

DRAFT

Weare Center Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes – July 18, 2007

Members Present: Paul Doscher, Thomas Clow, George Malette, Ruth Jones, Dot O’Neil, Elizabeth Straw, John Houle, Elizabeth McSweeney, Ian McSweeney, Heleen Kurk, Neal Kurk, Janet Brown.
Guests: Rosemary Heard and Mike Reed.

Tom Clow started the meeting by informing the group that they had been accepted as a subcommittee of the Planning Board. He said that with this new status comes the responsibility of posting all meetings and seeing that the minutes of meetings are filed with the Town Clerk within five business days.

The next order of business concerned the name of the group. It was decided to change the name from the Weare Center Advisory Group to the Weare Center Advisory Committee. Heleen Kurk also brought up the issue of televising the meetings. It was the general consensus of those present that the meetings would not be televised. It was felt that televising the meetings would take away from the round table discussion format used by the group.

The majority of the meeting focused on a discussion of senior housing. Rosemary Heard and Mike Reed from CATCH Neighborhood Housing were present. Rosemary is president of Catch, which is a nonprofit organization that builds and manages affordable housing and senior housing projects in Merrimack County. Although Weare is not in their territory, Rosemary feels that with the approval of her board of directors, a Weare project is a possibility.

She gave a brief history of CATCH saying that it began in response to a housing crisis. Over time they have developed 200 units of “quality affordable housing” in 12 different projects. These include both rental and ownership properties. They are currently working on an age restricted project (62 and older) in Concord.

Neil asked if CATCH could come into a town such as Weare and build a senior housing project with their own money. The short answer was – yes.

Paul commented that there has not been a need for affordable housing in Weare, in part because the mobile home parks fill that need.

When asked how many units a project would need to be viable, Rosemary answered 25. She added that we would first need to do a “friendly survey” to establish a need.

A question was asked concerning income restrictions for subsidized housing. The present restriction specifies a maximum income of \$23,000 per person. Heleen asked about restricting to Weare residents. Occupancy cannot be restricted in this way. There was also a discussion of community service needs in relation to senior housing.

Paul commented on the role of the Weare Center Advisory Committee in relation to promoting this type of a project. Several sites were discussed including town owned and privately owned sites. Rosemary said that density relative to cost is the key to a project’s viability. She also said we could consider a combination of rental and ownership within the same project.

Mike Reed compared nonprofit development to for-profit. He said the margin for success is very narrow in nonprofit development.

During the discussion of density, Neil brought up the topic of transferable development rights as a possible second benefit to making zoning changes to accommodate this type of project.

Tom asked if a project developed by a nonprofit such as CATCH is taxable property. It is taxed at its full value.

In response to a question from Heleen, Rosemary said that from start to finish a housing project with CATCH is a two to three year process. She also said that there are ways to incorporate offsite improvements into a project.

In conclusion Rosemary talked about the need to involve as many people as possible in the planning of a project. She said that we might want to reconsider the decision not to televise the group's meetings. However, she said that the first thing we need to do is define what we want.

In other business, Tom Clow said that he would be stepping down as co-chair of the committee because of added responsibilities elsewhere. He will, however, remain on the committee. Ian McSweeney agreed to assume the role of co-chair along with Paul Doscher. Neil Kurk and Elizabeth McSweeney will share the responsibilities of recording secretary.

Heleen Kurk brought up the topic of signs. Specifically she is investigating costs and designs for a new sign for the Town Office Building. Granite State Signs in Henniker made the "Welcome to Weare" signs. Gagnon Signs in Brooklyn, Connecticut, made the sign in front of the Town Hall.

Tom Clow is looking into a new flagpole for the Town Office Building and has contacted Flagworks in Concord and Jutrus Signs in Goffstown for prices. Prices for a commercial fiberglass flagpole at Jutrus Signs are: 20' - \$975.00, 25' - \$1,120.00, 30' - \$1,350.00. There is an installation fee of \$850.00, however, the company representative said that most groups install the poles themselves.

The proposed sign at the new Middle School was also discussed. The group feels that it should conform to the new sign ordinance and be similar in design to the sign at Center Woods School and other signs in the middle of town such as the new Historical Society sign. It was pointed out that a common background color for signs in the Town Center would be a way to provide uniformity. Signs at the Town Hall, Historical Society, and Library have a green background. Paul will pass on the committee's thoughts to the Chairman of the School Board.

It was suggested that in the future the committee's meetings be limited to 90 minutes.

Next Meeting: August 15, 2007, 7:00 p.m. at the Town Office Building

Topics: Parking, Continuation of items on checklist from June 20 meeting minutes.