



# Housing Committee

## Town of Chilmark

### MEETING NOTES - DRAFT February 17, 2022 (via ZOOM)

Present for the Housing Committee and attending the Zoom meeting were Jim Feiner - Chair, Andrew (Andy) Goldman, Bill Rossi, Ann Wallace, Allison Cameron Parry, Nettie Kent Ruel and Alison Kisselgof - Administrator. Peter Cook and Jeffrey DuBard were also in attendance.

The meeting came to order at 9:00 AM.

**PEAKED HILL PASTURES UPDATE:** Peter recounted conversations between the Planning Board and the Select Board which are deciding on the language of the Peaked Hill Pastures (PHP) warrant for the town meeting. There is a consensus on the parameters of the project which will include 10 rental units. The Planning Board had suggested that two home ownership opportunities be turnkey due to cost effective construction and uniformity of design. Turnkey homes would also be presumably be less expensive for potential homeowners. There is consensus on the green aspects of the development. The rental campus is proposed to use ~3 acres of the eastern side of the plot. Peter mentioned a site plan drawn up by Reid Silva which identified about 8 acres of the property with the best drainage and therefore the best location for the Homesites. At the moment, there are only four Homesite in the design but the PHP Subcommittee hopes there would be land available to add more at a later date.

Bill offered that the concept for the PHP development which would be voted on at the town meeting would include 10 rental units (20 bedrooms), 2 you-build and 2 turnkey Homesites. The vote at the spring town meeting would be for the overall design and the financial aspects of the project are scheduled to be included on the fall town warrant. Bill felt that the proposal should pass at town meeting. He added that any amendments offered may jeopardize the project.

Jim asked if the proposal identified how much of the land would be used. Bill answered that ~ 8 acres are proposed to be developed. He offered that the Scott's Grove development was used as a model for density of the PHP proposal.

Nettie expressed disappointment at the number of Homesite lots proposed. She felt the town was missing an opportunity to help more families and that she expected the number of applications for the four Homesite would be shocking. Bill responded by saying that the original plan was to not develop the entire lot so there would be the possibility of adding more housing later after assessing the success of the first project. He went on to say that developing the entire property all at once could be a burden to residents who live in the area. Nettie clarified that she was not proposing development of the entire lot but a higher density on the portion currently being discussed. Bill offered that 14 units on 8 acres is already higher density that then the town normally encounters and consistent with Scott's Grove.

Allison offered that only 10 people on the current waitlist for apartments with Dukes County Regional Housing Authority are listed as residents of Chilmark. Allison also determined the number of applicants that did not receive housing at Nab's Corner was also 10. She concluded that the need for rentals vs homeownership was about equal. She felt that the town should consider creating an equal amount of rentals and homeownership opportunities at PHP. She added that the rentals would cost more to the town due to maintenance and management. Allison said that she believed homeownership creates permanent residents, which are assets to the community.

Ann said that the Subcommittee felt strongly about creating a neighborhood for both homeowners and renters. The Subcommittee would like the RFP to convey the campus-like concept. Peter added that the by-law adjustments for minimum acreage and setback requirements would give flexibility to the developer to help guide the town with housing siting as well as allow for more Homesite opportunities.

**HOMESITE SALE PRICE & SETBACK REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED DISCUSSION:** Bill said that the \$40,000 sale price would equate to roughly 10% of land value 25 years ago. He estimated that the same 10% value in today's market would be \$80,000-100,000.

It was mentioned that the sale price is meant to subsidize the cost of adding well, septic and utilities to the Homesite. Allison recommended finding out what the cost would be to add these utilities today. Bill added that there has been discussion of using the Molly Flender Affordable Housing Fund to help subsidize these costs to homeowners. Peter offered that PHP design might help provide information for Homesite pricing.

Jim asked if the Committee would like to vote to raise the Homesite sale price. Ann felt that there should be some data to look at before the Committee determined a new sale price. Bill said the Committee should make a recommendation of the price increase to be further discussed by the Planning & Select Boards.

Ann said that she would like costs to be researched and presented at the next meeting so the Committee could make an informed decision. Allison thought this was a good idea but was confused as to what is being paid by land owners, town and potential Homesite owner. Jim clarified that the current process is a landowner carves off ~1 acre of their property and the Homesite buyer pays them up to \$40,000. The town is not currently subsidizing any costs but Jim supports recommending town subsidies from the Molly Flender Affordable Housing Fund (MFAHF) to incentivize Homesite creation. Allison wondered if a new formula could be devised using income and lot size, rather than just basing the cost on recuperation of infrastructure expenses.

Jim mentioned that Island Housing Trust is considering buying houses to lower the value and deed restricting them but that this idea might not be feasible because it would require funds.

Andy offered that originally the \$40,000 sale price was not meant to incentivize Homesite creation but intended to keep the price low for affordability to Homesite buyer. He felt that homeowners participating in the program were not motivated by profit. Andy added that he is not against raising the price but wanted to make sure other Committee members kept affordability to potential buyers in mind. He mentioned that the Housing Committee has the authority to change the price since it is defined in the Homesite Implementation Guide. Andy lastly said that the majority of Homesite created were between people who had a relationship and the desire to help each other, not for profit.

Bill reminded that the price is a cap and that homeowners could decide the sale price. He said that there was still room for philanthropy by homeowners.

Jefrey supports raising the sale cost of a Homesite. He offered the scenario of a resident who may own land but is not wealthy. The ability to carve off acreage to sell may allow them and the potential Homesite buyer to remain in town.

A motion was made to raise the Homesite cost to \$100,000 and seconded. Jim, Nettie and Bill voted yes, Ann voted no and Andy abstained (Allison was not present in the meeting at this time). Andy then changed his vote to yes and the motion passed. The change would now require a public hearing before being implemented.

Ann volunteered to research costs with Alison to bring to the next meeting.

**MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING CONTINUED DISCUSSION:** Jim recounted that Chilmark is the only town that does not have a multi-family housing by-law. Jim asked Jeffrey about West Tisbury's use of their by-law. Jeffrey answered that the by-law has not been used much since implementation. He added that it is a topic of discussion at Island Housing Trust where he is a board member. Jeffrey said that there are many existing properties which could be converted to multi-family housing.

Bill asked about the current West Tisbury by-law and Jim said that he would email the by-law to Committee members for further discussion at the next meeting.

**HOUSING BANK SUPPORT DISCUSSION:** Bill said that he had a discussion with Doug Ruskin from the Housing Bank. Bill mentioned to Doug that he supports the Housing Bank and particularly likes the support of people with up to 240% AMI.

Alison asked Nettie if she had anything to add to the discussion since she suggested the topic. Nettie said that she wanted to support the Housing Bank by attending a meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and encouraged other members to attend as well. Alison offered to forward the meeting information so that other Committee members could join.

Bill said that he did not see a lack of support on the island. He suspected that the Board of Realtors especially in Boston would be against the Housing Bank. Bill agreed that Committee members should attend the Housing Bank meeting to show support. He mentioned that the Housing Bank would have collected 14 million last year based on actual sales of properties of over 1 million. Bill said that 2021 was a boom year for real estate and isn't sure that future sales would be as high.

**TOPICS NOT ANTICIPATED:** Nettie attended the Planning Board meeting to review the Accessory Apartment by-law and felt that the discussion was rushed. She said that the by-law deserved further review and the Committee should make recommendations to improve the by-law for greater usage. She supports increasing allowable square footage of the accessory apartment as proposed by Bill in the Planning Board meeting.

Jim offered that he would like to see the town give subsidies for converting garages to accessory apartments.

Andy asked Alison if she knew who was on the MFAHF Committee. He thought that this group should meet since it's been a while and the fund comes up often regarding housing solutions. Alison offered to find out who is on the MFAHF Committee and share the information.

Allison asked about the status of the short term rental tax transfer to the MFAHF. Andy answered that the money is in the general fund and Select Board has yet to move the money. Allison would like to follow up on this recommendation.

**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:**

VSLE Site Plan of Peaked Hill Pastures  
Draft minutes from 1/20/22 meeting

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

With no further business to conduct the meeting adjourned at 10:22 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Alison Kisselgof, board administrator.