

# Westminster Master Plan Committee

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## **Westminster Master Plan Minutes 9/19/12**

**Present:** Steve Wallace, Scott Ryder, Mike Gallant, Linda Wiest, Mike Fortin, Heather Billings, Dean Johnson, Laila Michaud, Ted Fiffy, Richelle Brown.

Meeting called to order at 7:01

Minutes from 8/15/12 approved Laila motion, Scott 2<sup>nd</sup>. AIF

### **Review the data & analysis section of the Housing chapter:**

Decline in Ashburnham housing numbers could have been caused to census error. Table H4 HUD figures for 2012 would be better to include. SW to check as they come out in March. Use more current 2010 numbers for 4 year housing estimates. Table H6 Manufactured housing is viable downsizing option for some.

### **Housing issues:**

Land use, open space, housing chapters all may cover the same issues. Discussed that it would be good to repeat the information in each place so that if a reader only picked a certain chapter, they would see the relevant content.

40B- Demonstrate making steady progress with affordable housing projects. Calculating the median income includes the neighboring towns.

Projects have 8 years before permits expire, SW is keeping track of them.

Municipal water and sewer helps 40B projects be affordable.

Rates of development laws are illegal unless put measures in place temporarily to address certain issues (sewer capacity).

Home assistance fund is available for people who need help.

MRPC grant for transportation infrastructure & housing rehab for Pleasant Street being proposed.

### **Goal setting exercise:**

What would we like to see housing mean in the next 10 years?

Cluster housing- consider landscape screening, consider scenic road bylaw (who would enforce?)

Most housing in town is 3000 sq ft or greater, land prices are higher than neighboring towns, so developers look to recoup with higher price house.

Balanced- meaning growth to balance our ability to provide municipal services. Also could mean variety of housing.

Elderly housing-

Starter or downsizing housing-

Revisiting zoning-

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## **Recommendations:**

Consider feasibility of new Habitat for Humanity project

Soft second loan opportunity

Reconvene Affordable Housing Committee- SW receives many inquiring letters.

Consider Comprehensive Village Center zoning change

Consider Senior or assisted living by-law

Consider Cluster housing permit by right

Revisit inclusionary housing provision-incentive or hammer approach, can be combination

Rental housing

Design stipulations are that affordable housing units cannot be distinguished from other units.

Where to put meaningful open space. Could it be agricultural use? Community garden?

## **Other discussion:**

SW to draft objectives and recommendations for discussion at October meeting.

Applied for DHCD downtown grant to hire professional landscape architect to sketch out streetscape designs based on citizen participation.

DHCD peer to peer grant for professional planner to follow up discussion with steps to turn it into zoning bylaw.

Wachusett growth corridor steering committee meeting. They are on the transportation-data and analysis section. Town will submit comments. Should offer possibilities of connecting train station to mid-state trail. Shuttle from train station to ski area. Etc.

## **Schedule:**

### **Next meeting: October 17, 2012**

Finish housing chapter at October meeting.

Economic Development scheduled for the fall (November 7<sup>th</sup>) jointly with Economic Development Committee. Invite policy makers, business owners, regional and state entities involved in economic development. "Here's what we have, here's what we need, how can you help us?"

Open space and Recreation in January

Rest of next year will be land use.

**Adjourn** at 8:55 motion made by Mike G, seconded by Laila.

Respectfully submitted by:

Heather Billings