



Town of Warner NH
Housing Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes June 27, 2024 – **DRAFT**

Attendees: Ian Rogers, Bill Hanson, Barak Greene, Barbara Marty, Mark Allen, David Bates, Bob Holmes, Pier D'Aprile, Laura Hallahan, Bob Bower, Matt Taylor, Bret Ingold, Judy Newman-Rogers
(via Zoom) Dana Myskowski

Meeting called to order at 19:06:41

Background

The meeting focused on reviewing and updating the master plan for Warner housing chapter, addressing the inclusion of the Kawasiwajo Community Land Trust (KCLT) in the town organizations report, and discussing various issues related to affordable housing, zoning flexibility, and community engagement.

1. Review and approval of the minutes from the last meeting.

Dana Myskowski prepared the last set of minutes.

Recognition that Andy Bodnarik, (the master editor), resigned from the Planning Board.

No edits or concerns were raised by the attendees.

Motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded.

All attendees voted in favor.

2. Inclusion of the Kawasiwajo Community Land Trust (KCLT) in the town organizations report.

KCLT was left out of the previously approved report.

Brett wrote a statement for KCLT's inclusion.

Copies of the statement were distributed for review.

A suggestion was made to change the wording to credit the committee instead of individuals.

Motion to approve the inclusion with the suggested change was made and seconded.

All attendees voted in favor.

3. Discussion on recommendations and ideas for the master plan.

A small group met to discuss the master plan recommendations.

Reviewed what was done and what wasn't from the last master plan.

Clarified definitions of manufactured and modular homes.

Discussed the differences between manufactured and modular homes, including financing and building codes.

Decided that modular homes did not need to be included in the zoning ordinance.

4. Accuracy of past population projections and their impact on housing demand.

Projections from the 2011 master plan were discussed, but it was noted that they were outdated and did not account for economic downturns.

The state updates population projections every two years, but the master plan remained static.

It was suggested that the new master plan should avoid including specific population projections due to their inaccuracy.

5. Review of the town's current zoning framework with regard to housing.

There was a discussion on whether the master plan should include a comprehensive review of the zoning framework.

Some participants felt that the language from the 2011 master plan was too broad and needed to be more specific.

It was suggested that the wording be revised to better reflect the intended scope.

The January draft document unpacks different aspects of the zoning ordinance.

6. Evaluation of the housing survey paragraph.

The survey yielded 404 responses, but the paragraph discussing it seemed negative.

It was recommended to highlight the positive aspects of the survey and acknowledge the concerns about representation of renters and younger residents.

7. Incorporating property taxes into the housing chapter of the master plan.

The survey indicated that property taxes were a major concern for residents.

There was a strong consensus that property taxes should be considered in housing-related decisions.

It was noted that high property taxes have been a perennial issue in Warner.

The planning board should take into account the impact of new developments on property taxes.

There was a discussion on how housing impacts taxes, including the effect on school district taxes.

The first paragraph should state the facts of the data collected and mention that the impacts of tax should be considered in housing-related decisions moving forward

Instead of saying specific issues fall outside the scope, say the solution to these issues falls outside of this chapter and needs to be addressed by the planning board when reviewing future development.

8. Impact of new developments on town expenses and infrastructure.

New developments should be assessed for their cost-benefit impact on the town.

Sprawl was identified as a concern due to its potential to increase public infrastructure costs without sufficient tax revenue.

The planning board should consider the marginal cost of population growth when approving new developments.

9. Reflecting survey responses in the final product

Ensure that everyone who filled out a survey sees something reflected in the final product.

Avoid making it feel like points were sidestepped.

Include high-level directions for the planning board to work on revenues and expenditures.

10. Mission statement of the Planning Board

The planning board's mission statement may not substantially address the concerns raised in the survey.

You cannot deny a development solely based on potential expenses to the town if it meets all zoning criteria.

Consider whether the RSA gives the authority to make cost-benefit analyses.

Towns can impose impact fees if they think a development will cost the town.

Warner currently does not impose such fees except for businesses.

11. Reviewing the draft and survey results

Plan to meet as a working group again to incorporate suggestions.

Consider using a data-driven chart to reflect survey results.

Include quotes from the survey in the final document.

Ensure the language is neutral and does not appear to be anti-subdivision or anti-development.

Consider the impact of tax rates in a way that is vague enough to avoid taking sides.

12. Housing costs and affordability

35% of respondents said they paid between 30 and 50% of their income in housing costs.

Just under 9% said they spent over 50% of their income on housing.

13. Defining areas for building and conserving land

Emphasize the importance of clearly defining where building should and should not occur to reflect community preferences and conserve agricultural land.

Noted that survey responses indicated a strong preference for preserving natural features like trees, nature, and rivers.

Mentioned the in-person forum where participants indicated preferred areas for housing using stickers.
Highlight the difficulty in enforcing zoning restrictions and the perception that they limit housing availability.
Suggested considering form-based codes to address community character and housing structure preferences.
Explained how form-based codes can guide development by specifying building types and designs, citing examples from Canterbury.
Question about retrofitting existing commercial areas with form-based facades.
Responded that planning boards can negotiate design elements during site plan reviews.

14. Community engagement and education

Discussed the importance of educating the community about planning processes and housing needs.
Emphasized the need for community understanding of planning board conditions to alleviate fears about development aesthetics.
Pointed out the high costs of building workforce housing and how it has changed since the last master plan.
Mentioned that increasing supply could reduce demand, but costs remain a barrier.
Note state incentives to encourage affordable housing development.

15. Grants for affordable housing and decentralized grant structures

Federal grants are available for building affordable housing units, but they are often directed towards big population centers like Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Chicago, leaving smaller states like New Hampshire with less funding.
There is no decentralized way to provide grants for individuals wanting to convert their homes into duplexes, which could increase housing supply at a lower cost.
USDA rural grants are available and are being monitored by non-profits.
There are potential lending solutions for ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) conversions, with banks like Bangor Savings working on facilitating these loans.

16. Community land trusts and non-profit partnerships

Community land trusts and non-profit partnerships can help provide credit for housing conversions.
The town government should partner more with community land trusts to achieve housing recommendations.

17. Town ordinances and condo community bylaws

Town ordinances do not specifically outline bylaws for condo communities, which can lead to complications in defining common and private areas.
State requirements exist for condo ownership, but town planning boards often review homeowners association bylaws during the approval period.
Encouraging condominiums can increase the tax base and home ownership, leading to a stronger community.
Recommendations include encouraging condominiums and other home ownership models, as reflected in the recommendations list.

18. Review of recommendations from the 2011 master plan

The recommendations list includes creating a housing commission, conducting community engagement, and adopting senior housing ordinances.
Incentives for senior housing must also be offered for workforce housing due to state law changes.
Reducing the required tract size for manufactured housing parks and clarifying definitions of tiny houses were also recommended.

19. Supporting affordable home ownership through resident-owned manufactured housing.

Suggested including a bullet point about supporting affordable home ownership and incorporating resident-owned manufactured housing as a subclass.
Mentioned the potential for tenants to collectively purchase residential facilities, providing an example of a facility costing \$1.2 million, with individual houses costing \$150,000 to \$160,000.
Highlighted the issue of money flow, noting that resident-owned housing helps keep money in the community and builds equity.

Proposed encouraging the development of community-owned mobile home parks.
Emphasize the importance of showing the value of such initiatives to the community.
Suggested using action language and requiring home ownership in resident-owned communities.

20. Educational component for public understanding of housing options.

Emphasized the importance of educating the public about the benefits and workings of different housing options.
Pointed out the negative connotations associated with terms like 'trailer park' and the need for rebranding.
Expressed caution about using the term 'education' in recommendations, as it can be vague and non-directive.

21. Regulations and zoning for manufactured housing.

Discussed the current regulations that require new manufactured housing to be sited in a park and suggested allowing them on individual lots.
Clarified that the state allows manufactured housing on individual lots, but local regulations can be restrictive.
Mentioned existing zoning language that requires homeowners associations for cluster housing developments and suggested similar requirements for manufactured housing parks.
Proposed identifying town-owned property for resident-owned communities and expressed concerns about the town's ability to manage such properties effectively.
Suggested that a non-profit could manage the properties instead.

22. Cluster housing and density incentives.

Noted that the draft master plan mentions open space development and the lack of density incentives.
Suggested that the town could offer density incentives for cluster housing developments.
Proposed allowing more flexible lot sizes in certain areas, such as the medium-density R2 district along Route 103.

23. Obstacles preventing developers from building \$250,000 homes

Developers face high costs due to zoning restrictions and land prices.
Non-profit developers might be willing to take on such projects.
Building new, affordable housing is challenging due to high initial costs.
A feasibility study could help determine if affordable housing can be achieved by reducing zoning restrictions.
The study would assess the potential for \$250,000 homes.
Reducing lot sizes and setbacks could lower housing costs.
Allowing more flexible zoning could encourage development.

24. Challenges of building new affordable housing -

New construction is rarely the most affordable options.
Increasing housing supply can lower prices over time.
Educating residents on the benefits of adding rental units could help.
Loosening zoning restrictions for existing homes could facilitate this.

25. Property taxes and housing affordability

High property taxes in New Hampshire do not deter people from moving in.
Increasing the number of high-value homes could boost tax revenue.

26. Next steps for zoning changes and housing development

Suggestions for zoning changes should align with community feedback.
Central could provide a list of potential zoning changes.

27. Feedback and Specificity in Suggestions

Emphasized the importance of matching feedback and providing specific suggestions based on community comments.
Agreed, noting that previous feedback was too general and that more focused suggestions are needed.

28. Zoning Ordinances and Potential Changes

Suggested reading through zoning ordinances to identify specific changes that reflect community comments. Proposed including potential district changes, such as changing from R2 to R1 and discussed the master plan's recommendations for redrawing the interval map to solve zoning issues.

29. Timing for Future Meetings

Proposed meeting dates for the work group and the larger group, suggesting the 10th for the work group and the 25th for the larger group and discussed the timing for submitting homework and ensuring Central has enough time to incorporate feedback.

Called for a motion to approve the proposed meeting dates.

Motion made seconded and approved by the group.

30. Announcements and Adjournment -

Announced that Matt Taylor and Michael Polizzotti are moving to new positions.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded. All attendees voted in favor at 21:08

Action Items

Work group to meet and review zoning ordinances, identify specific changes reflecting community comments. July 10th @ 6pm

Larger group to meet to discuss and finalize suggestions July 25th @ 7pm

Submit homework on zoning ordinances and suggestions by July 8th.

Central to incorporate feedback and make recommendations for potential zoning changes.