

## DENNIS PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of Meeting held

August 28, 2023

The Planning Board meeting, having been duly posted, was called to order at 6:30p.m. by Chairman Paul McCormick Jr. in the Nathan Stone Hearing Room at Dennis Town Hall.

Present: Chairman Paul McCormick Jr., Brad Bishop, John Terrio Jr., Rick Hamlin

Absent: Chris Hedetniemi, Jeffrey Eldredge, Elizabeth Patterson

Staff: Paul Foley (Town Planner), Anna Pannell

Chairman Paul McCormick Jr. opened the meeting, introduced the members and outlined the procedures and process of the meeting, as well as noting that this particular meeting would be short as the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) meeting would be starting shortly after at 7:30pm.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:**

1. Committee Reports-NA
2. Planning Board Minutes August 7, 2023. (Moved to September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting)
3. ANR's – None

### **Public Meetings:**

None

### **Public Hearings:**

**1. Multi-Family Housing Overlay District Bylaw – Beginning of public hearing to review the language and district boundaries of a proposed Multi-Family Housing Overlay District Zoning Bylaw. The proposed District is generally south of Route 6, East of Route 134, west of South Gages Way and north of the bike path straddling Theophilus F. Smith Road. Note: The Public Hearing will begin on Monday August 28. After a presentation and public input, the public hearing will be continued to September 11, 2023.**

The Town Planner, Paul Foley, provided a brief summary of what had been discussed at the previous meetings as well as the new proposed language. He brought up the updated timeline stating that it was recommended to continue the hearing to the September 11, 2023 and potentially September 18 as well.

Board Member Brad Bishop spoke up just looking for clarification that this meeting wouldn't be a full hearing as at this point they couldn't really bring up any new points, as they were just going to hear what the public had to say at this one before making a vote on the 11<sup>th</sup> and before they make another vote to bring the finalized idea to the Select Board and that the current meeting had to be based on specific language, referring back to a document that was approved by the board at the July 17<sup>th</sup> 2023 meeting.

Chairman Paul McCormick Jr. thought it was important to highlight a few of the changes, stating that

even though they hadn't been voted on they would still be taking them under review as they still had yet to hear from the public.

Board Member Rick Hamlin, also looking for clarification, asked if the corrections made from the July 17<sup>th</sup> were in black while the new ones were in red. To which the Town Planner confirmed this and the meeting proceeded.

Town Planner Paul Foley, reiterated the statement of how housing has grown to be more and more expensive over the past few years as well as the issue of over 50% of the homes are seasonal, which was contributing to the affordability crisis that was being discussed. Additionally, he went over the proposed Bylaw and the changes to the Bylaw from 2022, and went into a bit more detail about what was changed, such as added language and definitions of words like Complete Streets and Smart Growth as well as what those entail.

The Town Planner also provided some comparative visuals of what the site looked like the year prior in 2022, and what the overlay district is now proposed to look like. He added that the intent is that there would be a mix of bedrooms from 1 to 3 but that the average would be two-bedrooms per unit as well as giving an estimate of the number of units. Currently the proposed overlay district would be a total of about 88 acers. He pointed out some areas that are less likely to take advantage of the overlay district and pointed out some areas that he thought might also not be included for environmental reasons. He described the definition of Smart Growth, but additionally added that the idea was not to keep growing or "sprawling" out and that the goal was to look at a more sustainable design plan. After bringing up the document that had the changes, as per the request of the Board, discussion was then switched to public to hear their thoughts on the matter.

Julie Kenny from West Dennis spoke of the little space that there was to place these much-needed homes, really emphasizing on the point that there wasn't much room for error when it came to this, adding that there should be more information and data. How will this proposal, when fully developed, impact the town's shortfall of affordable housing? She also noted that regardless of how much this is needed it will expand the population of the town which in turn would require the expansion of services. Kenny worried that the town would never be able to meet the demand that will always be asked of them. More people meant more need for homes. She worried that it would cause the town to be stuck in this distress cycle. She made a few more additional points before ending on the one that would be the topic of discussion for the night. The public needed more information. She claimed that there were too many 'what-ifs' and just felt that there should be some reassurance.

Arnie Lett who was at the previous meeting reminded the Board that he wasn't opposed to the affordable homes but as discussed at the previous meeting there was a general concern about the number of units and their effect on the surrounding area. He suggested that there could be up to 2,000 units. An average of 2 beds per unit, one car per bedroom, getting up to about 4,000 additional cars year-round daily right next to 134. Additionally, he also brought up the concern of an increased population with potentially not enough jobs to support that. He also suggested that there should be more study done on things like traffic control, waste management, and whether the police department could manage the increased demand of their resources, as well as how this project would affect other

towns among other questions and concerns. Lett felt that the grant of about \$125,000 wasn't enough and wondered if the town could find a way to, to get more money to look at this and to see how it will affect the environment within Dennis. He provided a few more concerns but ultimately, he felt that there should have been more community input/involvement as well as have the public better informed about all details of the proposed homes and what studies have or will be done to ease at least some of the concerns presented.

Wayne Bergeron stated that while the changes made to the document in question were an improvement there were still a fair number of variables in regards to how the Board wanted to approach this. From his understanding he claimed that the units were done on a lottery basis. He closed by stating that his hope was that the town would consider these units as employee housing.

Pierre Gerten, Knoll Lane, stated that he felt that the size and significance of this project, merits a level of engagement that he didn't believe had occurred, and worried that this had potential to spiral in a way that diminished what people thought it was going to be. He went on to say that he listened to the August 21, 2023 meeting, and took from it that this project wasn't near ready to move forward. He felt that there still seemed to be a lot of disagreement conceptually about what we want to do, whether this will even attract developers. Outside input from multifamily developers and see they what kind of parameters they get with a piece of land to consider to develop, and what is an affordable project today? He went on to express other concerns about the size as well as the cost, and also felt that this project was too premature to proceed as there wasn't what he felt was enough input from the community or Multi-Family Developers. Additionally, he wondered why the town didn't think to take one parcel, figure out what needed to be done, get a developer, then down the road could add other pieces once they were sure of the success or failure of the first to the Overlay District. He had a few more concerns in regards to the language as well as wondered about the number of units that would have gone up and how enforceable the restriction of no short-term rentals would be.

Mark Lambden of South Dennis, who was a retired, Senior Project Manager, spoke via Zoom about the previous discussion about smart streets stating that he felt that was a direction that the town should have been going in. To the comment about the concern of increased traffic he went on to claim that, "The way you reduce traffic, is not necessarily limit housing units, but you make it easier to do your stuff in other ways." He then provided a personal story about him selling his car but still being within a reasonable walking or biking distance of the places he needed to go to. He added that he too agreed about the need for more studies to be done not just on the traffic, but on the environmental impact of the area as well. He closed by rephrasing a quote he said at the beginning, "Again, it's not what you don't know that counts. It's what you don't know, you don't know that gets you. "

Ellen Stalazi who was trained as a teacher, also discussed the concern of the fire, police and other emergency personnel becoming overwhelmed by the increased potential population. She also asked what studies have been completed that project the number of additional police, firefighters and EMT professionals, as well as office workers, ambulance drivers, and what new equipment that will be necessary to accommodate the enormous influx of new residents? Will those who are first responders be guaranteed a chance for housing? She too, like some of the others who had spoken felt the public

wasn't fully informed on the matter. She claimed that she had seen more flyers for a free concert in Dennis than for this bylaw covering an 88-acre proposal.

Bob Samoluk claimed that since moving to the Cape back in 2016, he had been involved with and heard about the need for affordable homes but that there was always some push back about placement. He claimed that now was the time to do something. He clarified the term 'attainability', and added that the proposed location in question is near shopping, transportation and services. He claimed that this was an opportunity to create something in the town through input and the design standards. He also stated something that the Board had repeatedly stated in previous meetings, that it was multiple projects. It was not one project. There were multiple pieces of land, all of which need to be dealt with. He went on to say that, "2,000 units are not going up on this all at one time. It just doesn't work that way, particularly when you have multiple owners." He stated that time to absorb the change, and that this has been going on for years. He reminded the Board that their full-time residents both within the service portions and not, are leaving the town, adding that there is one year-round apartment listed in Dennis. He closed by pleading with the Board to consider that as they move forward we need to always come back to who's being affected by this the most.

Allen Fisk of South Dennis, felt that this project wasn't ready for prime time yet, especially for a town meeting that, at the time, was only weeks away. He praised the Town Planner, Paul Foley, who took the initiative to go after state funding to get professional help in crafting this effort. He went on to say that he felt that effort should have been allowed to run its course. He reiterated the statement from the Board that this was not a 40 B project, claiming that's a good thing, as he claimed to have always believed the town loses too much control under 40 B. His concern was how the Town was going to be able to enforce that the homes be owner occupied, and felt that the language in the document, while better than before, wasn't quite there yet. He went on to discuss the language of the overlay Document. The Zoning language of these existing parcels, which by his understanding was 100% commercial, as he asked if the owners of those parcels, would they be forced to go multifamily overlay? What would be the terms and conditions or are they grandfathered? He stated a few more proposed questions and said that as a voter he would want those questions answered before taking a vote on the matter. He closed by stating once more that while he was in favor of this, he didn't feel like it was ready to move forward.

Chairman Paul McCormick Jr. clarified that the overlay gave owners an opportunity to do housing. They were still able to do everything allowed in the existing zoning.

Steve Boyson from South Dennis, gave a personal story about his mobility impairment, and said that most of the nurses that had assisted him at the hospital, were traveling nurses. Now he claimed that regular nurses have no place to live in addition to the travel nurses have no places to stay. He gave another personal story about his home mobility aide before ending on the point of "Let's get this done."

Dawn Dennon worked in the disability community for 13 years in Dennis and said that their staff were leaving in droves. Claiming that those who do remain are overworked and exhausted. She expressed that cottage colonies and little Nantucket condos and townhouses can be beautiful and claimed that she trusted Dennis to do it right.

Robert Pierce expressed concern of the town becoming too city-like with this Overlay going on to say that people have been leaving everywhere, not just Dennis, not just the Cape, and not just Massachusetts. He went on to say that Dennis's population had already grown significantly and that there was going to be some point where the town just can't keep growing and growing, as there would always be a need for housing.

With that Chairman Paul McCormick ends the meeting reminding everyone who so wished, to join them on September 11<sup>th</sup> for the next, longer meeting.

No Vote was taken at this time.

Meeting end at 7:28pm

Minutes approved September 11, 2023