

Westwood Planning Board Minutes
Tuesday, November 17, 2020
7:00 pm
Via Zoom Remote Participation
Westwood, MA 02090

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law MGL C. 30A, §18 and the Governor's March 23, 2020 Emergency Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, the November 17, 2020 Planning Board meeting was conducted via remote participation by the Board.

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Atkins at approximately 7:00 pm. The remote meeting was video recorded by Westwood Media Center and was available on Comcast channel 12, Verizon channel 42 and on Westwood Media's YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=westwood+media+center Chair Atkins explained the meeting procedures, and how the Planning Board meeting process works. Board members and the public will be able to ask questions as the Committee presents each section of the Comprehensive Plan.

Present via Remote Participation:

Planning Board members present via Roll Call: David L. Atkins, Jr., Deborah J. Conant, Christopher A. Pfaff, William F. Delay and Robert R. Gotti.

Staff members present: Abigail McCabe, Town Planner, Nora Loughnane, Director of Community & Economic Development, Pat Ahearn, Town Counsel and Jessica Cole, who recorded the meeting minutes.

Draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan - Public Hearing. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Chair Jack Wiggin and Committee members will present the Draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan to the Planning Board. The full plan will be presented with Board discussion, and a public comment option as the Committee presents each section of the Plan.

Mr. Atkins stated that the Comprehensive Plan steering committee was present and they would present the draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan. The Committee will present each section of the full plan and the Board and public will be able to ask questions with each section before moving onto the next and then again at the end.

Committee Chair Jack Wiggin went through a brief overview. They completed a draft after a two-year process. The Plan is a long range visionary document which lays out visions and goals. There are 9 topical elements: Land Use, Town Centers, Housing, Economic Development, Natural & Cultural Resources, Community Facilities, Open Space & Recreation, Transportation, Sustainability & Resiliency. Mr. Wiggin went through each section.

Land Use Section:

Improving and increasing what we have.

Board Comments:

- Board member complimented the committee and the document. Can L7 and L8 be merged together?
- Have some edits and will submit via email and the tone seemed different in each section.

Town Centers:

Intent is for the Planning Board to consider how to improve a design review process.

Board Comments:

- Maintain a healthy economic ecosystem.
- TC2, collaborate with the School Department School Committee if the school property becomes available, Does that fall under jurisdiction of The Select Board? *Mr. Wiggin will reword to be under Select Board.*
- TC6 & 11, Can they be reworded and turned into one?
- In 5 different sections, TC12 is almost the same as Land Use 11 Economic & Development 16 and Natural & Cultural Resources 10, formalizing the Planning Board review process. *Mr. Wiggin explained that this came up in several sections and is intended to have the planning board review what sort of design process they would like to see. The intent is for the planning board to provide clarity on the desired style and design upfront to prospective applicants.*
- This could be a change for the Planning Board and has some concerns. Not against it, but it is a recurring theme, but maybe the Planning Board has to discuss it the exact language.

Housing:

Board Comments:

- Inquired about the exact percentage of affordable housing to be considered on the subsidized housing inventory. We need to keep track of this. *Ms. Loughnane responded by explaining that the Town has a very firm grasp on the exact count of housing in Town and how many affordable units are in Town. The Town gives a range because we don't have the results of the 2020 census numbers yet. It is still unknown how the federal census considers accessory housing units and assisted living and how they will be counted in the town's total number of housing. It is all dependent on what the Census Bureau counts.*
- H2: Affordable Housing Trust Fund. It is not a Trust Fund it is a Fund.
- H1A, presupposing, can we reword it? Work with Town officials.
- The Fund, maybe look into a Trust, so it can be specific for Affordable Housing, we may want to pursue. Trusts are run differently than a Fund.
- The racial diversity in Town, can we address it and recognize it in the Plan?
- Can we work with Sarah Bouchard, Town Housing & Zoning Agent?

Public Comments:

Chair Atkins read the questions and comments received in the Question and Answer feature and responded at that time. Questions related to how the corona virus has played a role in this Plan, asked about the affordability requirements related to housing goals, about increasing racial diversity, and a diversity committee and resident groups.

Economic Development:

Board Comments:

- p 3 of 7, under Islington, change wording to rebuild instead of relocated of Wentworth Hall.
- Will the edits get done? *Ms. McCabe, is taking notes, yes we will get updates and a redlined version will be posted on the website.*

Public Comments:

Chair Atkins read the questions and comments from the Question and Answer function and responded at that time. Questions were related to how we support the desired businesses such as restaurants and coffee shops. *Ms. Loughnane responded that the town supports the types of businesses desired by regularly evaluating, reviewing and making adjustments to zoning and permitting.*

Natural & Cultural Resources:

Board Comments:

- Obed Baker House: Has it been sold or under agreement? *Ms. Loughnane, the Town did not spend money on renovating the property. The Westwood Historical Society did and brought it back to historical status. The Town now owns it and has out proposals for bids. The Town did receive a proposal and are waiting for the applicant's finalized plans.*
- Wentworth Hall, will it be renamed? *No, it will still be Wentworth Hall and it was reassembled. It will look like Wentworth hall.*
- 34, Rebuild the Blue Hart Tavern? *Ms. McCabe answered, we tried to save the BHT and we no longer have the land she recommends removal of this goal unless the board revises to include find and fund land in addition to funding the construction. Ms. Donahue, Mr. Petruzzello agreed to having land available for the BHT. Ms. Loughnane answered: Mr. Petruzzello determined that the building was not usable, the Town tried to save it, but were unsuccessful. The land is being used as a landscaped area.*
- NC32, Typo: will be fixed to be ensure.
- As private property there was no protection for the Blue Hart Tavern. How do we protect old historic homes in Town? *Ms. Donahue, we want to change the Demolition Delay Bylaw from 6 months to a year, 6 months is not long enough. Westwood Historical Society (private organization) and Westwood Historical Commission (appointed body) are different. Ms. Conant would like to see them work together in collaboration, that is what makes a community.*
- NC24, talks about a calendar. Is there an absence of communication? Where does it fall in the recommendation? *Mr. Olanoff replied, the implementation action expresses what the need is.*

Public Comments:

Chair Atkins read the question and comments submitted in the Question and Answer function and responded at that time. Questions were related to Wentworth Hall and its historic nature, the Blue Hart Tavern, scenic roads, the public process, and the Community Preservation Act.

Community Facilities:

Town Hall, Elementary School Building Project, Renewable energy, sidewalks.

Board Comments:

- CF28: How do you see that? *Mr. Viti, it was a recommendation that came through the Water District.*
- Can it be more defined?
- CF6, Is that already done in the Design stage? Does it need to be an action item? *Ms. Loughnane: This plan is still in advancement of Wentworth Hall. The project will continue till 2020, you may need to adjust the date.*
- Senior Center; Difficult to read between 5 & 6.
- CF 27, DWWD: this should be their mission every day. *Mr. Viti: they are working on a long range plan.*
- CF 23: Westwood Media, can we add a second sentence? Be supportive of WMC.

Public Comments:

None

Open Space & Recreation:

Board Comments:

- P 2, Many of the open space and conservation areas were deemed to be in poor condition. Were they Public or Private properties? *Mr. Wiggin: They were public.*
- Can we maintain these public properties long term so they don't become in this state? It's sad that we have these properties that become unused. *Mr. Wiggin: The Plan recommends improving and maintaining what we have.*
- P4, property, Former Westwood Lodge: Is it necessary to call it The Westwood Lodge? *Mr. Olanoff, we will add the address.*

Public Comments:

None

Transportation:

Board Comments:

- Mr. Olanoff, this went in front of the Pedestrian Bike Committee.
- P. 2 of 7, typo. Identify or identifying?
- T15, adaptation signal, add-Pursue left turn signal onto Washington Street to East Street. Is it worth a study? *Ms. Loughnane responded that as part of the project they did a traffic study, it will be done again in Phase 3 which is expected soon.*
- T11 & T12, might be worth pursuing.

Public Comments:

Chair Atkins read the questions and comments submitted in the Question and Answer feature and responded at that time. There was a question related to the left turn on Washington Street onto East Street and staff responded that a traffic study was reviewed in 2018 as part of the planning board's approval and a traffic evaluation of that intersection is still going forward in phase II of the Islington center redevelopment project.

Sustainability & Resiliency:

Board Comments:

- Solar panels, I think we have tunnel vision when it comes to the solar panels, we should consider the installation of solar carports, rather than struggling with open space and that maybe we could add that into this because I know there were a lot of negative comments about Shuttleworth Field. *Ms. McCabe: S3, Install solar panels on municipal facilities, carports, include specific language and can add in "carports".*
- R11: Remove barriers, what do they refer to? *Ms. McCabe will look into clearer language.*
- Typo, R2, R12, HIPAA violations?

Public Comments:

Chair Atkins responded to questions asked and questions and comments submitted in the Question and Answer function. Questions were related to local energy needs, ground solar including solar fields and solar over parking areas.

Implementation Plan:

Board Comments:

- p27 of 30 S15, short term, electric stations
- P23-30 Take a look at these to make sure they line up and the grid can handle it.
Mr. Olanoff, we have no control over the power company.
- The Planning Board and Planning and Planning Staff?
- Do we want to keep this plan and redistribute the survey? Do we want to make forward? Are we capturing all of this in our plan? Do we need to add to the Plan because of COVID? *Mr. Wiggin, we don't know how to react, I think we can add, but we can add some language.*
Mr. Donahue, highlighting what might be different, the whole plan can be reconsidered.
Ms. McCabe, we have gone back and looked at it, electronic permitting, trying to have a range of businesses.
- A really good idea because with the unemployment rate and people having difficulty with taxes and mortgages, it makes it more clear that we're considering the implications of COVID.
- Maybe visit in one year, or even in 6 months. It is a plan; we need to come together as a community. Finances are a big problem. This will not be the first pandemic. Not saying to get rid of it.
- Most of this plan was created pre-COVID. Can add this in the beginning of the plan.
- Highlight some things.
- Asked the steering committee to revisit and make changes.
- Not predicting, we are just being transparent, it is just a plan.

Public Comments:

Chair Atkins responded to questions and read comments and questions submitted in the Question and Answer function. Questions related to charging stations timing of the power grid, community input, discussed how the plan's goals have changed in relation to the coronavirus pandemic, emergency resource such as food and supplies.

Ms. McCabe, also included please email her with edits or word changes or anything more that you want included.

Action Taken:

Upon a motion made by Mr. Pfaff, and seconded by Mr. Gotti, the Planning Board voted in favor via roll call (5-0) to continue the public hearing for the Draft Comprehensive Plan review to Tuesday, December 1st at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)- Continued Public Hearing. The Planning Board submitted a final revised Open Space and Recreation Plan to the MA Division of Conservation Services (DCS) and will vote to close the continued hearing after receiving the final approval letter from the state.

Ms. McCabe has the updated the Shuttleworth property previously. Morrison Field and Sheehan Field need to be changed because they are not Article 97 changed in Table 14. The state has already approved the plan and this is a correction to be updated.

Board and Staff Comments:

- P 39 needs to be removed, Blue Hart Tavern. The preservation and moving of it.
- Mr. Ahern did a Title search for the Sheehan and Morrison properties, they are not Article 97, and he is looking into June Street and School Street Playgrounds too.
- Ms. McCabe, there might be additional corrections and we can bring them back up.

Action Taken:

Upon a motion made by Mr. Pfaff and seconded by Mr. Gotti, the Planning Board voted in favor by roll call vote 4-0-1 (Ms. Conant abstained) to make the changes that the Sheehan and Morrison Fields are not Article 97.

Discussion:

Ms. Conant, is there documentation?

Mr. Ahearn: There is an opinion letter. He cannot add June Street and School Street tonight.

Action Taken:

Upon a motion made by Mr. Pfaff, and seconded by Mr. Gotti, The Planning Board voted 4-0-1 (Ms. Conant abstained)

To close the Public Hearing.

No discussion

25 Fox Meadow Drive & 300 Fox Hill Street (Assessor's Map 15, Lots 2 & 44). ANR (Approval Not Required)
Plan to adjust the lot line between two lots.

Ms. McCabe, ANR there is a parcel in the back of the lot, the lot is part of the old Fox Meadow Estates, the owner is proposing to go back to its original formation.

Board Comments:

- Reverting back to the original property line? *Ms. McCabe, Yes.*

Action Taken:

Upon a motion made by Mr. Pfaff and seconded by Mr. Gotti, the Planning Board voted in favor via roll call (5-0) to endorse the ANR plan at 25 Mox Meadow Drive & 300 Fox Hill Street (Assessor's map 15, Lots 2 & 44).

Other Business:

Review of Meeting Minutes:

Upon a motion made by Mr. Pfaff, and seconded by Mr. Gotti, the Planning Board voted in favor via roll call (3-2 abstain Delay/Conant) to approve the October 27, 2020 meeting minutes as submitted.

No discussion.

Minutes adopted.

Mr. Pfaff:

37 implementing items. At some point we start looking into these, for the Comprehensive Plan. There is a lot in every section, we will need to be proactive.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion made by Mr. Gotti, and seconded by Mr. Pfaff, The Planning Board members voted in favor (5-0) via roll call to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:31pm

List of Documents:

Link to Documents:

https://westwoodtownma.igm2.com/Citizens/detail_meeting.aspx?ID=1581

Link to the Planning Board web page

<https://www.townhall.westwood.ma.us/departments/community-economic-development/planning-division>

Comprehensive Plan Draft 2020-Public Hearing Public Hearing Notice, Westwood Planning Board, 10/23/2020, 1 page. Draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan, 107 pages. Appendix Docs Combined, 321 pages. Letters of Support Combined, 9 pages. Summary of Changes Since First Draft, 1 page.	PDF
Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)- Continued Public Hearing Final OSRP revised 10-27-20, 168 pages. OSRP Final Approval Letter October 2020, From: The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, To: Abigail McCabe, 10/28/2020, 1 page.	PDF
25 Fox Meadow Dr. & 300 Fox Hill St. ANR ANR Plan Fox Meadow Dr 25, Norwood Engineering, 11/8/2020, 1 page.	PDF