



Town of Warner NH
Housing Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes, August 22, 2024

Attendees: Pier D'Aprile, Barak Greene, Laura Hallahan, Bill Hanson, Ian Rogers, Jim Sherman, Mike Tardiff (Central NH Regional Planning Commission).

The meeting opened at 7:05.

Minutes

Ian distributed the minutes from the July 25th meeting. Barak made a motion to approve the minutes without revisions, and Laura seconded. The group voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

HOP Grant Final Report

Ian introduced a Final Report for the HOP grant that he had received from NH Housing. The report must be submitted before the town can receive its final grant reimbursement. The group agreed to fill it out together, and brainstormed responses while Ian took notes. Mike Tardiff offered insights from Central Regional's perspective, noting that in comparison to other towns they work with, Warner took the lead with the process and conducted a lot of community engagement.

Master Plan Text

The group then moved on to discussing the Master Plan text document. Mike commented that he saw this meeting as the last meeting before Central can prepare a completed draft, noting that there was still work to be done within the HAC with the draft before passing it on to the Planning Board. He also noted that he was hoping Janice had been at the meeting so that they could talk as a group about issues that pass through the Land Use Office.

Buildable Area and Noncontiguous Structures

Barak brought out a list of ideas he'd prepared, noting that the 1/2 extra buildable area requirement for multifamily housing was making development difficult and should be changed, though it might be too much to get rid of it completely. Keeping the requirement for dwellings with 3 or more units could be a good compromise, which would make it easier to build duplexes.

Barak also brought up the idea of making it easier to build noncontiguous structures as multifamily units, similar to a detached ADU, and this could make it easier for older couples who wanted to build a small cottage to retire on. Bill brought up the 75-foot tethering rule for ADUs, and the group discussed septic systems for detached buildings and the regulations involved.

More relaxed rules for noncontiguous structures would also make it easier for people who owned older houses with barns they wanted to turn into living units. Pier supported this, saying that many elderly people wanted a living situation where they could live with someone else. This led to a discussion about different types of communal living arrangements on one piece of property (for example, friends buying a house together), and how to encourage that. Bill asked how this would affect road frontage, and Barak answered that road frontage wouldn't be affected, because there would only be one lot. Mike added that a phrase like "more flexibility" covered the noncontiguous housing issue at the Master Plan level.

Senior Housing

Jim spoke about the importance of affordable housing and how the town regulations made it difficult to build larger multifamily and senior housing. This led to a discussion about the definition of senior housing and who lives there, as the average age for moving into senior housing is age 82.

Jim also spoke to the different types and levels of supportive services for seniors, and noted that there are many older people in town who want to downsize and need senior housing. Barak responded with the idea of creating density incentives for senior and affordable housing. There was discussion about different sizes of senior centers, as well as what was appropriate for Warner. Mike also added that insights from this conversation about senior housing could be useful for housing conversations down the road. Jim offered to write up some insights into senior housing for the HAC to look at, which Mike was in favor of. Jim also mentioned that affordable housing is important for many of the activities that the Economic Development Committee is looking at.

Design Overlay District & Cluster Developments

Barak brought up the idea of a Design Overlay District to maintain the character of the town between Exits 7 and 9, which could come with density bonuses. There was talk about how this related to cluster developments and aesthetics. Mike noted that regulations related to design (as opposed to density bonuses) could be a flash point. People on the survey talked about walkability, which could tie into design.

The group talked about cluster/open space developments, and the recommendation that the Town's current ordinance be made easier to use or incentivized. Language to adjust buildable areas and road frontage could be useful here. Barak also noted that minimizing the amount of blacktop/roads is important for affordability, and Mike agreed that many towns are looking at this as well. In addition, not every town has a buildable area requirement for its cluster development ordinance. Barak also talked about shared driveways as a potential tool, while Pier discussed restrictions at a larger level. Mike posed the idea of having a discussion about why the town has frontage requirements, and what purpose they serve. Barak also emphasized the importance of Community Land Trusts.

Barak posed the idea of a density bonus for condominium developments, though Mike advised asking Town Council about this. However, condominiums and co-ops could be an excellent option for creating missing middle housing. The group discussed the definition of a condominium (which can be foreclosed on) and a co-op (where the other owners have to step in to avoid a foreclosure). To conclude, the group decided to add the word "density" to Recommendation #3 regarding affordable and senior housing.

Mike noted that this conversation is helping him fill in the blanks he needs to prepare the Housing Chapter draft. He also asked Barak to write up his ideas about noncontiguous multifamily housing and community land trusts so that he can get everything into the Housing Chapter draft.

Intervale

Mike also brought up the recommendation for the Intervale district, and expressed the need to clarify the district's purpose and the Board's goals for it. He pointed out that the Intervale district actually reduces the number of permitted uses, and the district has the potential for additional uses.

Barak brought up mixed-use as a possibility, along with more mixed-use zoning other places in town, since several people in town have come before the Board wanting to start businesses in residential areas. Mike suggested that more flexibility could be helpful, and the group discussed potential small-scale

mixed-use. Ian brought up the 2004 Design Charrette that focused on the Intervale, and pointed out that conversations about the Intervale aren't as active as they were in the 2000s.

Next Steps

Ian asked Mike to clarify next steps: Mike said he will take Central's current Master Plan draft that Matt Taylor prepared last winter, add updated data, and fill it in based on the HAC's conversations. After that, the committee can work through it and then pass the baton to the Planning Board for more discussion.

There was some discussion of how much time remained in the process: Bill asked how many more meetings would be needed? Mike said the committee could go over the draft in one meeting, but a second meeting might be necessary. Pier also agreed with the committee finishing with the Housing Chapter next time. Ian agreed, but said it might depend on how many edits people had for the chapter. Mike voiced the idea that the HAC could hold a second meeting after the first one if it was needed.

Because Mike is helping the Economic Development Committee on the fourth Thursday in September, he cannot meet that night. The group discussed potential meeting dates and decided on Tuesday, September 24th for the next meeting. Bill said that September would have to be his last meeting because of the Budget Committee, but voiced the idea of putting out feelers for a potential new co-facilitator. Laura expressed some interest in the position, and the group discussed how this might work. Mike will send the Housing Chapter draft a week before the meeting (September 17th), and it will be disseminated to the group.

Barak also brought up the idea of preparing zoning changes for March. Bill said that would be the Planning Board's job, and Mike agreed, adding that finding low-hanging fruit could be a good idea. Mike would also like to talk to Janice, either during the HAC meeting or in a separate Zoom, about what people come into the Land Use Office wanting to do, and will talk with Kathy about setting this up.

Finally, Ian asked a question from the Planning Board about whether Central could help with an STR ordinance as part of the HOP grant. Mike answered that this would depend on several factors, especially timing, and would have to be figured out.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53.