordon began the review of Option 2. She summarized Option 2 as proposing 1) a new CVS on the northwest corner of Washington Street and School Street, 2) relocation of the Blue Hart Tavern and Library to the west side of Washington Street on what's known as site 1, 3) construction of a new mixed-

use building on the northeast corner of Washington and East Street , and 4)renovation of the current CVS building on the east side of Washington Street to house MMO and Community Space on what's known as site 2.

Ms. Perry, Library Director, commented that she would prefer not to see CVS on the School Street corner, and would prefer MMO and Community Space on the School Street corner.

Mr. Korchin, Public Works Director, stated his preference for Option 1 with CVS on the East Street side to provide a closer walk to the Morrison Park. He said that he had concern with traffic flow from the field and was not sure School Street could accommodate the foot traffic from Morrison Park.

Ms. Dukeman, Finance Director, stated that while Option 2 is not her preferred option, she supports the renovation of the Blue Hart Tavern.

Mr. Hertz, Finance and Warrant Commission Task Force representative, stated his support for both Option 2 and Option 6. He said he would like to see a traffic study but likes the proposed mixed-use building across from the Fire Station.

Mr. Walsh, Board of Selectmen Task Force representative, commented that he was not supportive of the proposal for rentals and believes condos would be better because residents are more invested when they own property. He said that he was originally adverse to CVS on the School Street corner, but now believes that the proposed CVS on the School Street corner is workable because CVS has changed their model and has designed in other locations and now employs a design that fits in better with neighborhoods much better than the old model. Mr. Walsh noted that photographs of a newer CVS in Falmouth, MA were displayed on the computer screen. He said that he doesn't think people would use the parking spaces shown in the back and thinks that a community use should be in this area.

Mr. Jaillet, Town Administrator, expressed support for Option 2 and also likes Option 6. He said that the phasing of both of these options works best for the needs of the Town and all businesses. Mr. Jaillet believes that Option 6 is more in keeping with comments heard over last year because of it preserves the look of the steeple. He noted that, with either option, he would prefer for MMO to be located in a town-owned building with the town as its landlord.

Mr. Patterson, Islington business representative and Islington resident, believes Option 2 is worthy of further review. He said he is not opposed to CVS on the corner but would like to see that traffic flow. He also said that he likes the library on the west side of Washington Street.

Mr. Reardon, Deputy Fire Chief, stated that Option 2 is his preferred option, and that traffic is his biggest concern. He noted that the paved portion of Strafford Place is not drawn to scale and said that this road does not provide a traffic outlet to Stafford Road as suggested by this plan Deputy Chief Reardon said that he likes CVS on the School Street side of Washington Street and which allows for some green space.

Mr. Wisialko, Islington business representative and Islington resident, said that he had no objection to moving CVS to the School Street side of Washington Street, but would prefer to see the MMO switch locations with the proposed Blue Hart Tavern, to allow children to walk to the Library and School Street playground without having to cross Washington Street. He said that Option 2 is his top choice, and that he believes that CVS should exit onto School Street, rather than Washington Street, to reduce traffic backups.

Ms. Klosi, Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety representative and Islington resident, said that she likes Option 2 because there could be three places to exit and enter the site. She said that she would prefer a bigger location for the Blue Hart Tavern, but would be open to relocating the Blue Hart Tavern as shown on this plan, and would like to see more green space. Ms. Klosi thought that this option provides a bigger

footprint for the proposed mixed-use building with parking behind all buildings. She said that the provision of more outdoor space for seating and gathering space is better for the community's health. She also said that she would like to see a pedestrian path between the mixed-use building and the MMO/Community Space building, plus an outdoor space between the Blue Hart Tavern and the Library.

Mr. Shanshiry, Islington resident representative, said that he likes CVS on the School Street side of Washington Street, but thinks it makes more sense to reverse the traffic flow on site 1 so that cars enter from School Street and exit onto Washington Street. He said that he likes the relocation of the Blue Hart Tavern to the west side of Washington Street thinks it complements the historic Wentworth Hall library building.

Ms. Donahue, Historical Commission representative, stated her preference for Option 6. She said that she likes the proposed locations of the Blue Hart Tavern and Library next to each other.

Ms. McCabe, Town Planner, commented that her favorite options were Option 2 and Option 6. She said she likes that the retail uses are on three corners and that the community and municipal uses are on all sides of the street to allow for street activity in all areas of Islington. Ms. McCabe stated that having the Fire Station, Post Office, Library and MMO/Community Space on opposite sides integrates commercial and community uses. She said she would prefer to see the building on the corner of School Street be a two-story structure, with retail on the bottom and some residences above. She would prefer to see residences on both sides of the street rather than have a larger building on one side of the street and smaller building on the other, with a mix up in the roof lines and building heights. She also noted that housing will help give life to the area and support the businesses, such as restaurants and coffee shops, which are desired by residents.

Ms. Tucke, Islington resident representative, said that her top choices were Options 2 and 6. She said that she was not overly supportive of CVS on the corner, but doesn't see a better option. Ms. Tucke said that she would want to encourage better architecture for CVS, and would like to see the building pulled further away from the School Street residences and closer to Washington Street. She would also like to see traffic improvements and believes that people would use the parking lot proposed in back of site 1.

Mr. Laubenstein, Planning Board representative, said that he preferred Option 6 and would like to see additional and more thoughtful pedestrian paths between all the uses. He said that he would like to see a traffic study with improvements for pedestrian pathways to integrate where children will walk. Mr. Laubenstein said that he likes the library on the west side of Washington Street and would also like to see more green area around the MMO playground.

Ms. Persons, Library Board of Trustee representative, expressed concern about the size of the proposed new buildings and the number of residences proposed, but said she likes the Blue Hart Tavern and the Library sited together. She suggested that the Blue Hart Tavern could be used by the Town. Ms. Persons said that her preferred option is Option 6. She added that she thinks CVS is too large as proposed and has concerns with the proposed drive-through.

Ms. Sutton, Director of Youth & Family services, commented that her favorite options were also Options 2 and 6, but noted that she'd like to see the entrance and exits from Washington Street with clear pedestrian paths and a strong link to allow children to cross the street to visit the School Street playground safety. She said she also likes the Library on the west side of Washington Street.

Ms. Loughnane, Director of Community & Economic Development, commented that Option 2 was her favorite option. She said that she likes that this proposal mimics the existing massing by placing the large mixed-use building where the ICC is. Ms. Loughnane also said that she likes the retailer uses on the corners, but would prefer to see improvements to the East Street façade. She recommended a revised orientation of the mixed-use building with a strong street wall on the East Street side. She also noted that she is not convinced that expanded parking in rear of site 1 is absolutely necessary, and would prefer

to maintain the buffer of trees between the commercial area and the residential neighborhood that exists today unless absolutely needed for parking.

Ms. Gordon, Islington resident representative, said that she supports Options 2, 5, & 6. For Option 2, she said she likes the CVS on site 1, but is concerned about traffic and would like to see further investigation of the School Street traffic flow, including consideration of a right turn only. Ms. Gordon said that she likes the MMO and Community Space together, and would like to see a safer crossing to the School Street playground. She added that she likes the façade of the proposed Option 6 to replicate the former church over the proposed Option 2 facade, and would also like for the Proponent to consider relocating MMO to the rear parking lot on site 2.

#### **Petruzziello Properties Response to Task Force Comments and Questions:**

Ms. Loughnane told the task force that Mr. Petruzziello is sick, and that his attorney, Mr. Zahka, has a meeting conflict tonight in another town. She said that the project architect, Mr. McKay, was present and would answer questions.

A Task Force Member asked Mr. McKay to explain how many floors would be in the proposed buildings for Option 2 and Option 6. Mr. McKay stated that the MMO/Community Space building would be same height as now with basement space and access from the rear. He said that the mixed use building would have retail on ground floor, with tenant underground parking accessed from the rear of the site, and with two levels of residential above.

#### **Discussion on Option 6:**

Ms. Gordon described Option 6 as similar to Option 2. She summarized Option 6 as proposing 1) a new CVS on the northwest corner of Washington Street and School Street, 2) relocation of the Blue Hart Tavern and Library to the west side of Washington Street on what's known as site 1, 3) construction of a new mixed-use building on the northeast corner of Washington and East Street which would replicate the exterior appearance of the existing ICC Building, and 4) renovation of the current CVS building on the east side of Washington Street to house MMO and Community Space on what's known as site 2.

Ms. Loughnane said that she likes the massing in this Option, as well as that of Option 2, but again would prefer an improved street wall to follow the East Street sidewalk line. She noted that this would allow for increased open space between the mixed-building and the MMO/Community building, and possibly for the relocation of the MMO playground to between these two buildings, rather than in the rear parking lot. Ms. Loughnane said that she would also suggest that the Proponent revisit the layout for this parking lot.

Ms. Sutton said that she liked Option 6 because it took into account many of the comments heard at past meetings about residents' appreciation of the ICC's façade.

Ms. Persons said that she felt this option does not sufficiently provide for outdoor gathering space and would like to see an open area between the mixed-use building and the MMO/Community Space building, or possibly an area in the rear of site 1. She said that she would also like to see a wooded dog walking area.

Mr. Laubenstein said that he would encourage all uses related to children to be on the west side of Washington Street on site 1. He said that he would prefer to preserve the landscaping at back of the 9 School Street property rather than turn this into a parking lot, and that there may be an opportunity to cross the street at 301-315 Washington to provide access to School Street.

Ms. Tucke said that she, too, would like to keep the vegetation at rear of site 1 for a buffer to keep noise down for nearby residents.

Ms. McCabe stated that Option 6 was her second favorite option because it takes into account resident comments to replicate a building valued by community. She said that she likes retail at the corners and a strong focus on well-designed buildings at the intersections.

Ms. Donahue stated that Option 6 was her top option. She said she likes that it replicates the historic look of the former church, and that she supports the locations and uses of the proposed buildings.

Mr. Shanshiry said that Option 6 is his preferred option. He commented that he likes the look of the ICC façade. He added that he has concerned with Town continuing to act as a landlord.

Ms. Klosi said that she likes that the space between the mixed-use building and MMO/Community Space building is larger in Option 6 than in Option 2, but she believes that both options need further improvement for walking and outdoor seating. She asked if CVS would be open to a two-story building.

Mr. McKay responded that CVS's prototype is for a one-story model.

Ms. Gordon said that she likes the idea of replicating the church façade, but thinks the plan looks too compressed and would like to see more green space.

Mr. Wisialko stated that Option 6 is his second choice. he said that he agrees that CVS should be pushed further away from the School Street residences. Mr. Wisialko asked about how many floors would be in the proposed mixed-use building.

Mr. McKay said that part of the building, to the north and to the east, would have two levels of residences over a level of commercial space along the street, while the corner section would have one floor of residences over the commercial space. He noted that, as in Option 2, there would be underground parking for tenants. Mr. McKay added that the building would appear to have 2.5 floors to flow with the land.

Mr. Reardon commented the he thinks the parking in both Option 2 and Option 6 could be problematic because they are so close to East Street and the intersection. He said that Option 6 is his favorite, and suggested reorienting the MMO/Community Space building to face the green space between that building and the proposed mixed-use building.

Mr. Patterson said that he likes Option 6 because the change from what exists today is more subtle.

Mr. Jaillet commented that Option 6 was his favorite and again noted that he would prefer for the MMO/Community Space building to be Town-owned, so that the Town could be the landlord and hold a lease with MMO as it does presently. He said that he would like to see the Blue Hart Tavern restored but remain in private ownership and use. He said that he does not envision a suitable municipal use for this building . Mr. Jaillet said that he likes that the proposed mixed-use building would have the efficiency of new construction, while replicating the look of the ICC in response to community comments.

Mr. Walsh stated that he'd like to see the new Option 6 mixed-use building with more emphasis on the portion that faces Washington Street. He said he'd also like to see this building pushed back further from the street. He suggested turning the mixed-use building to face the intersection, with and the residences setback from the street. Mr. Walsh added that he would not be averse to letting the Blue Hart Tavern go.

Mr. Hertz stated his preference for Option 6 and commented that he believes the proposal for apartments is important to provide housing diversity. He said he believes the town needs some more affordable options than single-family homes, and believes condos would be difficult at this scale. Mr. Hertz said that he believed condos are more feasible on a larger scale where the economics work better. He added that he believes a proposal for high end apartments would attract residents who would add to the community, but he doesn't believe the development could support a condo market.

Ms. Dukeman said that she likes the proposed Option 6 façade replication for the mixed-use building.

Mr. Korchin said that he does not like the proposed ICC replication or the colors of the awnings.

Ms. Perry said that she doesn't like that there is too little green space and open space in this option. She said she also doesn't like CVS on the School Street corner.

Mr. Shanshiry asked if there would be any problems having the Crown Cleaner's retail building attached to the MMO/Community Space in Options 2 and 6.

Mr. McKay said that he didn't see that as a problem. He said he could revise the layout for Option 6 to alter the building orientation and footprint and could create a new Option 7.

### **Public Comments and Questions:**

A question was asked: How many apartments are proposed in Options 2 and 6?

Ms. Gordon responded that both options propose 28 one-bedroom apartments.

A comment was made: A resident expressed opposition to Town leasing, trading or selling any properties. he said that the proposals are too cluttered And that he prefers to maintain what is there now. He is not supportive of rentals.

A question was asked: Is a CVS drive-through finalized?

Ms. Loughnane explained that a drive-through requires a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) in addition to Planning Board approval of the overall development.

A question was asked: Who is likely to live in the apartments?

Ms. Gordon responded that, at an earlier meeting, Mr. Petruzzello stated that he had begun marketing the apartments across the street. She said that he may be able to provide some information on the expected demographics.

A comment was made: A resident stated concern about the size of the proposed CVS and encouraged a smaller building.

A comment was made: A resident expressed concern with existing traffic, particularly when turning left out of Brookfield Road, and when travelling north on Washington Street from Norwood to Westwood and turning left onto Brookfield Road.

A comment was made; A resident said that she was concerned with 28 residences and retail that would lead to traffic backups.

A comment was made: A resident expressed concern about kids' safety, particularly with traffic from CVS.

A comment was made: A resident expressed concern with walkability and traffic, and said that these proposals will become a drive-through area instead of a destination for families.

A comment was made: suggested suggestion was made to swap the locations of CVS and the MMO/Community Space building in Option 6, and to consider more green space and a gazebo. The commenter also expressed concern over 28 apartments.

A comment was made: A resident expressed concern that additional apartments could be proposed on other properties within the overlay district, and that the aggregate effects of those additional residential developments could be negative.

A question was asked: Is keeping the existing ICC building an option?

Ms. Gordon responded that Options 4 and 5 propose keeping this building. She said that these options will be discussed at the next meeting.

A question was asked: Have there been any traffic studies of this area?

Chairman Gordon stated that the Task Force is only just reviewing concept plans for recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. If the Selectmen decide to pursue one of the proposed options, the plans will be developed beyond the concept stage and traffic and environmental studies will be conducted at that time for the Planning Board's review. Ms. McCabe noted that a traffic study was done last year for the mixed-use building currently under construction, which is available on the town's website on the Islington Task Force page.

Ms. McCabe encouraged residents to sign up on the town's webpage to receive email notifications of meetings.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

On a motion made by Mr. Walsh, seconded by Ms. Donahue, the meeting minutes of November 10, 2017 were approved as written.

### **Scheduling of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting dates were selected as Wednesday, February 15 and Wednesday, March 22. Meetings will begin at 7:00 pm at a location to be determined. The agendas for these meetings will be posted on the town's website at least 48 hours in advance of each meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm.

### **List of Exhibits:**

Comments submitted by Kela Klosi, Abby McCabe, Tricia Perry, Tricia Perry, Michael Reardon, Mary Beth Persons,
Task Force Member informal option preference list
Three marked up vision plans
Updated option 6 (floor sheets) on screen and printed.
Municipal Capital Needs Assessment and Replacement Reserve Analysis for Islington Branch Library, prepared by RECAP Real Estate advisors, prepared for Town of Westwood, dated December 9, 2016 (34 pages).
Report: <i>The Future Economic and Environmental Costs of Gridlock in 2030</i> , Cebr, Report for INRIX, July 2014 (67 pages).
Study: <i>How Congestion Pricing Reduces Property Values</i> , by Amihai Glazer and Kurt Van Dender, University of California, Irvine, dated April 16, 2002, (14 pages).