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**GOVERNOR PRENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
Monday, June 27, 2022**

A hybrid meeting of the Governor Prence Planning Committee was called to order at 5:15 p.m. in the Skaket Room of Town Hall.

Regular Members, Present: John Sargent; Mark Mathison; Fran McClennen; Hadley Luddy; Tina Shaw, Debra Oakes, Alexis Mathison.

Absent:

Town Staff Present: George Meservey, Marsha Allgeier

Guest Speakers Present: Barrett Planning Group (Elizabeth Haney, Judi Barrett), Union Studio Architecture and Community Design (Arica Thornton), Brett Pelletier

John Sargent opened the meeting and welcomed Alexis Mathison, the new representative from the Affordable Housing Trust, replacing Katie Wibby.

- I. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no public comment.
- II. **DISCUSSION OF GUIDANCE FOR REDEVELOPMENT:** George Meservey said that this meeting was primarily for the Committee to start to make decisions regarding recommendations or directions and the consultants were online to answer questions if needed. In response to Ms. Shaw's question, it was clarified that the Committee was charged with considering at least three and up to five options, but did not have to recommend three options to the Select Board.

Mr. Meservey pointed the Committee's attention to the "Guidance for Redevelopment of 66&76 Route 6A," which is a decision matrix to organize the Committee's discussion:

1. **Municipal uses:** There was discussion on the Select Board guidance to not consider the new fire station and library at this site. The location is unacceptable for the fire station because of response times. Mr. Mathison said that the Select Board had met with the Library trustees. The library work is dependent on State grant funding, for which the Town would not be eligible for several more years, and there was general agreement that the current location is the best because of proximity to Main Street and to the Middle School. John Sargent moved, seconded by Tina Shaw, that the Committee not consider the fire station and library for this site, given the Select Board guidance. Motion was approved 6-0-6.
2. **Municipal use – community center:** After discussion about the amount of land needed, whether a small building would be useful, and the difficulty of waiting for

other processes given the dire need for housing as soon as possible, it was generally agreed that there was a need for due diligence about the community center possibility before making decisions. Mr. Meservey will invite the Chair of the Community Center Feasibility Task Force to attend the next meeting of the Governor Prence Planning Committee for a conversation.

3. **Municipal use – park/open space:** There was general agreement with prior discussion about the lack of value added by a small one-acre site with Route 6A frontage given the availability of similar open space in the immediate area. There was discussion of the value of open space next to the Rail Trail (discussed below). {The Committee decided not to have formal votes, but rely on general agreement of Committee members.}
4. **Portion of site for housing:** It was decided to leave this question open until the community center discussion was culminated.
5. **Density of development:** Village Center zoning allows up to 14 units per acre and no development has yet occurred in the district at that density (Mr. Meservey cited only one other site with comparable density elsewhere in the Town). It was agreed that it was better to try to stick to the current zoning limits given the general rural nature of the Town.
6. **Number of housing units:** It was decided to leave this question open until the community center discussion was culminated.
7. **Affordability of housing:** There was considerable discussion about the various categories of affordability. The term “committed” is used to indicate some legal responsibility to maintain affordability, such as an agreement by the developer, or a land disposition agreement when the Town conveys the property to a new owner. There was general agreement that the proposed development should be structured so as to qualify for tax credits. Mr. Pelletier said that there was no one formula for ensuring that because of the income averaging used to arrive at the 60% of AMI limit; it depends on a number of factors such as units reserved for less than 30% AMI, etc. There was also discussion about whether there could or should be market rate units allowing households over 120% AMI: the limits of higher rents providing internal subsidies to lower rents of affordable units, the lack of control over what rents would be charged over time due to the lack of legal commitments to keep units within limits, whether the Town could provide additional subsidies to fund market rent units. It was clarified that the Orleans Affordable Housing Trust could only subsidize units for households up to 100% AMI. Committee members want to allow maximum flexibility to responders to an RFP to be creative. Staff will work on wording to express this position.

8. **Building type/height/tenure:** Past discussion resulting in tentative recommendations for no single-family bungalows and no homeowner units was verified. There was discussion about exceeding the 30-foot height and the 12 units-per-building limits, which would require variances. Committee members expressed interest in options that went above the height of the current concepts (3 stories). Staff will develop wording to allow designs that require relief from community zoning provided that the design is consistent with community character, achieves other goals, and is appropriate to the site.
 9. **Amenities:** There was agreement on the need for internal open space and landscaping, and a small clubhouse for residents. There was discussion about public access resulting in agreement that there should be access to open space on the site from the Rail Trail but not public access from the Rail Trail to Route 6A, in deference to residents' privacy.
 10. **Parking:** It was agreed that some parking reduction would be desirable below the required 2.1 parking spaces per unit. There was discussion about whether sub-surface parking would be possible and efficient given the site topography.
 11. **Town Subsidy:** Dependent on financing strategy, market conditions, and cost.
 12. **On-Site Improvements:** It was agreed that a sidewalk on Route 6A should be required, as well as other infrastructure.
 13. **Building Design:** It was agreed that a high quality of design was essential to ensure the development is attractive, including where possible, building entrances to enhance individuality and varied grouping and frontages of buildings.
 14. **Energy Efficiency:** There was agreement on the need for maximum feasible efficiency.
- III. **COMMITTEE CHARGE TASK 1c:** Ms. Shaw, who requested this agenda item, agreed that her issues had been covered in the prior discussion.
 - IV. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEM:** Case studies of other jurisdictions would be included in the consultant's Technical Memorandum. The Implementation Strategy is the final task required of the consultant and will be forthcoming.
 - V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 23, JUNE 6, AND JUNE 13, 2022:** Tina Shaw moved, and Fran McClennen seconded, approval of the three sets of minutes. The motion was approved 5-0-1 (Ms. Mathison abstaining).

The next meeting of the Committee will be on July 11, 2022, and will include discussion with the Community Center Feasibility Task Force and further review of the decision matrix.

It was agreed that Mr. Sargent, along with Mr. Meservey, will make a report to the Select Board on the Committee's progress to date. It would be desirable to post something in writing on the Town's website on the Committee's report.

VI. **ADJOURN:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Marsha Allgeier, Affordable Housing Coordinator