

**Town of Westwood
Islington Center Task Force Meeting
Wednesday, March 22, 2017 - 7:00 PM
Thurston Middle School, Cafeteria, 850 High Street**

Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members Present:

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

Members Absent: Al Wisialko.

Chairman Helen Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM, summarized the agenda and explained the meeting procedures to all present. She also noted that Westwood Media Center was present to record the meeting.

Miscellaneous Updates

Ms. Loughnane, Director of Community and Economic Development, reported that the new Hogan Tire Center located further north on Washington Street is expecting to open in soon. The next mixed use building at 317 Washington Street is moving along with construction and is expected to open in July. The Westwood Little League is also working on constructing a new snack shack at Morrison Field. The structure was approved by the Planning Board and they are now aiming for construction this season. Bertie's Creative Creamery is an ice cream parlor working on interior renovations to open this spring-summer season at 305 Washington Street. Construction on the Islington Fire Station is continuing to progress and expected to be completed in the spring or summer. The gas station and convenience store at the site of the old gas station at 390 Washington Street has been approved by the Planning Board but no building permit application has been submitted. Improvements to the Clapboardtree Street/Washington Street intersection have been designed, including a new left turn lane from Clapboardtree Street onto Washington Street. A warrant article has been proposed for the Annual Town Meeting to provide funding for the intersection improvements to supplement the funding already received from the Benchmark Assisted Care facility on Clapboardtree Street in Norwood.

Ms. Loughnane also announced a number of important meeting dates that may be of interest:

- March 27 & March 28, 2017 – Finance and Warrant Commission continued hearings for Town Meeting
- April 4, 2017 – Board of Selectmen meeting to consider submission of Subdivision and/or Approval Not Required (ANR) plans for the purpose of obtaining a zoning freeze on land in Islington Center
- April 11 & April 24, 2017 – Regular meetings of the Planning Board
- April 12, 2017 – Islington Center Task Force meeting at Downey School Cafeteria
- May 15, 2017 – Board of Selectmen to hear initial presentation of Petruzziello Proposal in accordance with Islington Center RFP
- May 31 or June 1, 2017 – Board of Selectmen to receive public comments on Petruzziello Proposal
- June 19, 2017 – Board of Selectmen to consider and deliberate on Petruzziello Proposal

Approval of Minutes:

On a motion made by Mr. Walsh, seconded by Mr. Patterson, the minutes of February 15, 2017 Islington Center Task Force meeting were approved as written.

Summary of Submitted Research Articles

Mr. Shanshiry continued his summary of articles which had been received by the Task Force from the developer and from interested residents over the last few months. He noted that he had presented summaries of several articles at the February 15th meeting, including all of the articles that were submitted by residents. Mr. Shanshiry then summarized the remaining two articles which had been submitted by the developer. Those articles included a Tufts University Study entitled "On the Ground: 40B Developments Before and After" and a report by the Urban Land Institute entitled "Higher-Density Development, Myth and Facts".

Mr. Shanshiry said that the Tufts study evaluated four different projects in Newton, Walpole, Wellesley, and Weston, and concluded that many of the fears of the community were not realized when the projects were evaluated following construction and occupancy. He said that the Urban Land Institute report contained presented common myths and provided responses in light of various examples of projects across the country.

Summary Presentation of Petruzzello Properties Concept Plan Options

Mr. Petruzzello briefly reviewed each of the six RFP options submitted to the Task Force over the last several months:

Option 1 – This option is the original proposal. It proposes a new mixed-use building on Site 1 (west/School St. side of Washington St.) containing 28 one-bedroom apartments, 9,000 Sq. Ft. of first floor retail, and underground parking. It calls for the Blue Hart Tavern to be restored and located at back of the 9 School Street parcel, with municipal parking in the rear. Site 2 (east side of Washington St.) proposes a new CVS building at the corner of Washington St. and East St. where the Islington Community Center (ICC) is today. This option also calls for relocating Wentworth Hall to where CVS is presently, and constructing a 10,000 Sq. Ft. addition behind the Library for Community and Mothers Morning Out (MMO) nursery school/preschool space.

Option 2 – This option proposes a new CVS on the School St. corner of Washington St. It calls for restoration and relocation of the Blue Hart Tavern and Wentworth Hall to the west side of Washington St. with municipal parking in the rear. For Site 2, this option proposes a new mixed-use building where the ICC is presently, and calls for renovation of the existing CVS building to contain Community and MMO space.

Option 3 – This option proposes a new mixed-use building with 20 apartments and 14,000 Sq. Ft. of first floor retail on the School St. corner of Washington St., with a restored Blue Hart Tavern at the front of 9 School St., and municipal parking in the rear. For Site 2, this option calls for a new CVS a new CVS building at the corner of Washington St. and East St. where the ICC is today. This option also calls for relocating Wentworth Hall to where CVS is presently, and constructing a 10,000 Sq. Ft. addition behind the Library for Community and MMO space.

Option 4 – This option proposes a new CVS on the School St. corner of Washington St. with the restored Blue Hart Tavern and Wentworth Hall on the west side of Washington St. and municipal parking in the

rear. This option maintains the ICC building in its current condition and proposes a new mixed-use building with 28 apartments and 14,000 Sq. Ft. of first floor retail where Wentworth Hall and CVS are now.

Option 5 - This option proposes a new mixed-use building with 20 apartments and 14,000 Sq. Ft. of first floor retail on the School St. corner of Washington St. It makes no changes to the west side of Washington St.

Option 6 - This option proposes a new CVS on the School St. corner of Washington St. It calls for restoration and relocation of the Blue Hart Tavern and Wentworth Hall to the west side of Washington St. with municipal parking in the rear. For Site 2, this option proposes a new mixed-use building designed as a replica of the ICC building, and calls for renovation of the existing CVS building to contain Community and MMO space.

Public Comments and Questions:

Question: Why does this Task Force not have a representative from the School Committee or School Department?

Ms. Loughnane responded that the School Department was asked to send the name of a School Committee member or staff member to represent the schools on the Task Force. She said that they declined to put forward a representative, and when asked why, responded that they did not have any concerns at this time and did not see the need for a School representative on the Task Force.

Question: Who owns the lot in the back behind the School Street property?

A Task Force member responded that this land is part of the 9 School Street, which is currently owned by Petruzzello Properties. It was noted that this is the former tailor shop parcel, and that the lot extends behind the temporary storage area for the Blue Hart Tavern to a wooded area. The property lines were shown on the screen.

Comment: A resident expressed an opinion in opposition to the town selling any town-owned land.

Question: What is the size of the proposed CVS?

The proponent responded that the proposals for new buildings range from 12,000 Sq. Ft to 13,000 Sq. Ft., and that option 5 maintains the existing CVS at its current size.

Comment: A resident recalled a survey from over the summer and stated that the survey did not show support for apartments, expressed concern with traffic, aesthetics, and impacts to surrounding property values.

Question: Are there renderings that go with the proposed site layout options?

Ms. McCabe showed the submitted renderings on the screen and stated that these renderings are also available on the Islington Center Task Force's webpage here:

http://www.townhall.westwood.ma.us/gov/boardcomm/active_boards_committees_n_commissions/islington_center_task_force/islington_redevelopment_rfp.htm.

Comment: A resident stated that she is opposed to apartments in Islington and thinks that if housing is allowed it should be limited to condominiums. She stated that she was an apartment renter for two decades and believes that renters are lazy and unclean.

Mr. Hertz disagreed with the previous comments and said that many renters are good people, are connected with their communities, and should be welcomed. He commented that the town has a unique opportunity for to work with a private owner because of the location of private properties next to the town's.

Question: Is there a contingency on CVS? Do they plan to move forward with this proposal given that there is another CVS and other pharmacies in town?

The proponent responded that he is in communication with CVS and that they agreed to a long-term lease if relocated in a new building.

Comment: A resident stated that there is no master plan for Islington and that it is too early to leverage the town's properties. He also asked if the cash payment was required in the RFP.

Ms. Loughnane responded that there as a not a required cash payment in the RFP. She said that the RFP was written to allow for purchase payment or for equivalent compensation in the case of a trade.

Question: What land is being swapped or traded?

Ms. Loughnane responded that each of the six proposals present different options. For example, she said that Option 5 proposes only using a portion of the town's municipal parking lot, and would likely involve a payment in addition to land trade. She said that Option 4 proposed land exchange and funding of historic restoration and relocation of the Blue Hart Tavern and Wentworth Hall. Ms. Loughnane added that once this Task Force makes a recommendation, the RFP proposal will go to the Board of Selectmen who will review that proposal and, if they deem it worthy of pursuit, the Selectmen will work out details in a negotiated development agreement. She stated that the plans would then have to be further developed before the proposal could move ahead to the Planning Board for permitting. Ms. Loughnane noted that no project could be developed unless Town Meeting first approves the sale or transfer of town land.

Comment: A resident expressed concern over the loss of character of the town. He believes that the area zoning allows for too many apartments, and doesn't believe the MMO will be able to continue paying rent in a privately-owned building.

Mr. Shanshiry stated that if MMO is only able to operate because they are being charged a reduced rent for use of the town-owned ICC building, then the town's tax payers are subsidizing the tuition of MMO students which he believes allows for an unfair advantage in competition with preschools that do not have the same opportunity.

There were no more public comments and Chairman Gordon closed the public comment period.

Deliberation on Petruzziello Properties Concept Plan Options and Recommendation to Board of Selectmen

Ms. Gordon introduced each of the voting Task Force members and informed them that they can now deliberate on the options before them.

Mr. Shanshiry commented that he'd like to see MMO survive and thrive but noted that there are other preschools in Westwood and this one doesn't need to be singled out to be subsidized by the town.

Ms. Persons commented that part of keeping the character of the town is to keep the town services in Islington such as the library and town offices to continue serving the area's residents. She said that she believes this proposal furthers that goal.

Ms. Tucke commented that while she'd rather not see apartments from her home on School Street, she recognizes that housing for seniors is very important. She said that she works at the Council on Aging and receives inquiries for this type of housing which is attractive for older people because of the reduced maintenance responsibilities. She said that she believes there is a need for apartments here so that older residents can continue to stay in Westwood.

Ms. Gordon stated that she has been listening to the public and understands the concerns, particularly with traffic, and is supportive of the consideration for condominiums. She noted that the RFP was issued last spring and only one response was received because the respondent owns property in close proximity to the town's land which makes for a more feasible project. She said she realizes that some people are afraid of the scale and possible heights of new buildings.

Mr. Walsh commented that the proposal is still in the early stages of consideration and is by no means a done deal because ultimately any use of town-owned land would need Town Meeting approval.

Mr. Laubenstein commented that he is familiar with the master plan concept, which can take many years, however, what this Task Force has been working on and what is before the group is essentially a master plan for Islington. He said that the projects now being considered set a cohesive standard for more properties to follow.

Mr. Hertz added that there are almost 5,000 homes in Westwood with prices that are out of reach of most young people. He said that these proposals involving apartments provide a place for people to rent and then buy in town. He said that not all renters are "bad" and many are very nice and should be welcomed into the community.

Ms. Donahue commented that she values the historic buildings and likes that there is an opportunity now to see the Blue Hart Tavern restored.

Ms. Klosi added that she has lived in Islington for nine years and believes these plans provide an opportunity to create improved open space and more gathering areas. She said she wants to see more pedestrian friendly areas.

Mr. Patterson commented that he believes this RFP process and the Town's involvement can shape any projects that move forward to a much greater degree than if town-owned properties were not involved. He said that people are concerned that the building at 323 Washington Street is out of scale, but with the town as a property owner, the town would have a greater say in the design of future development.

The Task Force discussed ways to narrow down their options for a motion and agreed on an unofficial pole of all members on which option should be considered for recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.

On a motion made by Mr. Laubenstein, seconded by Mr. Patterson, the full Task Force, including ex-officio members, voted 18 to 2 in support of Option 6.

On a motion made by Mr. Hertz, seconded by Mr. Laubenstein, the Task Force voted 9-1 to deliberate and discuss conditions for Option 6. Mr. Walsh noted he preferred option 4.

The group reviewed draft conditions for a possible motion and discussed topics to be considered before recommending specific conditions. Topics of discussion and questions included:

- How and if they should specify conditions related to the space for community uses and MMO and how any proposed space would be divided between MMO, Youth & Family Services, and the Recreation Department;

- Support for a condition that would improve the geometry of the East Street corner to allow improved street turning movements;
- Recommendation for town-ownership of community space;
- Possibility of recommending that new construction, rather than renovation of the current CVS building for the Community and MMO spaces;
- Removal of "shall" or change to "will" from suggested conditions #3, 6, & 7;
- Adding outdoor seating and public gathering spaces where possible to suggested condition #3;
- Revisions to suggested conditions 4 and 5 to meet the space requirements of Youth & Family Services, Recreation, and MMO based on need rather than specify a specific size breakdown for each; and
- Setting a limit on the number of permissible dwelling units.

After hearing all the discussion, Chairman Gordon read the final language for a proposed motion and asked if any member wished to make that motion. Jack Patterson made the motion which was seconded by Trevor Laubenstein.

Motion on RFP Recommendation to the Board of Selectmen as follows:

Whereas, Petruzziello Properties Inc. submitted a proposal in response to the town's Request for Proposals for the Redevelopment of Property in Islington Center (RFP # ECON-16-R-003); and

Whereas, said proposal was received on or before 11:00 am on June 20, 2016 and was accompanied by a bid deposit in the amount of \$50,000; and

Whereas, said proposal is comprehensive, complete and responsive to the objectives set forth in town's RFP; and

Whereas, said proposal meets the evaluation criteria set forth in the RFP, including the Threshold Criteria specified in Section 5.1.1 and the applicable Comparative Evaluation Criteria contained in Section 5.1.2;

I, Jack Patterson, move that the Islington Center Task Force hereby recommend that the Board of Selectmen choose Petruzziello Properties' as the Designated Developer pursuant to RFP # ECON-16-R-00, and that the Board of Selectmen negotiate a Disposition Agreement to allow for the development of Project Level Plans consistent with the Option 6 Concept Plans, prepared by Architect Michael McKay, dated January 17, 2017, with the following additional conditions:

1. That the Project Level Plans favorably address the applicable design and performance criteria set forth in the Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District (FMUOD) section of the Zoning Bylaw, with particular emphasis on vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle safety;
2. That the mixed-use building proposed for the northeast corner of the intersection of Washington Street and East Street will be designed and located to provide maximum opportunity for improvements to the geometry and signalization of said intersection;

3. That the Project Level Plans include well-designed and appropriately located landscaped public spaces adjacent to buildings and accessible from Washington Street and to the extent possible provide for public gathering space and outdoor seating;
4. That requests from Youth & Family Services, Recreation and MMO be adequately considered by the Selectmen to meet the needs of those groups in negotiations with the developer and in refining options;
5. That Wentworth Hall will be relocated to town-owned property, set on a new foundation with accessible basement, and renovated in a manner consistent with that structure's local historic significance;
6. That the Blue Hart Tavern will be renovated and reused in a manner consistent with that structure's local historic significance;
7. That the new municipal space and new space to be offered to MMO be completed prior to the demolition of the Islington Community Center building, and that schedule for relocation and renovation of Wentworth Hall be designed to cause the shortest possible period of disruption to Library services;
8. That the aggregate estimated value of the properties owned by the town following completion of the development will be at least equivalent to the combined assessed value of the four (4) municipally-owned properties involved in the RFP; and
9. That the development includes a minimum of dwelling units not to exceed approximately 28 single bedroom units.

Motion seconded by Trevor Laubenstein.

The following members voting in favor: Nancy Donahue, Helen Gordon, George Hertz, Kela Klosi, Trevor Laubenstein, Jack Patterson, Mary Beth Persons, Rabih Shanshiry, Trish Tucke, and Michael Walsh.

The following members voting in opposition: None.

Summary of Petition Warrant Articles Proposing Amendments to Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District (FMUOD) Section of Zoning Bylaw

Chairman Gordon invited two of the Petitioners to present the proposed Flexible Multiple Use Overlay Districts (FMUOD) Zoning Amendment articles to the Task Force. Ms. Ellen Rollings and Ms. Deborah Conant, lead petitioners for the two citizen petition zoning articles submitted for Annual Town Meeting, introduced themselves and summarized their proposed articles. They stated that the articles were intended to remove the ability to apply for a special permit for multi-family housing use and to change the way projects in the Washington and High Street (FMUOD) Business Districts are reviewed by removing a footnote that allows contiguous lots to be considered as a single project when properties are adjacent to each other or across a street or railroad. Ms. Rollings said that the Petitioners submitted these articles because they spoke to and heard from many residents that did not like the development steps the town has taken and wanted another chance to review and vote on the zoning bylaws.

Mr. Jaillet asked if the intent of the zoning articles is to impact the RFP and the proposal from Petruzzello Properties. Ms. Rollings responded that the intent is to think long term about future development. She

also said that she believes that there may be a zoning freeze plan in the works that would result in proposed amendments not being applied to the properties involved in the Petruzziello Proposal.

Mr. Shanshiry asked why height limits weren't included in the proposed zoning amendment since there have been concerns raised about the allowable heights. Ms. Conant responded that they consider an amendment of the height requirements in the future, but that the real reason for submitting these articles is to reverse the zoning that allows multi-family housing in the FMUOD which was created without all residents realizing it.

Ms. Persons asked if the zoning only applies to the High Street and Washington Street FMUODs? Ms. Rollings responded that the zoning amendment is only for the FMUOD 6 (Washington Street) & FMUOD 7 (High Street) districts and said that the articles would not affect the other five FMUODs. She said that, unlike the other FMUOD districts, these two districts are close to residential neighborhoods and they don't want these kinds of developments in the town centers.

Ms. Persons stated that she recalls early discussions about the zoning for University Station area a decade ago. She noted that many people didn't want to see anything developed in that area in the beginning either. She said that she would hate to see the zoning removed before it has had a chance to be implemented.

Ms. McCabe, Town Planner, provided a presentation summarizing the Petitioner zoning articles proposing changes to FMUOD 6 & 7. She stated that the town first adopted FMUOD zoning in 2011 to encourage commercial property improvement in five areas of town. She explained that the Planning Board, in 2014, recommended adding the FMUOD 6 & 7 districts to encourage redevelopment in the Washington and High Street Business Districts, to incentivize the replacement of aging village centers properties. Ms. McCabe said that, in 2015, the multi-family housing use was added to help sustain desirable business and provide another economic incentive for appropriate commercial development. She noted that the Planning Board received a special permit application for the 301-323 Washington Street properties in late 2015 and approved it in April 2016. She said that, shortly after that in May 2016, this group issued the RFP for which a proposal has now been recommended. Ms. McCabe noted that the RFP and that proposal were both developed to comply with the existing zoning.

Consideration of Petition Warrant Articles Proposing Amendments to Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District (FMUOD) Section of the Zoning Bylaw for Recommendation to Finance and Warrant Commission

Chairman Gordon asked if any member wished to make a motion regarding the proposed Petition Zoning Amendment Articles. Trevor Laubenstein made the motion which was seconded by Mary Beth Persons, as follows:

Whereas, the Islington Center Task Force has been working for more than a year on various efforts to revitalize Islington Center, and is in the midst of considering a Master Plan for Islington Center; and

Whereas, the Task Force just wrapped up a recommendation in favor of a development proposal submitted by Petruzziello Properties, Inc. in response to the Town's Request for Proposals (RFP) for Redevelopment of Property in Islington Center (RFP # ECON-16-R-003);

I, Trevor Laubenstein, move that the Islington Center Task Force hereby recommend that the Finance & Warrant Commission vote to recommend Indefinite Postponement of the two abovementioned Petition Articles.

Motion seconded by Mary Beth Persons.

The following members voting in favor: Nancy Donahue, Helen Gordon, George Hertz, Kela Klosi, Trevor Laubenstein, Jack Patterson, Mary Beth Persons, and Rabih Shanshiry.

The following members voting in opposition: Michael Walsh.

The following members abstained from voting: Trish Tucke.

Scheduling of Next Meeting:

The next meeting date is scheduled for:

Wednesday, April 12, Downey School Cafeteria, 250 Downey Street, beginning at 7:00 pm.

The agendas for Task Force meetings will be posted on the town’s website at least 48 hours in advance of each meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:11 pm.

List of Exhibits:

Draft minutes from February 15, 2017 meeting.
Petition Articles for Annual Town Meeting, Article A “Islington Center Zoning Article” and Article B “Islington Center Zoning Article”.
Sample Motion for Islington Center Task Force Motion to Recommend Indefinite Postponement of Petition Articles Proposing Amendments to the Flexible Multiple Use Overlay District (FMUOD) Section of the Zoning Bylaw
Sample Motion for Islington Center Task Force Motion to Recommend in Favor of Petruzzello Properties Proposal Option
Presentation from Town Planner relative to Article A and B for proposed Islington Zoning Changes (13 slides).
Tufts University Study entitled “On the Ground: 40B Developments Before and After”, May 1, 2009
Higher-Density Development, Myth and Fact by the Urban Land Institute