

MILFORD PLANNING BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES ~ **APPROVED**

March 5, 2019 Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room, 6:30 PM

Members Present:

Doug Knott, Chairman

Jacob LaFontaine, Member

Janet Langdell, Member

Susan Robinson, Member

Pete Basiliere, Alternate Member

Staff:

Lincoln Daley, Planning

Darlene Bouffard, Recording Secretary

Excused:

Paul Amato, Member

Kevin Federico, BOS rep

Tim Finan, Member

1. Call to order:

Chairman Knott called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., introductions were made of Planning Board members and staff, it was noted that Pete Basiliere is an Alternate Planning Board member but will have full duties this evening in the absence of Paul Amato.

2. Public Meetings:

a. Bob Moulton, representing the Melendy Country Community Landowners, indicated they are proposing a donation to the Town of the 2.5 acre parcel (Map 52, Lot 4-1) that was separated from the larger parcel donated to the Town last year (Map 52, Lot 4). This piece was separated and was left behind, it has never been purchased and the landowners would like to offer it as a land donation to the town as it might be useful and is contiguous to the Rail Trail and near conservation land donated last year. There is no road frontage for this parcel and it is mostly wet through the year and there are animals in the area. This parcel was also in Current Use. J. Langdell said there was a possibility of a small parking area at one point, she asked where that would be located? B. Moulton pointed out the area and said the map on the viewer is not the most recent one. L. Daley said the tax maps are only updated once per year. L. Daley said this is a good opportunity for the town. J. Langdell knows the Planning Board is here about the land only and has no jurisdiction about (LUCT) the money and asked if this is in exchange of the LUCT? B. Moulton said that is negotiable. J. Langdell said the LUCT portion is handled by the Board of Selectmen. L. Daley indicated the Planning Board needs to just provide a recommendation to the BOS. J. Langdell believes any land next to conservation land is a good thing, it could be beneficial without any change.

B. Moulton said this is not a buildable site. J. LaFontaine feels it makes sense to accept this donation. S. Robinson asked what is LUCT? J. Langdell explained it is the Land Use Change Tax. S. Robinson thinks the donation is an exceptional idea especially since it abuts the Rail Trail. J. Langdell said there are drier areas that might be suitable for a parking area. P. Basiliere would like to see a parking lot added, but that is the purview of the BOS. J. Langdell suggested a letter to the BOS to recommend acceptance of the donation of land and have it be part of the Rail Trail system, the Planning Board feels it would be a nice addition to the conservation land and could possibly have a picnic area and parking area as discussed in previous discussions. D. Knott said the Planning Board can suggest that. L. Daley liked the language provided by J. Langdell, noting that it would improve safety and access. Having parking would encourage people to use that part of the Rail Trail, according to P. Basiliere.

J. Langdell moved to recommend the BOS to accept the donation of the land (Map 52, Lot 4-1) to the Town based on discussions and to recommend a parking area be considered for the safety and access of residents. J. LaFontaine seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously. B. Moulton indicated that Attorney Tom Quinn is able to come to the BOS meeting on this subject if needed.

3. Work Session:

L. Daley indicated the Housing Chapter is a goal for 2019 for the Planning Board; what he has provided members tonight is the work done by the Planning Board in the past, and where we want to go today. The housing packet has been provided tonight as well as the Chapter on Housing, the zoning ordinance, development audit from 2013 and the discussion of an overlay district. The 2013 audit laid the ground work for Milford to continue, L. Daley wanted to bring this to members for discussion in more detail so that we might want to improve on the ordinance and Master Plan. At the next meeting, L. Daley will have more data to present for discussion. J. Langdell noted the "Work Force Housing Addendum" was done by Sarah Marchant – that would be of value as well. L. Daley asked what type of housing do we want to encourage? Work force or affordable housing or tiny homes to encourage people, but not the 30-40 unit type environment. By working on the Master Plan, we can encourage where the Planning Board would like the housing to be built. Hendrix is recruiting part time employees in Michigan to work in Milford. We should be encouraging housing for younger people. J. Langdell said we need to talk about what is "affordable."

Affordability is based on the median income level, according to L. Daley. J. Langdell said it is 30% of the gross family income. Red Oak is up to \$1800/month. Is that considered affordable? L. Daley said in the Nashua region, the median income is \$106,000 which would be a \$352,000 home. J. Langdell noted the Nashua region includes Hollis; we need to tailor the median income to Milford? S. Robinson asked if we really know what is the actual average income in Milford? J. Langdell said when we say "affordable" we need to have the definition of that. S. Robinson asked what is the average income in Milford? L. Daley responded \$67,000-\$69,000 is the average. J. Langdell said the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) has a summary of towns with the 2016 median income and that is helpful. L. Daley indicated the example of Hendrix is an indicator that people are coming into Milford just for work, but they do not necessarily live here. J. Langdell asked if Hendrix knows where those people are living? L. Daley could talk to them to find out where they are living. J. Langdell noted the workforce housing is just not available.

Another example is Hitchiner, L. Daley explained with their new facility Hitchiner will add about 80 jobs plus the existing building will add another 40 jobs. Some are full time and some are part time. S. Robinson would be interested to know what the plan is for housing those employees. L. Daley suggested the travel time to Milford from other communities is good. D. Knott asked if there is space for Hitchiner to build something for housing? L. Daley responded there is not. D. Knott asked if a developer has talked to Hitchiner and is there that type of large parcel available in town that is close to Hitchiner for housing? J. Langdell said Twin Towns has land at the top of the hill that is available. Perhaps a type of Boarding House that was used at one time, for renting a studio apartment and share a kitchen and common areas, possibly with a dining room as well. With good management, the management companies could keep out the riff-raff; a good example of that in Milford is the Brookstone apartments right on Elm Street. P. Basiliere said if a rooming house is kept up and managed well, would Milford want to go down that road? J. Langdell responded we are talking about alternative types of housing.

D. Knott indicated for some types of businesses, a village type of housing, such as one in Salem that is both attractive and affordable, and might bring in some people that are longer term residents. J. Langdell asked if that is like in Merrimack, where you can rent for a month? D. Knott said it is like a village that has space in the middle of the development with amenities where people can congregate, with grills, picnic tables, etc. Crosspoint in Lowell is set up like that. It is an attractive concept for residents and brings people in. J. Langdell said alternative types of housing is something to look into. L. Daley said we should definitely look into any ideas that members might have. J. Langdell said the last go around with housing was that we wanted more than just "big box" apartments. When Red Oak came in, we asked them to have areas to congregate for the residents. P. Basiliere asked why did they not include that amenity? L. Daley said the Planning Board can push and ask the developers but at some point they cannot ask anymore. J. Langdell said the Planning Board was able to get some things but not everything.

P. Basiliere said we should get the authority to make those things happen; the developer pushed back and say no to some requests. How does the Planning Board have authority to get what is asked for? J. Langdell said we just did not get everything we wanted, we also need the pieces within the regulations that allow the Planning Board to have the teeth to follow up with the decision. P. Basiliere asked how the regulations can be changed to protect the town? L. Daley said by adding standards and requirements to the regulations, it will protect the town. D. Knott said the plan for Dollar General does not meet the West Milford Gateway District standards, and they

are going to come back with the same design that does not meet the standards, and the Planning Board has to stick to that regulation. J. Langdell said that some parcels are in the B zone not the A zone so maybe the zoning ordinance can also be looked at. S. Robinson was told when she joined the Planning Board that Milford has a business friendly philosophy. J. Langdell said it is still a business friendly philosophy, and we want businesses to come here, but average people coming in do not want to lose the rural character. L. Daley said when builders come in they have a design already planned and the materials already in place, they want to go with a known plan. The town needs to put regulations in place in order to get what the town wants. J. Langdell feels it would be a good idea to get input from town residents. D. Knott said we do have regulations for the West Milford Gateway District, but the Planning Board did not hold the developer to them.

J. Langdell said if they had listened to the comments made at design review and all that was said, they would have come in with something different. D. Knott wants to make sure before adding any regulations that the ones we have are held to. L. Daley said we have regulations that are enforced and to give the Planning Board teeth. J. Langdell said if developers are reading the regulations and have questions about something, they should please call and review it with Lincoln and it might reinforce the understanding. L. Daley indicated the demographics in Milford have changed, the population is aging and younger people are not staying to live here, how can we attract the younger folks to stay and for older folks to remain, how can Milford compete with attracting the twenty-somethings? J. Langdell asked what the younger and older folks have in common? Smaller housing, shorter commutes, amenities. D. Knott asked how can we make Milford Unique? L. Daley said Milford already offers a lot, the downtown is getting busier every day. It is a walkable community; both the older and younger generations are looking for the same housing. Milford cannot compete with Boston for income. L. Daley said it starts with affordable housing. They filled East Ridge before they were even completely built.

J. Langdell asked if we found out where the residents in East Ridge came from, where are they working? D. Knott said about 25% of the license plates are out of State – lots are from the Midwest. L. Daley said that data is broken down. P. Basiliere asked what is the goal with that information? L. Daley will provide the list of goals and objectives based on the data. It is an ongoing project. J. Langdell added that is what was started in 2010 and then we needed to shift gears to work force housing. We added some things like a residential unit in a commercial zone. The next iteration might include more residential in the commercial zone, according to L. Daley. P. Basiliere asked what was the number the Planning Board wanted? L. Daley said we are trying to encourage more residences in the area, it will be based on the size of the building. Before we decide what we would like to see, P. Basiliere said we need to identify what we have today. J. Langdell said tonight is the starting point, the next discussion will have a little more detail. D. Knott said NH has a lot of attractions, why can't we get a train from Nashua to the mountains to ski? J. Langdell said the nature economy is starting to boost the economic development. As far as a train, PanAm is who you have to contact about the rail, the rails all belong to PanAm. The Logan Express bus service is also talking about expanding its service to Keene.

At the next meeting the Board will talk more about the Master Plan and about possible outreach. J. Langdell feels this might be a good opportunity to create some subcommittees, to break into subgroups and put an article in the newspaper, we need to do this, the Master Plan needs to be updated periodically and we need other people to assist and get information and possibly host a Charette. At the next meeting, the Planning Board must have the election of officers. L. Daley has been talking to Paul Amato who is in process of opening a new business downtown; there should be a group organized to discuss downtown parking. P. Basiliere noted that a parking garage is a bad idea because at some point the economy will go south, we have to be cautious moving forward. J. Langdell suggested maybe talking to the school about their parking for summertime when there are fewer cars parked there. L. Daley also suggested taking a look at the assets that are in town and maybe we just put up more signage and re-pave the public parking lots.

L. Daley will reconvene the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) and perhaps add new members and talk to Nancy Amato about leading up a parking group. J. Langdell suggested all members take a look at the Wilton website which was recently re-done. L. Daley will also work with the Amherst Community Development Director Gordon Leedy about sharing some ideas. L. Daley would like to re-visit the hotel study done in 2009 when it was found that Milford might not support a hotel, but since then Milford has changed. J. Langdell added that the hotel study was done with grant money, so the taxpayers of Milford did not pay for that. S. Robinson said the current trend is Air B&Bs which are taking over for smaller hotels in other communities. L. Daley stated currently, those are illegal in Milford and in other towns. J. Langdell said we need to take a look at

what NRPC is doing for Milford, since it is the “Nashua Region” and we might need to look at becoming part of a different region.

4. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m. on a motion made by P. Basiliere and seconded by J. Langdell. All were in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Signature of the Chairperson/Vice-Chairman: _____ Date: _____

MINUTES OF THE 3/5/19 MEETING WERE APPROVED 3/26/19