

Wilmington Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday December 14, 2020 at 4:00 PM via Zoom

**Open Meeting**

Meg opened the meeting at 4:05 PM. In attendance, Meg Staloff, vice-chair, Tom Consolino, John Lebron, Angela Yakovleff  
Mike Tuller, Zoning Administrator  
Gretchen Havreluk, Economic Development Specialist  
Visitor: Jessica Lee Smith

**Possible Additions to the Agenda**

None

**Public Comment**

Jessica Lee Smith asked how the public could be assured of being recognized to have questions answered, especially at Select Board meetings. She noted at Planning Commission meetings she had been recognized. It was suggested she contact the Select Board or Town Manager with her concern.

Gretchen said Tom had requested a copy of the housing analysis. She will get this to him this week.

**Approve Minutes from November 23, 2020**

Tom made a motion to approve the minutes of November 23, 2020.

Angela seconded.

In favor: Tom, Meg, Angela

Opposed: none

Abstain: John

**Continue Discussion on housing needs in Wilmington**

Meg sent out a draft of a letter to the Select Board for them to consider concerning our discussion and decisions by the Planning Commission on zoning in relation to development of diverse housing options that meet the needs of the community.

There was a lengthy discussion concerning the possible changes to the zoning ordinance that would meet the Town's present housing needs. Our proposals tie in with the document, Enabling Better Places, gentle infill, and two parts of the Town Plan. Changes would allow for units of up to four families. Units of more than four families would be subject to review. Up to two guest bedrooms would be allowed. Lodging with more than two guest bedrooms is already a conditional use. Is all lodging a conditional use? There was also discussion concerning air B&Bs and how they are affected by present zoning. Gretchen said the state has done nothing to regulate them in terms of fire and safety. They are not being monitored at all.

John noted our stated goal is to increase senior housing and workforce housing. Why do we want to promote air B&B?

Meg feels if we are going to work on that we should contact someone with lots of experience to help.

Changes in language on the draft were suggested. We agreed residential stipulations dealing with density and lot coverage should be in line with commercial in the commercial/residential district. Deeper setbacks are somewhat of a safety issue.

Various types of senior housing were discussed. Parking, too, is a consideration.

Dimensional standards remain. They prevent overbuilding.

Tom asked what the size limitations are under residential. He wondered why we aren't saying a principal home with up to four units?

Gretchen mentioned there may be properties that are abandoned that may be of interest in developing as senior or workforce housing. Meg suggested we develop a definition for senior housing then make this a conditional use.

A working definition is, "Senior housing is housing that is suitable for the needs of an aging population. It ranges from independent living to 24 hour care. In senior housing there is an emphasis on safety, accessibility, adaptability, and longevity that many conventional housing options may lack."

Ms Smith wondered if there were protections for people who already live there? Meg said the definition of senior housing can be used in all districts. What about density limits changed as a conditional use?

Tom said in research on senior housing there was no development that does not define it as 55 and over. There are minimal setbacks and the amount of space that can be taken up is far less (10 ft. setbacks and structures are larger than 30% of lot space) than ours.

Meg wondered if two lots could be combined to provide the specified lot coverage and still provide multi-family buildings?

Mike will look into assemblages. Ideally, they should be on the Town sewer. He thinks focus could be on the Route 9 corridor close to downtown.

Gretchen said she has seen small houses in a group that has its own septic.

Meg said we should not have a "massive overhaul" to the zoning ordinance without help. We need to focus on what we can do now.

Suggestions were made about public outreach to the community to get their input. Mike suggested a steering committee of community "experts" to aid the vetting process. A possible survey was discussed. Gretchen suggested a conversation with large property owners and Sue Westa from WRC.

Meg asked about applying for a municipal planning grant with the understanding we'll have community dialogue. Would this be more the Select Board's or the Planning Commission's role? For the next meeting Meg will reach out to Adam Grinold for input and Tom Fitzgerald as the Select Board liaison to discuss proposals.

Gretchen thinks the draft proposal should use language such as incremental, short term/temporary, and suggest the Select Board appoint a task force to work on this.

### **Old Business**

none

**Next Meeting – December 28, 2020 at 4:00 PM via Zoom**

**Adjournment**

Tom made a motion to adjourn at 5:51 PM.

John seconded.

In Favor: Tom, Meg, John, Angela

Opposed: none

Abstain: none

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Yakovleff, scribe