

Planning Board Subcommittee Minutes 11/26/18

APPROVED

Chilmark Planning Board Subcommittee Meeting

Monday, November 26, 2018

Present: Janet Weidner, Chair, Peter Cook, Catherine Thompson

Not Present:

Public: Clark Goff

Staff: Jennifer L. Christy, Lenny Jason

Meeting called to order at 3:04PM:

- **Peaked Hill Pastures Site Planning Discussion:**

- Chairperson Weidner opened the meeting.
- Mr. Cook addressed the purpose of the subcommittee's upcoming work. He noted it is a mandate of the Board to recommend, as part of the work on the Master Plan, a land use program with an emphasis on continuing to work towards a Peaked Hill Pastures proposal, a plan for the 8 acre parcel behind the former landfill (Map 13, Lot 35) and a plan for land acquisition in Town. Ms. Thompson asked for clarification on how these goals fit into the larger Master Plan and Mr. Cook stated that these goals would encourage discussion on what kind of Town do the residents want and who does the Town want to serve, which are Master Plan questions.
- Mr. Cook further stated that Affordable Housing issue is a major component of Master Plan work. He noted also that a conclusion of the Peaked Hill Pastures Proposals Committee (PHPPC) was that there is not enough land currently available for all of the things that the Town needs to provide for.
- Ms. Thompson inquired whether the Planning Board had developed an idea of what kind of Town is wanted and who should be served in a document that is more recent than 1985 (last complete date of a Town Master Plan). Mr. Cook stated there have been a number of preliminary discussions about the Master Plan and certain priorities keep emerging as the discussions proceed. He noted that land use and the preservation of the look of the Town keep emerging at the top of the list. He further noted that the subcommittee, in the work to produce the Menemsha portion of the Master Plan in 2017, discussed the priorities and paramount issues of the area with many stakeholders and townspeople.
- Ms. Weidner noted that a survey was sent out about a decade ago to create an update to the Master Plan. She further noted that there was a 20% response to the survey and the Board received good feedback, but that after the survey the Master Plan work was not continued to completion. Ms. Weidner noted that the Board has gotten in the habit of addressing the Master Plan work in a piecemeal fashion.
- Ms. Weidner informed the subcommittee that at a recent MV Commission workshop a suggestion was made to hire a consultant group to complete the Master Plan update, but that an outside effort did not seem right for Chilmark. At this same workshop, Ms. Weidner noted that the presenter suggested that working in sections, in a piecemeal way, is also ok and can be preferred for a Town especially if the Town is comprised of neighborhoods with their own pressures and concerns. This suggestion, at least in part, Ms. Weidner stated, was what led to the Planning Board pursuing a plan for Menemsha. She noted that there has also been a separate group that has begun to look at the center of Town and now the Planning Board is looking at the Tabor House road area. Ms. Weidner concluded by saying that although the Board continues to discuss and develop planning in a piecemeal way, there is a need for an overarching Master Plan.
- Ms. Thompson suggested that the Board would need to know about the needs of the Town in order to make a well-considered land acquisition plan. Ms. Thompson noted that the smaller Master Plans for specific neighborhoods may address the needs of stakeholders and residents but that the Master Plan as a whole will need to address the Town's needs as a whole. Mr. Cook noted the foundation of the Master Plan will need to be a clear understanding of whether the work of the Planning should anticipate being proactive or reactive. Consultants who work on Master Plans, from outside of the Town, will be proactive he further noted. Mr. Cook stated that during the Housing Production Plan process the consultants presented a range of options to move forward but

urged the Towns to not “cherry pick”. Mr. Cook noted that this was because the consultants would prefer to have a Town work from coherent plan and a set of principles that have been laid out.

- Mr. Cook stated that the 1985 Master Plan has a great amount of detailed “baseline” study (conservation, water quality, for example) that does not need to be replicated and the basic layout does not need to be reworked.
- Ms. Weidner stated that during the 2008 update of the Master Plan the Planning Board sent out a request to Town Boards for feedback and that this may need to be done again. Ms. Weidner stated that the Board has been asked to work on the Peaked Hill Pasture site plan and, even though this is another small area of the overall Town, it is important to address the work that the Board has been tasked with by the Selectmen. She suggested that they continue with planning this area and keep in mind the larger picture.
- Mr. Goff suggested that housing could be situated in the 8 acre parcel that is off of Middle Line Road behind the former landfill (Map 13, Lot 35) and storage for fishermen and other things of that sort could be situated in the Peaked Hill Pastures site. He noted that Middle Line Road is already a residential area for about 20 households. He further noted that the Peaked Hill Pastures site was imagined to be, at least partly, workforce housing. Discussion occurred about the possible needs for workforce housing in Town.
- Mr. Jason noted that it would be very important to identify what will serve the Town best and to not prioritize affordable housing without looking at the big picture. Mr. Jason also asked if the subcommittee knew of any clay rights which are owned below the 8 acre lot behind the former landfill. Mr. Jason stated that it would be a good idea to build an inventory of the parcels. Mr. Cook suggested that the 8 acre parcel behind the former landfill (Map 13, Lot 35) area be included in the subcommittee’s review. Brief discussion occurred regarding clay rights and what the cost impacts may be for parcels with clay rights held.
- Ms. Christy was asked to request from the Board of Health the test well results for the site behind the former landfill (Map 13, Lot 35) and was requested to contact the Asst. Assessor to obtain information on when the data went in to the GIS program, the definition of the code 130 (vacant, developable land) and to obtain a clay rights map of the area.
- Mr. Cook suggested that the subcommittee work to develop a plan for the Peaked Hill Pastures site that can be assessed, discussed and picked apart, using the proposals that have already been made.
- Mr. Cook suggested a plan could be developed that states the Town could develop the site in a specific way and show what the development satisfies and what it doesn’t satisfy based on the needs of the Town. He further suggested that a deadline should also be set so that a plan is developed in a reasonable period of time and that a consultant could be contracted with to assist with the development of the plan. Mr. Cook noted that the MVC has indicated that they will support a plan that the Town wishes to develop and will be able to help with the costs of developing a plan.
- Ms. Weidner inquired how the subcommittee felt about conducting a survey of what the Town wants. Mr. Jason stated his suggestion would be to list uses of the PHP site and have people prioritize those uses. Mr. Cook suggested that he did not think that the survey would provide useful information to move forward.
- Mr. Cook suggested taking an existing suggestion, such as Warren Doty’s suggested set of uses presented to the PHP committee on Sept. 5, 2018 (four resident homesites, six rental units including senior housing, 3 acres reserved for future use, maintain ballfield and move highway and shellfish storage to behind landfill), and use it to have a thorough discussion between the people who are in favor of the plan and people who may be opposed and/or be knowledgeable of other Town needs. He noted that the Board could also have a consultant look at the plan and provide feedback before it is presented to townspeople so that the Board could have solutions to possible opposition and a thorough discussion of the pros and cons. He further noted that an approach of this sort would allow the Board to delineate how a specific plan addresses Town needs and where its weaknesses lie in providing for overall Town needs. Mr. Cook further stated that it will be likely that the result of a survey is that the Board will get input on various needs that are dominant for a particular townspeople without the benefit of weighing that input against the larger Town needs. Ms. Weidner stated that there needs to be more outreach to the Town to hear from more people before a specific plan is assessed. She advocated getting input from individuals so that, at the time of Town Meeting, those individuals feel heard and feel their needs were considered.
- Mr. Cook noted that the closest the Board came to creating a plan that addressed multiple needs of the Town was when it had Bill Brewster propose and present a full plan that addressed all the concerns at once. He noted that the people who attended felt that the plan was well thought out. Ms. Weidner stated that many meetings had occurred before this forum was held.
- Ms. Thompson stated her feeling that the Board needs to reach out to more Townspeople as well.
- Mr. Goff noted there are needs for a fire house and not only needs for affordable housing and he worries that if a plan that prioritizes affordable housing is presented to be discussed that the other uses will be lost.

- Mr. Cook further argued that it is beneficial to present a thought-out plan to the Town in order for a useful discussion to occur.
- Ms. Thompson stated that the idea of prioritizing the uses identified by the PHP committee, in a survey, would provide useful information.
- More discussion occurred about the proper way forward: should the subcommittee reach out to the Town for their feedback on a wide range of choices of use or should the subcommittee reach out to the Town with one or two formulated ideas that could be debated in order to determine where the Town stands on the question of use of the PHP site. Ms. Weidner stated that she is reluctant to weigh in with ideas for the site without knowing more about where the Town stands on the issue. Mr. Cook stated that after the plan for the PHP site was submitted by Bill Rossi last winter people started talking about the plan and whether it served the Town well and it helped push forward discussion about other Town needs. He reiterated his view that the Town may benefit from the subcommittee doing some thorough thought on the subject of uses of the site before it is presented to the Town for feedback. Ms. Weidner suggested that the subcommittee could develop potential plans, without a consultant, that addressed the various stated needs and then put those before the Town. She stated she would not be in favor of developing and getting behind one plan at this time before more is known from the Town of what the people want. She also stated that more information is needed to determine what land is available for use.
- After more discussion, the subcommittee members recognized the benefits of the subcommittee identifying and assessing certain Town initiatives (affordable housing, senior housing, new firehouse) and presenting the pros and cons of those initiatives if they were to be implemented at the Peaked Hill Pastures site.
- Ms. Weidner asked if Ms. Christy could ask what the Selectmen are considering as a timeline for completion of a proposal for the PHP site.
- Mr. Cook noted that his understanding is that townspeople want to hear what ideas have been developed and why and be able to weigh in on a well-considered plan.
- Mr. Cook, on the topic of a new overall Master Plan, suggested that the subcommittee could develop an introductory paragraph for each new section of the updated Master Plan, noting the issues that did not exist twenty-five years ago. The paragraphs could give some direction to future planners on what pressures the Town faced and a guide on moving forward.
- Ms. Weidner suggested that the members of the subcommittee identify pros and cons of each of the items on the short list provided by the Peaked Hill Pastures Proposals Committee presentation on October 9, 2018, including a solar array. Mr. Cook suggested that the subcommittee take the list and prioritize the items and also give a couple of sentences describing why they are ranked in the way that they are and the challenges to the rank position. The subcommittee agreed to do this ranking and reasoning for their next meeting.
- Ms. Thompson suggested that she also could create a survey and the other subcommittee members agreed that they would welcome a draft of a survey to consider. Ms. Christy stated she would send to Ms. Thompson any committee minutes that dealt with surveys in the past couple of years.
- Brief discussion occurred regarding the idea made by Clark Goff to situate a new firehouse on the site of two of the tennis courts abutting the current Community Center.
- **Minutes:**
 - The minutes from August 13, 2018 were reviewed. The minutes were approved as written.
- **Next Meetings:**
 - December 10, 2018, 3PM.
- **Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chairperson:**
 - No other topics were discussed.
- **Documents:**
 - Maps of Peaked Hill Pastures Site:

- Topographical
- Ortho Map
- Subdivision Map
- GIS Map

- Peaked Hill Pastures draft proposals:
 - Bill Rossi, Winter 2018, plan (originally submitted to the Planning Board in February 2018 for discussion)
 - Warren Doty, Sept. 2018 (originally submitted to a Peaked Hill Pastures Proposals Committee meeting on Sept. 5, 2018)

- Peaked Hill Pastures Proposals Committee Information Presentation
 - Oct. 9, 2018

- Peaked Hill Pastures Proposals Committee Report to the Planning Board
 - Oct. 16, 2018

Meeting adjourned: 4:28PM

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer L. Christy