



Housing Committee

Town of Chilmark

MEETING NOTES – FINAL December 16, 2021 (via ZOOM)

Present for the Housing Committee and attending the zoom meeting were Jim Feiner, Andrew (Andy) Goldman, Ann Wallace, Allison Cameron Parry, Nettie Kent Ruel, Bill Rossi and Alison Kisselgof. Peter & Sally Cook, Rich Osness, Clark Goff, Wendy Wolf and Ellen Biskis were also in attendance.

The meeting came to order at 9:03 AM.

PEAKED HILL PASTURES UPDATE: On Monday, December 14, 2021, the Select Board met to discuss the Planning Board Subcommittee's report on Peaked Hill Pastures (PHP). The discussion was scheduled to continue on December 22, 2021. Ann mentioned that the Planning Board Subcommittee would not be meeting before this second Select Board meeting. Otherwise, Ann said that there was nothing new to report from the Subcommittee. Ann mentioned that the Planning Board endorsed the Subcommittee's proposal.

Peter said that the Subcommittee's proposal is a synthesis of all the ideas and opinions gathered from the community sessions and all comments received regarding PHP. The Subcommittee tried to find a balance between maximizing development of the land and keeping the rural aspects of the town. He added that details are missing from the project planning until there are specific conversations with potential developers or people with experience in other affordable housing projects. Peter said that the Subcommittee and Planning Board were committed to working together with everybody to make PHP happen.

Bill offered that the final initiative for PHP would come from the Select Board. The Select Board and Planning Board agreed that the Subcommittee would research the options available for the property and make a proposal. Bill went on to say that the Select Board would accept or amend the proposal and then bring to the town for a vote. At Tuesday night's meeting, the Select Board reviewed the proposal and consulted with Housing Committee members from Edgartown & Oak Bluffs and formulated their opinions. He believes there needs to be some compromise but doesn't feel the solution is far off.

Chilmark resident Wendy Wolf offered frustration over her perceived dismissal of the Subcommittee's proposal by the Select Board and thanked the Subcommittee for their thorough work. Wendy also does not understand the reticence to accept state money for the project and questioned the suggestion at the Select Board meeting to include a market rate house.

Jim said that he felt Wendy had some good points. He offered that it is understandable the Select Board is concerned about the use of public funding and how it would affect control of the property. He suggested that the matter would need further scrutiny.

Bill responded by saying that he did not feel the Select Board was rejecting state money and that, in fact, this was the only way he felt that any rental component could come to fruition. Bill mentioned that the rental component would have to be presented in a separate RFP from the homeownership and the density of rentals is in question. Bill said that he did not advocate for the inclusion of a market rate house in PHP. He mentioned that, from what he had heard at the Select Board meeting, a rental component was endorsed by all Select Board members.

Andy offered the history of the Middle Line Road development – a prior instance in which the Select Board rejected a proposal received. He has confidence in the Select Board’s commitment to affordable housing and is optimistic the project will move forward.

Rich appreciated Andy’s comments. He advocates for a greater percentage of rentals and a couple of you-builds. Rich agreed that there will have to be compromise in the design in PHP but that it’s important to get the project done because there are people who need housing and the land is available.

Bill asked Nettie and Allison to share their views.

Nettie said that she advocates for more homeownership opportunities because there are little if any in town and it would help retain more families by giving them stable housing. She mentioned that PHP may be the last town land available for affordable housing. Nettie added that she does feel inclusion of rentals in the PHP design is important.

Allison offered that the people who will live at PHP should be considered human resources for the town. She said that you-build homeownership could be financially challenging for potential residents at PHP. Allison would like to see a combination of you-build and prebuilt homeownership opportunities. She speaks from her own experience at Middle Line Road.

Rich mentioned his concerns over the future membership of the Planning Board with the perceived impression that their PHP proposal was dismissed by the Select Board. He wondered if there would be difficulty getting new members to join if the Board is appears their work is not valued.

Bill responded to Rich’s concern by saying that serving on a town committee comes with some rejection of ideas and reminded that the Planning Board is advisory. He offered that the Select Board is not compelled to take every recommendation but does the majority of the time. Bill reminded that we are all trying to accomplish the same goals.

Wendy said that it would be helpful to have a list of topics that the Select Board thinks that compromise is necessary so the Housing Committee and Planning Board could discuss them. She offered some topics which she had heard come up: you-build vs prebuilt, acceptance of state funds, number of different units.

Bill responded by again stating the Select Board is open to the acceptance of state funds. He mentioned that the town is committed to providing PHP infrastructure and hoped that the Molly Flender Fund could be used as funding. Bill prefers a lottery system for PHP homeownership as previously utilized for Nab’s Corner. He expressed concern over state funding requiring allowance of anyone from the state to be considered for residence.

Ann offered that Fair Housing laws allow for 70% local preference so that only about one third could go to residents from other towns. She went on to say that there is local preference even with a 40B program. Ann reminded that the housing crisis is an island-wide issue.

Bill mentioned that the approach that Ann was describing was regional and he did not share the same view. He said that he supports rentals be open to the whole island but would like to see housing opportunities goes to town residents.

Jim offered his support of the approach Ann described which he did not feel was regional. Jim said that 70% for local preference is a significant number. He added that other towns were most likely housing Chilmarkers.

Peter mentioned that the big issues with PHP were related to the scope of the project. He said that infrastructure has not been looked at in detail yet by the Subcommittee. Peter also offered that the development of 6 out of 16 acres was just an option explored by the Subcommittee originally and could be changed if needed. He went on to say there was the possibility of more than one campus on the property – as an example, he offered two campuses: one that would be rentals and you-build designated affordable housing with public funds and one that could be Homesites built and controlled by the town. Peter said that the Subcommittee has been listening to the input received and will incorporate what has been said into its final PHP proposal to the Select Board.

Bill asked Allison to clarify whether she supports you-build or not. Allison answered by saying she supports a combination of you-build and pre-built housing. She questioned whether the town would want to create pre-built housing with public funds.

Wendy supported the idea of splitting housing opportunities to have some built with town money with ownership restricted to town residents and some built with public money to be available to all.

Bill & Jim agreed that a compromise to get to a solution is close. Bill said that the setback requirements for Homesites is part of the solution and will be discussed soon. Peter offered that the Planning Board is in the process of updating the Homesite by-law.

DUKES COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY (DCRHA) MIDDLE LINE ROAD BUDGET:

Ann said that she look at the budget and felt it was very straightforward and based on past year's costs. Jim agreed.

The Committee decided to continue the discussion of this topic at the next meeting with David and Terri from DCRHA.

Bill asked if MLR had any vacancies and said he would call David to find out since nobody in the meeting knew the answer. Andy asked for the current rental rates and Alison said that she would send him this information. Allison would like to find out the square footage of the MLR apartments and Bill suggested that Tim Carroll would be able to distribute this information.

HOMESITE SALE PRICE & SETBACK REQUIREMENTS DISCUSSIONS:

Nettie asked the Committee to consider the \$40,000 cap on Homesite sale price. Jim offered that this cap was set 20 years ago and does not do enough to incentivize Homesite creation. He wondered if the town could offer some other financial compensation because Homesite housing is a benefit for the town.

Bill offered that he would be open to the town buying more property for affordable housing.

Andy said that Molly Flender Fund could possibly be used to set up a grant to cover the gap between what is determined to be affordability and the market cost. He mentioned it would be a good investment for the town. Andy asked Nettie what she was trying to achieve by changing the amount.

Nettie responded by saying that she hoped that a higher sale price would incentivize more home owners to create Homesites. She does not mean market price values, just an amount that would be more attractive.

Andy mentioned that the price was meant to cover the preparation of utilities for the Homesite lot. He said that adjusting the sale price was considered in the past.

Bill agreed that using the Molly Flender Fund to subsidize Homesite sales is a good idea and should be developed.

Allison asked if the short-term rental tax funds could possibly be used for subsidizing Homesites. Bill said that the Select Board supports putting 50% of the short-term rental tax in future years into the Molly Flender Fund but that the short-term rental tax could not be used from prior years.

The Committee decided to include Homesite setbacks on the next meeting's agenda after the Planning Board held their meeting to discuss the topic.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: A motion was made to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded and passed by with a vote of approval from all but Bill who abstained because he was not present at the November meeting.

DOCUMENTS:

Middle Line Road FY2023 Budget
11/18/21 Draft Meeting Minutes

NEXT POSSIBLE MEETING: January 20, 2022 @ 9:00am via Zoom.

With no further business to conduct the meeting adjourned at AM.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Kisselgof, board administrator.