

MINUTES

Walpole Housing Partnership Committee

April 18, 2018 – 7:30 P.M.

Town Hall, 135 School Street

Room 116

Members Present: Andrew Flowers, Audrey Grace, Michael Teeley,

Philip Czachorowski, Willa Bandler, Denise Landry (nonvoting)

Others Present: Planning Board member Sarah Khatib, John Hasenjaeger

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:41 PM

2. New members

- Marilyn (Mary-Ellen) House was appointed to the committee but has decided to withdraw.
- Mr Czachorowski notes that the committee can have as many as eleven members. Mr Flowers says we should focus on identifying veterans or senior citizens who may be interested, since both categories are supposed to be represented.
- Ms Landry, as head of the Walpole Housing Authority, is an ex officio member of the committee, and as such is not technically a new member, but joined this meeting for the first time since any other current member's appointment. She gave some background on different affordable housing mechanisms, and on the history of publicly-owned subsidized housing in Walpole, beginning with the post-World-War-II veterans' housing on Robinwood Rd. She also explained the length of waiting lists for affordable housing here, which can stretch into 1-2 years for smaller units, and 5-10 years for family units. Certain applicants, including Walpole residents and veterans, get preference, but the main problem is

simple lack of supply to meet the demand. The WHA is financially self-sufficient, with the rents paid covering operating costs (to be supplemented by the Commonwealth if needed) and Department of Housing and Community Development grants covering capital expenditures.

3. Approval of minutes

After the deletion of an extraneous word noted by Mr Teeley, a motion to approve the minutes from April 4th was made by Ms Grace and seconded by Mr Czachorowski.

VOTE: 5-0-0 UNANIMOUS.

4. Housing-related articles on the Spring Town Meeting warrant

Ms Khatib joined the committee to review articles #33-40.

- Ms Grace notes that article 34 is just a correction of a scribner's error.
- Mr Flowers reports that article 33 is sponsored by the Economic Development Commission, which believes excessive changes to policies keep businesses from investing. It is a 6-month moratorium on zoning *changes* rather than on new projects, and as such should not make Walpole ineligible for Housing Choice Initiative grants.
- Ms Khatib says the Planning Board has not yet voted on article 33.
- Mr Czachorowski notes that in his reading, article 33 makes all the other zoning-related articles moot.
- Ms Grace would like to be sure whether the six month period would officially expire before Fall Town Meeting, or whether it is in effect a one-year moratorium.
- Mr Hasenjaeger expresses support for Age Qualified Villages, and notes that the EDC (of which he is a member) had asked Tim Higgins to review the zoning articles before Spring Town Meeting, but Mr Higgins felt that that would be impossible given that he took the planning position so shortly beforehand.
- Ms Khatib offered a brief summary of her understand of articles 35 and 36

- Article 35 limits where AQV can be located to avoid taking up land zoned commercial. Ms Grace asked if there are businesses complaining about this; Ms Khatib believes there are not. Ms Grace said we shouldn't limit where you can build housing, and Mr Flowers concurred, noting that the demand for more housing in Walpole is extreme, while the demand for more commercial space is not.
- Article 36 seems to try to encourage density in some ways, but Ms Khatib believes it is not well-written, and has written a draft of a substitute motion. All agree that piecemeal amendments to the zoning code at every Town Meeting are not the right answer, and that this article seems oddly specific without being assured of actually accomplishing its goals.
- Mr Flowers says 37 amends table 5b regarding private, for-profit educational institutions *and nursery schools* in zones including rural. Ms Khatib says the Dover Amendment doesn't just apply to nonprofits, so this change is effectively meaningless.

5. Committee report for Spring Town Meeting

Mr Flowers and Ms Grace have been working on a draft of the presentation, and Mr Flowers has been informed by Moderator Dan Bruce that they will have 5-7 minutes. It is decided that Mr Teeley will be the alternate presenter, since there is a chance Mr Flowers will be unavailable. Ms Grace wants to explain to TM members what the committee is charged with, why affordable housing matters to them, and why restricting housing construction will be a problem; she also notes that it's important to be open about the fact that we don't yet have all the solutions, but are working on it.

6. Evaluation and maintenance of existing affordable housing

Ms Bandler spoke with Robin Chappell from the Board of Health recently about what recourse a resident has if a private rental unit (affordable/using a Section 8 voucher or otherwise) isn't in good repair. The procedure is that the resident requests an inspection

by the BoH, at which point they inform the landlord of needed repairs, and can take further legal action if the repairs are not completed. However, this sets up residents for conflict with landlords, and might lead to being blacklisted. One alternative would be annual inspections for *all* units, though Ms Chappell is opposed to this due to the burden it would place on the BoH's small staff. This matter is tabled for the time being, to be addressed after Town Meeting, but was briefly introduced as a point of information for members to consider for the future.

7. Reference

Documents presented:

- Article 36 alternative proposal by Ms Khatib
- October 2017 letter to Town Meeting members from Linda Wigren opposing zoning moratoriums, distributed by Mr Hasenjaeger

8. Next meeting to be held May 3rd at 6 PM

9. The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 PM

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr Czachorowski and seconded by Ms Grace
VOTE: 5-0-0 UNANIMOUS.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Willa Bandler

Minutes Approved by Committee on:

6/20/18

Chairperson Signature:

Andrew Flowers