

Westfield Review Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 29, 2010

*June 29th
Agenda prepared
by Clair Smith*

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by Clair Smith, Town Moderator.

Attendance: Rick Boucher, Jane Donahue, Donna Bronk, Chris Smith, Donna Hagopian-Barros, Jim Franklin, Tony Scarsciotti, all committee members, and Dick Heaton, invited guest.

Clair asked that a committee chair be elected.

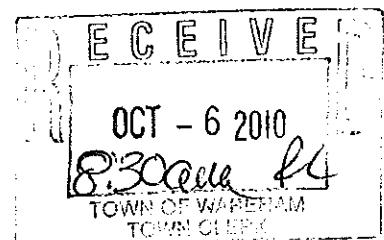
Rick Boucher nominated Jane Donahue and Donna Bronk seconded the nomination. All voted in favor. Jane asked for a volunteer to be the Clerk for this first meeting. No one volunteered so Rick was appointed for this first meeting. Clair Smith then excused herself and left the meeting.

Jane introduced Dick Heaton as an expert on the Westfield project and asked for all to present their questions.

Donna Bronk asked for explanation regarding the Westfield property deed restrictions, and the Westfield housing project and the BOS, etc.

Dick Heaton, of H & H Associates LLP, consultant for the Westfield Affordable Senior Housing project, answered:

- A Project Summary Update was handed out to all.
- Article 10 of the 1077 Wareham Town Meeting regarded taking of the land known as Westfield as Town owned property. The vote was yes to take or acquire the land for future municipal use.
- Subsequent to the town meeting vote, the deed actually filed reads something different regarding the land use.
- The deed restricts the land to municipal school, municipal purposes and/or recreation.



- The deed has (or should have been) amended to read any municipal use as per Article 10 of the 1977 Town Meeting Warrant as per the request of the BOS in the Fall of 2009.
- We agreed to verify what the actual deed at this date actually reads.
- At the request of the BOS an RFP was developed and five companies responded out of 30-40 developers that were directly contacted, including local developers. The project was also posted on the MA State web site. This response was actually to the second RFP, as the first included an assisted living element to the project to which only one company responded, so the assisted living element was removed.
- For purposes of the RFP, Sewer capacity **FOR THE HOUSING PROJECT** was assumed available but at this point in time is not. All builders had agreed to put in sewer lines down Charlotte Furnace Rd. to Rt. 28. All builders bid with and without sewer lines.
- Mr. Heaton said that this is a very positive project for the town based on the revenue it would generate and by the amount of senior citizens that would be served.

The committee agreed to establish the meaning of the word municipal as it is used on the property deed, based on concern by several committee members.

Tony said that he thinks people objected to the location of the Westfield property based on its location.

Dick Heaton responded that the developers think it is a great location for the following reasons:

- All that is happening in the area and all that is planned for the area such as:
 - Wareham Crossing
 - Post Office location
 - A. D. Makepeace development
 - Highway access points
 - Future retail development

Chris questioned how payments to the town would work, on are they based on occupancy.

Dick responded:

- Lease payments are a flat rate contract.
- Real estate taxes
- Excise taxes
- Water & sewer fees
- Payments are not based on occupancy.

Chris questioned CPC funds commitment and availability.

Dick responded:

- 90% plus of the money comes from Federal and STATE funds set up[for the purpose of projects of this type..
- The town money is the last in the pot. No CPC funds go into the project until the project is literally under way, i.e., all permits are in place, all other funding is in place.
- CPC money is back in a three year period in taxes.

Rick stated that a percentage of CPC funds are legally required to be set aside for affordable housing, the money should be available, and this project meets the criteria.

Other questions regarded the projects restrictions on occupancy.

Dick responded:

- This is a Low Income housing credit project requiring 5% handicapped units.
- No requirements exist for mentally challenged, etc.

Jim Franklin asked why this project has failed to pass as it seems like a "no brainer".

Jane Donahue answered that mainly, due to the reasons already discussed, other interests in town want to challenge for use of the land for other purposes.

Chris said that the argument for the project needs to be made "airtight".

Tony Scarsciotti pointed out that a maximum of 70% of units can be designated for Wareham residents.

Dick agreed to a point. Placement works on a lottery system. Up front, the maximum number of units set aside for Wareham residents is 70%. When the remaining 30% are advertised, Wareham residents are included in the pool of eligibility. If no out of town people register, 100% go to Wareham residents. This happens frequently. In general, hometown residents usually represent well over the 70% number.

Jane recommended a survey of all who are currently on the Wareham Housing waiting list.

Chris questioned our charge as a committee.

Jane answered that we are charged with reviewing the project and bringing our recommendations to Town Meeting in the Fall.


Chris recommended making more land available for recreation.

Rick Boucher proposed going beyond that and making a specific portion of the parcel to not only be designated for recreation but actually to be developed as such as a part of this project.

This was agreed to by the committee and we will request that a new RFP be issued to include this. The recreational development at minimum would include two or more baseball fields, one or more soccer fields.

Donna Bronk moved: The committee recommends Town Meeting to revisit the Westfield property as follows:

- Approve a definition of "municipal purposes" that will be proposed by the committee.

- Integrate and expand the following into the definition of Municipal Purposes:
 1. recreation land to include ball fields and soccer fields
 2. conservation land and open space
 3. affordable senior housing
- Correct the deed for the properties to reflect the vote at Town Meeting.
- Update and reissue the RFP for the affordable senior housing to include the construction of additional ball fields and soccer fields at the developer's expense. 
- Sponsor a citizens petition to put this recommendation on the warrant for the Fall Town Meeting as previously written but to include designation of the remaining land for recreation and open space.

This motion was seconded by Rick Boucher and was unanimously voted in favor by the committee, the two Donna's abstaining from the vote due to not being sworn in by the Town Clerk as of this date as they thought they needed to be.

Next meeting will be Monday August 16th at 6:30PM

