



# Housing Committee

## Town of Chilmark

### **MEETING NOTES - FINAL** **January 20, 2022 (via ZOOM)**

Present for the Housing Committee and attending the Zoom meeting were Jim Feiner - Chair, Andrew (Andy) Goldman, Ann Wallace, Allison Cameron Parry, Nettie Kent Ruel and Alison Kisselgof - Administrator. Peter Cook, Terri Keech, David Vigneault, Jefrey DuBard and Ellen Biskis were also in attendance. Bill Rossi was not present.

The meeting came to order at 10:33 AM.

**PEAKED HILL PASTURES UPDATE:** Peter started by saying he felt that the Planning Board Subcommittee was close to figuring out scope of the Peaked Hill Pastures project for the town to present for the Request for Proposals (RFP) which would include ~10 rental units (20 bedrooms) and 4 you-build Homesites. Some members of the Subcommittee would also like to include a couple turnkey and rent-to-own units as well which would be associated with the rental portion of the project, allowing a developer to maximize state funds. Peter said that the biggest development from the last Subcommittee meeting was that the Select Board were agreeable to expanding amount of property being developed by 3-4 acres.

Ann added that if additional acreage is used that there will be no land at Peaked Hill Pastures for future development which concerns her. Peter indicated what land is being considered on a shared overview map prepared by Chris Siedl at MVC. Peter went on to say that there is still some discussion needed regarding additional acreage and also to determine where the access road will be located. He recounted the Select Board's mandate to keep some land for future development.

Jim asked whether septic design leaves extra land for leaching fields that could be used at a future date. Peter agreed this would be a possibility to consider. The Subcommittee had talked about a community power center which could include a solar array and this could use the land that Jim suggested. Peter mentioned that the project should be consistent with Chilmark's green status and expected design to include an enhanced septic system. He also said that improvements to infrastructure could benefit abutters in the area. Peter concluded by saying that until the RFP is issued, there would be no gage of reaction to these ideas by potential developers and determination of which would be best to include.

Ann reminded that the Select Board would issue the RFP and determine the direction of the development.

Jim wondered about the process after the Select Board issues the RFP. Peter, Ann & Andy confirmed the next step would be a vote by the town residents. Jim said that it would be at this point that there would be an opportunity to make necessary changes to the RFP.

Andy expressed support for developing more of the land instead of phasing. Ann agreed but voiced concern that the density proposed is not the most responsible use of the land.

It was the consensus that the project keep moving forward because the need for housing is great now.

**DUKES COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY (DCRHA) MIDDLE LINE ROAD BUDGET:** David Vigneault opened the discussion by saying that he was pleased that the Housing Committee would be reviewing the financials at Middle Line Road (MLR) on a more regular basis. He specifically felt that quarterly review is an important component of oversight.

Terri Keech shared MLR budget which included a comparison of FY21 actual vs budget, comparison of FY22 actual Q1 & Q2 vs budget and draft version of FY23 budget. Terri explained that gross rent is calculated with a 3% increase but that the budgeted rental income expected is minus 2% to account for loss due to vacancy. Terri said that the property management cost is 8% of the gross rent, which includes 24/7 maintenance. She pointed out that repairs and maintenance for units has gone up and so the FY23 budget is estimated higher at \$40,000. Terri went over the other line items of the budget and explained how the total were based on prior year amounts. She said that she was instructed to keep \$10,000 in the operating account as a reserve and release the net to the town at the end of the fiscal year.

Jim thanked Terri for her presentation and added that he expected maintenance costs to increase as the buildings age. David mentioned that there would normally be a capital expense line item in the DCRHA budget but the excess from MLR goes to the debt repayment. David asked Ellen about the amount of debt repayment for MLR to which Ellen replied that it was \$100,000 plus interest annually. The debt repayment amount is well above the projected profit from MLR, which is expected to be ~ \$44,000.

David went on to say that there were lessons to learn from MLR when planning Peaked Hill Pastures. The town developed MLR itself which resulted in higher costs – typically municipalities pay ~25% more for development due to the Davis-Bacon Act which dictates prevailing wage. David said that other properties managed by DCRHA can cover their debt and have extra funds to put aside for capital improvements. He added that the MLR buildings were built well structurally and this will at least help keep capital costs down. David applauds the decision of the Select Board to hire a developer for Peaked Hill Pastures.

A motion was made to approve the FY23 budget for MLR and it was seconded. The vote passed unanimously (Allison did not vote because she had left the meeting during the time of the vote).

**HOMESITE SALE PRICE & SETBACK REQUIREMENTS DISCUSSIONS:** Jim recounted this topic had been previously discussed by the Committee and wondered what else on the topic could be discussed. Alison offered that Andy had proposed the idea of using funds from the Molly Flender Affordable Housing Fund to help offset costs of Homesite infrastructure, which have undoubtedly increased since the sale price was set almost 20 years ago.

Jim said that it was clear from the number of Homesites created that \$40,000 wasn't enough incentive to property owners. He questioned how much would be enough, where the money would come from and whether the town could subsidize any of the funds. Ann wondered the legality of the town essentially paying homeowners for affordable housing and how the Committee could find out.

Peter added that the price to be paid for a Homesite lot could depend on the infrastructure requirements of the road association. In using Peaked Hill Pastures as an example, he said that the homeowners may have to pay to for requirements like solar power or enhanced septic systems but he expects that the town will provide some of these requirements. Peter said that this may not be applicable to a private Homesites.

Ann said that there is a Homesite policy in which the price is set and may also have other information relevant to this conversation. She said that she would research it to bring to the next meeting. Ann mentioned that the policy is updated by the Select Board and not something that required a town vote.

Nettie added that she had brought up this topic in relation to private Homesite lots. She had hoped the sale price could be variable depending on the property and needs of the homeowner for development of the Homesite lot. Jim added that it's a great idea to bring the price current and that something needs to change to get better results.

Jim mentioned that Homesite setbacks were being discussed to match those of non-conforming lots and asked Peter if the Planning Board had discussed this topic yet. Peter said that the public hearing on Homesite setbacks has not happened yet. He recounted that town counsel advised that the Homesite setbacks should be defined in the same section of the by-law that other setbacks. Further discussion on this topic will take place at the next meeting after the Planning Board's public hearing.

**MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING DISCUSSION:** Jim would like to see zoning to allow housing for more than one family. He asked Peter and Ann if this has ever been discussed by the Planning Board and they replied no. Jim felt that more people would create this type of housing if there was a mechanism to do so. He would like to look at zoning to see how this type of housing could be encouraged.

Peter offered that Peaked Hill Pastures could incorporate this type of housing – he has previously brought up the possibility of duplexes at the development.

Ann suggested that a memo be written to the Planning Board that states the Housing Committee would like to look into multi-family housing. She went on to say that other towns' zoning could be looked at to support the idea in Chilmark. Jim agreed that looking at other towns would be a good idea. Jeffrey DuBard mentioned that the preexisting houses could be converted to multi-family housing, which would retain rural character and add to affordable housing without the need for new construction.

**FY2023 BUDGET DISCUSSION:** Alison shared the budget with the Committee and went through the line items to explain how amounts were arrived at. Professional development was lowered from \$500 to \$100 to bring the amount more in line with training she expected to take during the year. The amount for DCRHA housing assessment was supplied by David Vigneault and is slightly higher than last year. The rest of the line items remain the same from FY2022.

A motion was made to approve the FY23 budget and it was seconded. The vote passed unanimously (Allison was not present for this vote).

**TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED:** Alison asked if the Committee needed to discuss the annual report. Jim answered that only the department chair needed to be consulted.

Nettie asked how the Committee could support the Peaked Hill Pastures project further. Ann said that she would let the Committee know if the Subcommittee had any suggestions.

**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 unanimous approval.

**DOCUMENTS:**

MVC Overview Map of Peaked Hill Pastures  
FY2023 Middle Line Road Budget  
Homesite Implementation Guide

**NEXT POSSIBLE MEETING:** February 17, 2022 @ 9:00 AM via Zoom.

With no further business to conduct the meeting adjourned at 11:56 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Kisselgof, board administrator.