

**Town of Westwood  
Islington Center Task Force Meeting  
Wednesday, November 8, 2017 – 7:00 PM  
Sanctuary, ICC, 288 Washington Street**

**Meeting Notes**

**Task Force Members Present:**

Nora Loughnane, Abby McCabe, Michael Walsh, Trevor Laubenstein, Jack Patterson, George Hertz, and John Deckers.

**Members Absent:** Pam Dukeman, Mike Jaillet, Paul Sicard, Trish Tucke, Rabih Shanshiry, Kela Klosi, Al Wisialko.

Chairman Walsh explained that there was no quorum of members and therefore no official business or deliberation could take place.

Westwood's new Fire Chief John Deckers was introduced to replace Deputy Chief Mike Reardon as a member of this Task Force.

**Miscellaneous Updates:**

Ms. Loughnane, Director of Community and Economic Development, and Mr. Walsh reported on various items affecting Islington Center, as follows:

**Fire Station II Project**

The Islington Fire Station is now open and there was a successful open house last month.

**301-323 Washington Street Project**

The new mixed use building at 321 Washington Street received an occupancy permit this week, and the lottery for the two affordable units is scheduled for November 13, 2017 at noon at 50 Carby Street.

**Islington Center RFP Project**

The Board of Selectmen and Petruzziello Properties executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) relative to the Islington Center RFP project earlier in the fall. The MOU gives permission for Petruzziello Properties to submit a special permit application to the Planning Board, which is expected to be submitted in late November or early December for a 2018 public hearing. The Board of Selectmen last week heard from the Historical Commission relative the historic Blue Hart Tavern. The Selectmen were interested in saving the historic building but concerned about the cost. Ultimately, it was decided that the private developer would own and maintain the building and not turn it over to the Town. It was explained that an application to the Planning Board is the next step, also an application to the Conservation Commission, and lastly Town Meeting will be asked to grant approval of the disposition of Town-owned land. The Land Disposition Agreement will be negotiated between the Developer and the Board of Selectmen prior to any Planning Board vote. Mr. Walsh added that discussions with the Developer and CVS representatives over the last few months have resulted in the elimination of the proposed CVS drive-through. In addition, he noted that the Developer has proposed the relocation of MMO (Mother's Morning Out Nursery) to the existing CVS building which will be owned and maintained by Petruzziello Properties. When the special permit application is received the material will be posted to the town's website and available for public review.

**Dedham, 1000 Washington Street** – A special permit application was submitted to the Dedham Planning Board to redevelop the vacant gas station property at 1000 Washington Street in Dedham, just north of Hogan Tire. A public hearing is scheduled for November 10<sup>th</sup>. The proposal is for a three-

story mixed-use building with first floor commercial uses, two upper stories of residential uses, and associated parking. Westwood's Planning Board recently sent comments to Dedham recommending pedestrian improvements at the intersection of Washington Street and Gay Street.

**Clapboardtree St./Washington St. Intersection Improvement Project**

Plans for intersection improvements to establish a left turn lane from Clapboardtree Street onto Washington Street are nearing completion.

**East Street Bridge Replacement Project**

Construction of the East Street Bridge Replace Project is underway. Site work and advance utility work has begun. The bulk of construction will take place in 2018, with final paving and landscaping expected to continue into 2019.

**FMUOD Proposed Zoning Amendment Town Meeting Article**

The Board of Selectmen and Planning Board have jointly proposed a zoning amendment that would add a definitive residential cap on the number of housing units that could be constructed in the High Street and Washington Street FMUOD zoning districts. The proposed cap is 90 units per district, including all existing residential units previously approved by special permit. Town Meeting is next week on November 13 starting at 7:30 pm at the High School.

**Comprehensive Planning – Review and Discuss Town Center Element of 2000 Comprehensive Plan and Proposed Draft Updates for Future Consideration by the Comprehensive Steering Plan Committee**

Ms. Loughnane explained that the Task Force will engage in public review and discussion about the goals, policies and implementation strategies set forth in the Town Centers Element of Westwood's 2000 Comprehensive Plan, and will recommend updates to the Town Center Element to reflect current sensibilities in 2018. The assignment from the last meeting was to review the 2000 plans goals, objectives and action items for discussion this evening. Ms. Loughnane noted that only a few comments were received and those comments were compiled into a two page summary which was distributed this evening to task force members. Extra copies were made available for the public.

The Task Force discussed the topic of front setback requirements in Local Business Districts A and B. The current zoning bylaw allows 10' front setbacks in Local Business A (High Street) and 0' front setbacks in Local Business B (Washington Street). These setback requirements are designed to reflect historic conditions. Mr. Walsh noted that buildings located close to the street create a more urban experience. He said he would prefer to see more activity up close to the street such as porches, sitting areas, and open windows. Examples of towns with buildings close to front lot lines include Wellesley, Needham, Edgartown and Marblehead. Suggestions included increasing the width of the sidewalk, and thoughtful design of vegetation and greenery to create an attractive streetscape.

Ms. Loughnane explained that the minimum setback requirements are intended to allow buildings to be constructed closer to the street so that parking may be located at the back or sides of the property rather than creating parking lots in front of buildings.

The Task Force also discussed a proposed warrant article to authorize funding for the design of sidewalks along Gay Street. This article was discussed at the recent Finance and Warrant Commission Town Meeting public hearing. There were varying opinions surrounding the topic of installing sidewalks. Those opposed to the construction of sidewalks were concerned with impacts to the abutting property owners and potential changes to the aesthetics of Gay Street and its scenic elements such as the trees, stonewalls, and views. Those in favor of the construction of sidewalks supported having a safe route for children and all pedestrians, and providing a pedestrian connection between High Street and Washington Street where

none currently exists. Supporters also anticipated that sidewalks could serve as a traffic calming measure to slow down vehicles on Gay Street.

A suggestion was made that the Town Center element include the goals of encouraging private investment in private properties.

The Chairman opened the meeting up to public comments and questions. He also added that if there were additional comments people could contact Nora Loughnane or Abby McCabe.

Public Comments and Questions:

In response to a question about the Comprehensive Plan Update Ms. Loughnane described the process. She explained that, following completion of the Open Space & Recreation Plan in 2018, a full steering committee would be appointed by the Selectmen to spearhead the Comprehensive Plan's update. She said that the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee would consist of various representatives from town boards and committees, as well as interested residents and business owners. Ms. Loughnane explained that the steering committee would engage in an open public process and would ultimately bring the proposed Comprehensive Plan Update to the Planning Board for adoption and then to Town Meeting for endorsement. While the Islington Center Task Force has been asked to begin work on the Town Centers Element of the Comprehensive Plan, there will be numerous public input sessions and opportunities for comment along the way, including one or more sessions with a specific focus on the High Street town Center. In addition, there will be sessions focused on the Comprehensive Plan's transportation, recreation and open space, economic development, housing, and land use elements. A new element focused on resilience and sustainability will also be incorporated into the overall Comprehensive Plan.

Further discussion of the goals, policies and implementation strategies for the Town Centers Element of the Comprehensive Plan Update will be scheduled for upcoming meetings of the task force.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes from October 11, 2017 were not approved because a quorum of the Board was not present and review was continued to the next meeting on January 10.

**Scheduling of Next Meeting:** The Task Force previously selected the following meeting dates.

- Wednesday, January 10, 2018
- Wednesday, February 7, 2018
- Wednesday, March 14, 2018

On a motion made by Mr. Laubenstein and seconded by Mr. Hertz, the Task Force adjourned at 8:00 pm.

**List of Exhibits:**

Draft minutes from October 11, 2017 ICTF Meeting
Town Center Section of 2000 Comprehensive Plan, redlined for 2018 update
Comments received on Comprehensive Plan Village Center Element