

**Peterborough Conservation Commission / Open Space Committee /
Planning Board Joint Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2017, Peterborough Town House, 7 p.m.**

Present: ConCom members Jo Anne Carr, Swift Corwin, John Kerrick, Cynthia Nichols, John Patterson, Robert Wood, Francie Von Mertens; Select Board liaison Tyler Ward;

Open Space Committee members Anne Huberman, Joel Huberman, Debby Kaiser
Planning Board members Jerry Galus, Joe Hanlon, Bob Holt, Ivy Vann, Matt Waitkins, Alan Zeller; Select Board liaison Ed Juengst;

Town staff Laura Norton, Pete Throop, Nicole MacStay
Dick Estes; Sue Chollet

Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Zone II (TNOZ)

John Kerrick welcomed all, with gratitude for the Planning Board coming out two evenings in a row, and asked Francie Von Mertens to give some background for the joint meeting. She said she would present ConCom and Open Space Committee questions, concerns and recommendations arising from a December 15 meeting with Sue Chollet, chair of the TNOZ II Citizen's Steering Committee, and subsequent viewing of a map showing potential reach of the Zone.

She said that Select Board liaison/Planning Board member Ed Juengst, unable to attend the meeting, would be requesting a Planning Board work session on the ordinance. Von Mertens suggested the ConCom comments and concerns could be part of that work session's discussion.

She said that all meet on common ground: a desire to diversify housing options to serve what Sue Chollet called the "missing middle": smaller, more affordable, centered on existing village nodes, and, ideally, walkable to them. Smaller houses also have a smaller ecological footprint.

Recommendations:

That the purposes section clearly state those purposes, making them clear to an applicant and better empowering the Planning Board to direct a development to meet the ordinance purposes.

That density not be by right, but that a development qualify for the density/reduced setbacks if it meets the ordinance's clearly stated purposes as mentioned above.

This would include size, although it's been stated that size cannot be a requirement. Suggestion that if size is one feature that would qualify a project for density/setbacks of the ordinance, then size could be a requirement. Or, as the ordinance says, waived if other features of a development meet significant ordinance purposes.

Section E4 language "to the extent applicable" does not make clear to applicant what design requirements extent are. Will the same "shalls" be applied to WPOZ II? Are they guidelines (suggested) or "shall" requirements.

"Neighborhood compatibility" requirement: what would that be for a "new village" that has no neighbors within 300 feet?

Teardowns. TNOZ II does not have same discouragement against tearing down house in good repair, especially one with high neighborhood compatibility. If density is

by right, there is no protection against teardowns. If density has to be earned, teardowns of character houses could disqualify a project from WPOZ density/setbacks.

The original grant was for a "new village" in South Peterborough. Request to hear a rationale for why it was expanded.

RiverMead Retirement and Hospital Zones both allow for house staffing. Could these be prototypes more likely to meet WPOZ II's commendable goals? The Vine Street development, the first under WPOZ I, had a recent \$390,000 sales price, far from the "missing middle" housing goal of the two WPOZ ordinances.

Given likelihood of droughts as the climate changes, and fact that one town well was operating during the recent drought, how many new villages can town water capacity serve?

Strong sense that both the Planning Board and voters need a map that clearly indicates the reach of the ordinance. Suggest that one "snake" not two indicate where water and sewer overlap. Suggests that all potential parcels be color-coded, not just those with no housing, as the ordinance encourages subdivisions given that infill is more likely than an actual "new village."

Carol Ogilvie in a Planning Board meeting said the Master Plan Housing chapter revision process would begin in February, and zoning would be discussed. How does this ordinance; W. Peterborough District, Affordable Housing ordinance, WPOZ I, the new Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance, fit in with that?

In answer to how the original focus on S. Peterborough expanded, Bob Holt said the Steering Committee decided not to allow a "boon" to one area, or chose an inappropriate area, and instead expanded it to town water/sewer service. "New Village" has become more of an infill concept, similar to old village model of incremental, organic growth where village houses are close to each other.

In answer to allowing density by right, Bob Hold said the Steering Committee wanted developers to be able to "do the right thing" without too big an effort meeting requirements, that greater density and smaller setbacks would encourage smaller units.

Ivy Vann said that only two-unit developments were "by right"; all others have to come to the Planning Board.

Jo Anne Carr questioned where in the ordinance the two units by right were mentioned. It was determined that the most recent ordinance draft was not before the group.

Carr also asked how the ordinance fit the Master Plan goal of centering development on existing village nodes, walkable to them; not extensive expansion of infill out along linear water/sewer lines including to town gateway areas that help define a town's rural character.

Sue Chollet explained that she got involved because she's heard for 10 years that people want "workforce housing"—also clearly stated at the recent Master Plan visioning session: Smaller homes; rentals; bringing young families to town.

Von Mertens said all are in agreement with those goals; the question is how best to have an ordinance that achieves them, how best to have both a carrot and a stick.

Vann and Holt said that if zoning remains unchanged, we know what we'll get: large lots carving up outlying open space, not organic growth close to town centers.

In answer to the question whether the WPOZ could be rescinded by town vote in the event some "worst case scenarios" resulted, Vann said yes.

Carr questioned whether allowing 40% impervious, compared to 25% for WPOZ I, would present water quality issues giving increased stormwater runoff. Vann said state stormwater requirements are strict.

Bob Holt said he didn't realize RiverMead and Hospital zones allow housing, and Planning Board could pursue that.

Ivy Vann said a map showing water/sewer and potential parcels would be made.

Robb Farm, with quarter-acre lots, was discussed, as was the Open Space Residential Development ordinance changes that have been worked on—that directs development to the most appropriate area of a parcel, considering natural resource protection.

Anne Huberman said she still was concerned the ordinance would not achieve affordable housing.

Vann said you can't mandate affordable housing, but allowing small lots are intended to encourage small houses.

Von Mertens asked if the Planning Board could approve a project clearly meeting ordinance goals, but located on a parcel that did not have town sewer but could install its own community sewer. Vann said yes, if it was on town water.

John Kerrick said that all points appear to have been discussed. Thanked all for their participation, particularly the Planning Board for coming out two nights in a row.

The Conservation Commission discussed the joint session. Concern remained that density remains "by right," and not by meeting purposes of the ordinance, and therefore not much progress had been made on that most fundamental point.

Carr also suggested that a growth boundary be drawn that would contain linear sprawl that reaches north, west and south almost to town borders. She drew a circle as concept.

She also wondered if any lessons had been learned from the WPOZ I first development and the high sales price that could be applied to WPOZ II given that all appear to agree that affordable housing is the main goal of the ordinance.

All agreed that Pete Throop, as our town planner, should be fully involved in the work session that Ed Juengst will request. It's not clear what his role has been in drafting the easement or assisting the Planning Board in its evaluation of what the Steering Committee delivered for the Board's consideration.

Von Mertens will relay the growth circle to the Planning Board and the other points of agreement