

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

September 1, 2004

7:30 PM

Jamestown Library

26 North Main Rd.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. and the following members were present:

Gary Girard	Victor Calabretta
Betty Hubbard	Barry Holland
Jean MacGregor Brown	Andrew Kallfelz
William Kelly	

Also present:

Lisa Bryer, AICP – Town Planner
Cynthia Reppe – Recording Clerk
Brigid Ryan – Church Community Housing
Bruce Bartlett – Church Community Housing

I. Approval of Minutes from August 18,2004

Commissioner Calabretta made a motion to accept the minutes and Commissioner Kallfelz seconded it. After a discussion the clerk recommended that she will listen to the tape and amend the minutes for review at the next meeting. This issue will be tabled until the next meeting.

II. Correspondence – nothing at this time

III. Citizen's Non Agenda Item

Valerie Malloy asked a question about the presentation last week when Ms. Sokoloff spoke of increased density. Commissioner Girard asked if she could hold the thought until the agenda item.

IV. Reports

1. Town Planner's Report – nothing at this time
2. Town Committees
 - a. Harbor
 - b. Fort Getty

The Fort Getty Committee is putting together a master plan and survey and has established goals. Commissioner Girard asked when this should be put on the agenda for review. The charge is to report back to Town Council if the Town Council asks for Planning Commission review it will be sent here. The Committee is sending a flyer for school children to bring home next week with the children regarding summer camp needs.

- c. Buildings and Facilities
 - d. Others
3. Sub Committees

Commissioner Kelly made a motion to move Old Business before New Business, Commissioner Calabretta seconded the motion. So unanimously voted.

V. Old Business

1. Jamestown Housing Plan – (continued) - Discussion and Recommendation by the Planning Commission (continued)

Commissioner Kelly stated that he feels this plan could be summarized to no more than 3 pages, to include a definition of affordable housing; it should also include the 2004 figures. Look at the housing cost and make a footnote excluding 5-6 million dollar homes. Focus more on work force housing, especially Town employee housing, develop employee assisted housing and lets define it as who we are trying to provide housing for. Commissioner Kelly stated that the definition does not belong on page 11 of the document; it needs to be in the beginning. An executive summary is an excellent idea for people that do not have time to read the whole document. Brigid Ryan stated, we do not need to reinforce the stigma that people have of affordable housing. Commissioner Kelly shared with the board conversations with members of community. He was taken back by their negative reaction to affordable housing and that he thought they would be more open to something that is so necessary in the community. Promoting the idea of affordable housing is going to be a difficult sell. Town Planner Lisa Bryer stated educating the community on what affordable housing is here in Jamestown is very important and it is part of our responsibility. There are different ways to do education campaigns said Brigid Ryan. Town Councilor DiGiando stated everyone agrees it is necessary but how is it to be funded. Town Councilor Littman stated this issue has come to the forefront now, the fire department is having a hard time getting volunteers, because younger people cannot afford to rent or buy here, maybe most people did not realize this. The demographics have changed dramatically over the past few years. A discussion ensued and a question as to if there is any precedence that says that local working people here can take priority over anyone else. Bruce Bartlett stated that you can identify preference for local people with certain programs. Brigid said she has been reviewing other cities and towns; Maui is in a similar situation as Jamestown, they are trying to find innovative ways to provide affordable housing. Another idea is that a property owner can subdivide a lot for family members or even people that do not have family can state that they would like it to go to a Jamestown family that qualifies for affordable housing. Commissioner Girard asked what happens 30 years from now if family members pass, will there be a problem with resale since it has a deed restriction for affordable housing. Bruce Bartlett stated there are creative ways to deal with this. A discussion ensued regarding what would or could happen to property that they added rental income too. Lisa Bryer will summarize comments and she will meet with Brigid, Bruce and Barbara Sokoloffs office to go over this.

Commissioner Hubbard is excited to make this work. Commissioner Hubbard stated earlier that if we had a real estate transfer tax like Block Island and Little Compton have we would be in a much better situation than we are now towards providing affordable housing and open space, because the funding would be there already. Let's look at every possibility we have to achieve this. Commissioner Hubbard said let's look at this plan and look at the programs that can be done procedurally. She is worried about the increased density issue, not allowing it in the high ground water areas, but don't let this issue of a Real Estate transfer tax die here, but allow the people of Jamestown decide. Commissioner Brown asked if the process is that the recommendation from this Commission will decide if it goes on the ballot? No, it goes to legislature if the Town Council decides it should and then it goes to Committee and then the Legislature decides if they will give us the chance for us to decide. Commissioner Brown asked if it will be voted on by residents? Yes, was the answer from the Town Planner. Commissioner Kallfelz stated it seems as though to sell this to the town it should focus on the benefits to the town. Bruce it all goes back to the education issue, we as a community decide what is wanted and it needs to be stated in the plan. In CCHS's experience the people that want apartments would be local residents and not residents of other communities.

Commissioner Kallfelz stated the bottom line is that the state says we need to achieve the 10%.

Commissioner Hubbard asked what the turnover rate is here with the affordable units we have now? Ms. Ryan stated there has been 7-8 resales with all their land trust houses in Newport County in the last 11 years with most people having been transferred to other states. Lisa talked about stressing open space collaboration.

Lisa Bryer stated that there are 1 or 2 funding sources that could generate a significant amount of money, impact fees vs. real estate transfer tax. Impact fees are generally assessed on building permits, single family starts, looking into additions too, if there is a sliding scale etc. Commissioner Calabretta asked what kind of money are we talking about? We need to provide gap funding for 8 homes a year Commissioner Kelly answered, Brigid stated that for implementation, funding is key. The biggest problem in this town is opportunities. If we didn't have to worry about land cost we would have great opportunities. Lisa Bryer feels we have enough comments now to work with.

Councilor DiGiando is trying to come to grips with the next budget as far as what is the financial need with regards to affordable housing. When this is submitted to the Town Council it should have a monetary value on it. The Planning Commission must finish review of this by the beginning of October so the Town Council may have time to review it and hold a hearing and approve by the end of December. If we do not have a plan approved by January 1, then the State will not support us if we want to deny or amend a proposal.

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Update this and put this on the next agenda. After the next meeting a sub committee may be formed to review this and forward to the Town Council so that we can meet the deadline. This issue will be tabled until the next meeting.

VI. New Business

1. Presentation by Randall Arendt of Greener Prospects – Review of Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance

Randall Arendt made a presentation to the Planning Commission. He has published many documents and books. Mr. Arendt was asked to review 10 or 12 communities in the state and look at them to approach development with conservation in mind. Jamestown is one of the communities that he was asked to look at. Scott Millar a DEM representative and he met in Texas where Mr. Arendt was living at the time. Mr. Arendt ended up moving back to New England and has been helping DEM ever since. He has reinvented clustering since then. A simple ordinance can boards get better development.

This is a 4 step design process.

- a. Site Walk
- b. Sketch Plan with tracing paper
- c. Site analysis map
- d. Prioritized list

Keep zoning as flexible as possible in terms of lot size and frontage.

The abutters should have a site walk too.

Commissioner Kallfelz asked if towns were having success with flexible zoning and does he see a risk involved in that. There could be a problem in any town with this but a solicitor should be able to give proper advice. By nature if it is flexible than it should not have go to board of appeals. They have to show that the zoning board has made an error in interpreting the law.

Commissioner Holland asked Mr. Arendt, from his experience in cluster zoning, what is the difference in the value of the lots? What can you sell them for compared to a 1 acre lot. Lots in a cluster development sold for more to begin with and appreciated faster. At the least it would be a fairly even trade off.

Lisa Bryer asked if he has had success in clustering in areas where the soils are bad and there are issues with reducing the size of the lots significantly? In new England there are all difficult soils and they have not had problems. Mr. Arendt told the Planning Commissioner if they have questions about the memos that were included in the packet to please call him.

2. Jamestown Land Bank and Affordable Housing Trust Act – review and comment- **continued**

A motion to adjourn at 10:10 p.m. was made by Commissioner Kelly and seconded by Commissioner Holland. So unanimously voted.

Attest:

Cynthia L Reppe
Recording Clerk

This meeting was recorded on 1-micro-cassette

