

**Advisory Committee Meeting
Zoom Video Conference
Thursday, January 20, 2022, 6:30 p.m.**

Those present from Advisory Committee included Shawn Baker, Tom Cunningham, Jenn Fallon, Neal Goins, John Lanza, Jeff Levitan, Corinne Monahan, Doug Smith, Susan Clapham, Al Ferrer, Wendy Paul, Pete Pedersen, Madison Riley, Patti Quigley

Neal Goins called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and introduced members of Advisory in attendance.

Citizen Speak

Pete Johannsen, Vice President of Wellesley Friendly Aid presented a summary of the letter sent to Advisory and spoke in support of Articles A and B. Friendly Aid has been a not-for-profit since the 1880s. He discussed changes that have occurred over the last couple of years. The Community Center went out of business and turned over the building to the Friendly Aid. Friendly Aid hoped the additional space could help generate additional revenues to meet its mission. Friendly Aid feels it is important to generate additional revenues from the annex and the house for the mission and to maintain the properties. Crossroads Counseling occupied the 2nd floor of the house and went out of business. They had provided a substantial amount of rent to keep the house operating on a break-even basis. Friendly Aid has been unable to rent the 2nd floor of the house because currently rental is limited to not-for-profit entities. There are a couple of rooms on the 2nd floor of the annex that Friendly Aid is also unable to rent. Friendly Aid is concerned about the loss of revenue going forward and as existing leases expire. Friendly Aid would like to expand to organizations to which they could rent space. Friendly Aid has worked with the Planning Board. Article A and B fits Friendly Aid's needs. It's not a residential property. Friendly Aid would like to be able to rent space to for-profit organizations that fit with the current use of the property.

Planning Board – 2022 ATM Warrant Articles

Article A – Amend Zoning Bylaw for General Residence Districts to permit certain uses in a defined area and Article B – Rezoning 219 and 229 Washington Street from Single Residence to General Residence

Discussion

- Information was presented about zoning bylaws and zoning in Wellesley which goes by district. The rights to use a property stem from the zoning district in which a property is located. Single Residence district is the main district in town and there many rights in these districts. General Residence builds on top of Single Residence and has Single Residence rights plus two additional rights.
- A comment was made that it is a challenge to carve out and give special rights to specific properties.
- A comment was made that there are challenges with Article A and it was felt there are other ways to deal with this such as an overlay district which would not have changed the underlying district.
- A comment was made that this article open ups the potential of other General Residence properties asking for these rights as well.
- Concern was expressed that this could creep into Single Residence district and it was felt it was bad policy.
- A comment was made that it feels that exceptions are being made and that Planning should be looking at zoning in town from whole perspective. It was felt there should be time to re-map the entire town.

- Uncertainty was expressed that this is the right thing to help these two organizations and it was felt there is no big picture in the approach.
- Agreement was expressed with the previous opinions.
- A question was raised if the Administrative and Professional district could better address the requests.
 - The Administrative and Professional district is intended for larger office building developments.
- A comment was made that the information from Wellesley Friendly Aid was very helpful. A question was asked if there is a distinction between the properties.
 - Yes they are in two different districts. Friendly Aid have been operating under a series of special permits since the 1950s and the use was grandfathered.
- A comment was made that Planning must have considered the overlay process to determine if it was a better solution. Concern was expressed that if Article A is rejected and the impact of that on UUA since they came back after working through Planning on this.
 - One of the challenges is that zoning laws are based on property and not who owns the property. Planning is charged with proposing zoning law changes on that basis, rather than for these owners who present very sympathetic cases.
- It was felt that the changes are subtle enough to not change the area and that it seems to make sense to enable professional services firms to use these properties. Support was expressed for this.
- Concern was expressed that in making an exception for UUA church that the exception could become the rule. Although there may not be many other churches in a similar situation we could be looking at other churches who want to do this.
- A comment was made from a function perspective and that time matters as every month rent is not collected the impact is more severe.
- Support was expressed because Planning put this forward as an acceptable solution and this is a low impact application of real estate that will have limited consequences.
- A clarifying question was asked as to why non-profit and for-profit distinction was specified for the general residence district and why not just make these business districts. Also, what is the history where Friendly Aid could rent to not-for-profits in a single residence district.
 - Neither district gives the right to rent to anyone. The reason that the Friendly Aid property is allowed to rent to not-for-profits is because of a special permit and they are grandfathered in.
- A comment was made that even though time is important we shouldn't make decisions that affect the whole town.
- Is this the role of Advisory to approve this article?
 - Yes, because it is a Warrant article. Advisory charged with making recommendation to Town Meeting on Warrant articles.
- Questions were asked if we are causing problems by not allowing things to move forward and if the current rules can be detangled so we can move things forward.

Article C – Amend Bylaw for Flood Plain Districts – State and FEMA related

Discussion

- A request was made to hear from Tom Harrington's office about this as it seems to be a legal issue.
- A request was made to confirm and identify who notifies residents if this Article passes Town Meeting?
- A request was made for the number of residents affected by this.
- A comment was made that this is a federal mandate.

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- A comment was made that there is a flood map is on the Town's website.

Article D – Definitions – Update to Child Care and Child Care facilities definitions

Discussion

- A comment was made that it is important to know if this affects home based day care.

Article E – Amend the definition of Town House in General Residence Districts to permit two-unit dwellings

Discussion

- Besides the Public Hearing is there any other public involvement? How are residents who are impacted notified?
- A comment was made that there is recognition of the affordable housing component of this and request was made to understand the history of why only over and under were previously allowed.
- A comment was made that this is only in General Residence district if the lot is large enough.
- Concern was expressed about builders who buy property and put-up townhouses. Concern was expressed over controlling developers.
 - There are 85 general residence lots in Town and this represents a single digit percentage of housing.
- A comment noted that Planning said in a prior meeting that there are town houses that should not have been built and a question asked as to how this happens.

Article F – Sustainability (4 Motions): to include a sustainability goal in the bylaw; to require a greenhouse gas emission study to any application for a project of significant impact; to amend the Design Review standards to include a review of sustainable design; and to change the Yard Regulations to facilitate the installation of heat pumps

Discussion

- Concern was expressed that this is rushing something through and it might not be viewed well.
- Concerns were expressed about the cost required of contractors to expend that may or may not be helpful. Support was expressed for sustainability but there is uncertainty over just how much to push this with no real measures or markers or guidance.
- Clarification was provided that this is only for Projects of Significant Impact (PSI).
- Have these goals been published and do developers know of these and what are the consequences? How much has the Climate Action Committee (CAC) been involved with the Design Review Board (DRB) in putting this together?
- Clarification was provided that there are four (4) independent pieces to this: a general sustainability goal in the bylaw; a required GHG study for PSI; amend the DRB requirements for sustainable design; and change yard regulations with respect to setbacks for heat pumps.
- Concern was expressed and a question asked as to the Town's authority to issue permits on GHG. It was felt this makes us less attractive to businesses and people who want to move into the Town. It was felt that the DRB would be looking at things with no goals or guidelines. An opinion was expressed that the Town shouldn't regulate this but the state or federal government should regulate GHG.
- A comment made about the number and the wording of the general purpose article.
 - A comment was made that the challenge is that the ATM Warrant article language is set and changes are not allowed if they change the Warrant article.
 - A comment was made that it is not Advisory's role to fix the language but to pass along the opinion as to whether Advisory agrees or not.

- A question was asked if the bylaw would be changed again when Climate Action Plan is finalized.
- A comment was made that in the second motion and in part the third motion it feels a little backwards because there is not a metric or goal of what is being accomplished. It was felt that we should figure out what we want to achieve and then work to achieve it. A question was asked if this is the best path we can do for sustainability issues.
- A comment was made that these are going to cost money and is this money better spent elsewhere.
- A comment was made and concern expressed about the effectiveness of heat pumps during cold snaps.
- A comment was made that everyone talks about electrification being the solution to GHG emissions but a good portion of the electric grid relies on fossil fuels. It was felt that these are good goals and objectives but that it is premature. It was felt that spending money on insulation is better. It was felt that we should not show a preference for one technology over another because things are continually changing
- A comment was made that the State can't mandate not using fossil fuels but it can encourage.
- Support was expressed for Motion 4 as the action is measurable and specific.
- A comment was made that when heat pumps are installed in a home there is a formula to use to see how effective it is at certain temperatures based on the square footage of the house.
- A comment was made that it is not clear that heat pumps are less noisy than AC condensers and it was felt that the noise might be an issue for neighbors.

Human Resources FY23 Budget and Overview

Discussion

- A comment was made that based on the survey of TMM it would be useful to TMM to see the 40 and 50/60 salary charts.
- A comment made that the inflation rate of 7 percent and the impact to the budget should be mentioned in the Advisory Report.
- A request was made for the data on the amount of time it takes HR to fill a position and that this could be used as a performance metric for the operation of the HR department.
- Concern was expressed about the motivation level of staff and a suggestion was made to consider a one-time bonus for good performance as we want to keep good workers.
- A comment was made that positions in different towns are paid at different rates and therefore it takes longer to fill positions.
- A request was made for retention information and feedback on why people leave.
- An annual satisfaction survey of employees was suggested.

Community Preservation 2022 ATM Projects

Discussion

- A comment was made that CPC is a very disciplined committee and support was expressed for the work that CPC does.
- A comment was made that CPC provided the requested long-term outlook. Cash flow for the 10-year period was \$15.2 million (\$1.5 million per year); expenditures are \$14.6 million. Therefore, CPC disburses about 90% of what they take in. Spending by category show half of the funds went to Recreation; \$4.4 million to open space (\$3.3 million of this was debt service on the North 40) and the remained went to Open Space, Historic and Housing.
- A comment was made that reserves are equivalent to four years of expenditures. More than half of this is undesignated. \$1 million is in each of Historic and Housing. Is the \$5.6 million a

prudent level or is it excess holding of taxpayers money? Is the reserve growing reserve for a big one-time expenditure? What is a reasonable amount of reserves given the annual revenues?

- A request was made for ideas for the use of the reserves.
- A comment was made that the Wellesley Housing Development Corporation (WHDC) has been revived and some of the reserves can be reviewed and how to use those for housing discussed.
- A comment was made that CPC has wanted to spend on Housing and Historic.

NRC FY23 Budget and Overview

Discussion

- A question was asked as to why NRC is not using the Tree Bank reserves for capital projects.
- Concern was expressed about the additional hours being added for the land enforcement issue and how this is going to look.
- A request was made for a job description. It was felt this seems a bit unfinished.
- A comment was made that enforcement should be through education.
- Concern was expressed about NRC's focus on passive land and not active land. Concerns were expressed about not filling both sides of the mission
- It was felt if a department goes over guideline they should give a good reason for going over guideline.
- A comment was made that NRC is an independent board. The CAC is also increasing their budget to add personnel. NRC is an open space committee and seems to place emphasis on passive parkland and not active parkland. It was felt NRC is starting to look like CAC. It was felt that someone from CAC could do education and that the NRC has not made the case that they need the extra person.
- It was felt that there is a lack of planning in NRC for example there are no plans to use the Tree Bank fund and the replacement lights for the tennis courts has been going on for several years.
- It was felt that there is no sense of how things are prioritized with NRC and a comment made that effectiveness and planning are important.
- Clarification was requested about the Warren Park work.
 - This was actually Perrin Park work and involved taking shade trees out at Perrin.

Minutes Approval/Liaison Reports/Administrative Items

Liaison Reports

Jenn Fallon/Schools – budget discussions have concluded; FY23 (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) spending will exist in narrative form rather than numbers in the budget.

- A question was asked as to why people are reluctant to put dollars into DE&I? DE&I is in many components and should be in the budget as it is important to show the dollars.
- A comment was made that it is a challenge to identify it as a separate budget and to keep it imbedded in other budgets.
- A request was made to ask Dr. Currie to come to Advisory to explain how it works. There appear to be no metrics on how DE&I is measured.
- Did Dr. Currie talk about her plan during the budget meetings?
 - She was not in attendance at the meeting. The only DE&I expenditure requested was a METCO coordinator.
- A comment was made that feels that it is not an Advisory role to discuss operations such as DE&I.
- Strong disagreement was expressed as DE&I is central to the soul of the Town.

Coming attractions

Approved January 26, 2022

- January 26 – Select Board Department budgets/Town Clerk FY23 Budget
- February 2 – Public Hearing; Planning FY23 Budget

Adjourn

Wendy Paul made and Doug Smith seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes

John Lanza – yes

Corinne Monahan - yes

Patti Quigley – yes

Tom Cunningham – absent

Jake Erhard – absent

Jeff Levitan - yes

Doug Smith – yes

Susan Clapham - yes

Al Ferrer - yes

Wendy Paul – yes

Pete Pedersen - yes

Madison Riley – yes

Shawn Baker – yes

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m. 13 to 0.