

Windham Master Plan 2005

Land Use and Housing Workshop – Meeting Minutes

Planning Office

Wednesday, June 9, 2004 – 7:30 p.m.

“Growth is inevitable..., but the destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how.”

Edward T. McMahon, The Conservation Fund

Taken from Windham Planning Board Annual Report 2003

- “Village District” – Town Commons on Route 111 cited as positive addition to Town. Need to attract uses that **generate tax revenue**...yet, place in appropriate places (e.g. industrial park is not even visible to many residents! Truck traffic in residential areas should be minimized.) Can mixed use occur near/behind Library?
- **Wetlands protection/Watershed protection** has resulted in good amount of open space, which contributes greatly to the Town’s character. Issues relating to these ordinances include:
 - Variances issued by the Zoning Board tend to be for pools, and housing additions that frequently do not expand the footprint of the home. Usually variances from WWPD – should look at revising ordinance, perhaps, to allow commonly-granted activities.
 - Setbacks can be obstacles to industrial and commercial development – look to modify for instances where protection can be achieved while eliminating deterrent to positive development.
 - Remaining larger sites for commercial development are generally limited by ledge, wetlands. Small sites do exist.
- **Seasonal conversions** to year-round occupancy have positive and negative effects: septic systems are being improved with conversions and tax revenues increase, yet density is dramatically increasing as homes are re-built, and people aren’t used to living in such close environs. Also: potential issues of septic capacity with comparatively intensive usage – perhaps a common sewage treatment system for the Lake area should be considered. Roadways can be improved with conversions, but many are not properly built to serve the increased use. Concern about fairness: first people “in” are using capacity which may not be available to support later development in a similar manner. This area provides some of the most affordable housing opportunities in Windham.
- **Farms and farmland** are important to Windham’s character, but many farms have been sold for development, and remaining farmers are protective about future rights to develop.
- **Scenic views and view corridors are important** – Range Road is one. Planning Board would like to be able to consider viewshed protection, but caution against being too bureaucratic/too much regulation – if people hear more restrictions will be adopted, they may clear cut, sell soon, etc. Scenic designation of Morrison Road did not prevent detrimental changes from occurring – there is a need to learn more about how to protect and manage scenic roadways.
- **Traffic.** Noise and circulation are both problems. Lack of connectivity in residential areas.
 - Discussion about how to solve traffic on Route 111 included those who thought widening was a good idea to those who see widening the road as devastating to the Town’s character. Identifying alternative to solving Route 111 backups must be addressed.

- Can a new exit off of Route 93 help the 111 issue?
- Should overpasses on Route 111 be considered (particularly if widened, and esp. for pedestrian and bicycle traffic)?
- ***Clear cutting of lots.*** Planning Board has no standards for installation of street trees. Loss of trees should be addressed. There was discussion about identifying important natural resources (tree stands, habitats, etc.) to keep in mind when reviewing developments.
- Usable open space in open space subdivisions – there is some sentiment that the open space set aside in open space residential subdivisions is not utilized to a great degree and perhaps could be made more available for active and/or passive recreation.

Housing:

- Lake district is growing – target for multifamily?
- Cap on elderly housing (# of units) should be adjusted upward to meet demand. Possibly target new areas for elderly housing developments
- Create new residential zones for different types/needs – w/mixed use, neighborhood uses, walkability.
- Concern that cost of housing is driving life-long Windham residents out of town.
- Should work force housing be a community goal? How? Land is limited...Town subsidized?

Planning Focus Areas:

- Intersection of 93 and 111
- Clark Farm area – consider rezoning from rural residential (high school site?? Land purchased and owned by developer...) – area fronts on Route 111 – not Rural residential in nature.
- Campbell Farm, Kendall Pond
- Route 28 corridor – impacts from 93 construction, concern about safety (re: fire response times)
- Access roads off of major corridors to minimize traffic/sprawl
- Plan for 93 construction – impact re: lack of connectivity
- Provide activities for active seniors.