**Public Planning Board**

Anne Stewart Joan Kozar

Ann Howe Jim Atkinson

Karen Hall Al Atkinson

Jay Kennedy

Joy Potter David Spitz

Jim Cheverie

Don Howell

Sandra Hall

Carole Ridley

Liz Dubuque

Perry Gabour

Resumption of EH Subcommittee Meetings after summer hiatus. (Last meeting was on 25 June 2015)

Joan Kozar (JK) provided a brief introduction, noting that there had been a hiatus, but that the EH Subcommittee had prepared a proposal (available on the town website) that takes into account the work that the Subcommittee and the Town Planner, David Spitz did in the winter and spring. Jim Atkinson (JA) presented the plans for the way forward.

The meeting started with a discussion of the traffic issues that were raised in December 12/2/2014 traffic analysis done by the Cape Cod Commission (CCC). Essentially there were already some failed and failing intersections in the East Harwich commercial zone in question. David Spitz (DS) noted that this meeting was to continue the discussion that began in May/June 2015. DS has rewritten a zoning proposal. With the CCC findings, the scope of traffic mitigation must be addressed. He proposed two considerations:

1. Impact fees to be assessed to developers to cover costs of traffic mitigation (like the Harwich sidewalk fund). The Town Planners in Dennis and Hyannis have both recommended against impact fees.
2. Implementing mandatory traffic mitigation into each development plan.

The success or failure of the traffic situation in East Harwich is under the aegis of the Public Works, not the Planning Board. The PB can only suggest what could be done.

Questions from the Public:

Ann Howe: What will stop people from parking in one lot (i.e., 400 East Plaza) and simply walking across the vegetation diving strip to the new Agway? There is a question of adjacency, parking and walking that needs to be addressed.

DS and JA replied that current zoning regulations require sufficient parking to be placed on an applicant’s property. The zoning regulations do not address the situation that Ann Howe cited.

Don Howell: advised that he was the clerk of the Planning Board when the sidewalk fund was started. He did not find that the monies from the fund have been specifically used in the locations that were being developed, but rather had gone to the general benefit of all of the Town of Harwich.

Anne Stewart: requested clarification about why the TIP project (for Rte137) had not taken care of the intersection issues that are now being raised by the CCC.

JA replied that the question is one for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

Carol Ridley: attended the December 2014 meeting when the project impacts were first discussed, and believes that the assumptions of scale made by the CCC meant failure. The first step should be to get more assessment.

Karen Hall: spoke of the current dangerous conditions, and the need to resolve the transportation issues first.

Ann Howe: asked how do we define the need for more assessment. She indicated she wanted to have access to the base data.

JA responded that we can submit the current plan and ask for and updated survey. The data for the previous survey(s) is public, and available in the December 2014 study. The CCC data and assessments were based on peak season traffic.

At present, several intersections are at a “failure point” regardless of whether it is current, no build or proposed build scenario. Changing the mix of retail/professional/residential might have an effect on the traffic. Some mitigation (improved signalization, timing, etc.) could improve things somewhat.

Peggy Gabour: questioned why the increase in traffic going to the Fontaine outpatient survey was not included in the original TIP or the December 2015 CCC survey.

The discussion moved to the second planned topic, that of open space and/or public space. The EH Subcommittee is working on the current zoning for the commercial district, but bringing to bear the overall open space configuration in Harwich.

The 5-acre parcel behind the CVS and Hinkley’s was raised as an example of space that could be made useable for the public. It is not a conservation area.

Ann Howe: objected to the proposal for the 5 acre parcel, stating that leaving it as “just brush” is a good use of land for wildlife conservation, not just public space.

The discussion then opened to general questions from the public.

Don Howell: One major concern is the compartmentalization of efforts. Each committee/town unit appears to have their own responsibility, with no cohesive management. In addition, the wastewater issue is driving much of the discussion of development in East Harwich. This is a “chicken and egg” issue – which comes first, sewering or development. Many fear that the sewering will just enable more development.

JA responded that the open space proposal will be part of the discussion with the Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen needs to coordinate the differing paths. They could ask one group to work another to pull it together. The EH Subcommittee and the Planning Board are only looking at one part, but we want to come to a conclusion on what we have engaged in for years.

Sandy Hall: why do we have to develop East Harwich anyway?

DS responded that the Planning Board has been asked to consider development in East Harwich for the benefit of the future Cape Cod inhabitants. To develop the commercial zone, a mixed-use zone that is pedestrian friendly is a commonly accepted good practice. The current zone allows for only 40% development (and less in the DCPC zones), which does not allow for development. However, the EH Subcommittee accepts that there is sentiment opposing this from the townspeople, and that a two-thirds vote in favor of a development plan is currently unlikely.

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