

Town of Washington

Planning Board Summary

January 9, 2024

Attendance: Micah Nelson (Chair), Samuel Collins, Seth Anderson, Kristie Grant (VC/S), Erick Anderson (Alt.), Will Cassis, Steve Ocean (Alt.)

Absent: Dave Studer (CEO)

Public Attendees: Peter Drum, Freya Drum, Wes Daniel

Meeting is started at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Board reviews December summary. Will Cassis motions to approve as written, Sam Collins 2nds . All in Favor, none opposed, December summary is approved.

Multi-Unit Building Ordinance change proposal;

Washington town attorney, Peter Drum has prepared the proposed changes to the ordinances. The Town must be in compliance with the State which is implementing a system to encourage growth. The proposed changes first include definitions. 1) ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT : A self-contained dwelling unit that is either attached to or detached from a primary dwelling unit on a shared parcel of land belonging to a SINGLE family, often referred to as an In-Law apartment. ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS must meet a minimum of 190 square feet and cannot exceed 800 square feet. 2) DWELLING: Any building or structure or portion there of used for residential purposes. 3) MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING: A building containing four to six dwelling units for four or more families living independently of one another. Multi-Family Dwellings may not be ACCESSORY Dwellings. 4) SMALL DETACHED DWELLING: A structure containing one to three dwelling units for occupation by not more than three families. This term includes multi-sectional modular and will include manufactured homes and older mobile homes. 5)TWO-FAMILY DWELLING: Residential building occupied by two independent families. Peter Drum did note that the State has allowed for towns to be able maintain minimum lot requirements which is a change from allowing a subdivision of 3 dwellings on non-compliant lots after 10 years.

Micah Nelson had questions about the SMALL DETACHED DWELLING ordinance and the possibility of having up to 3 units on a single lot. Peter Drum explained that this was part of the State planning and for a more developed area with infrastructure the number of allowable dwellings could go up to six. Maine Housing is offering grants to encourage development and the Town of Washington could use the grant requirements to shape the ordinances. Erick Anderson is concerned entities could abuse the regulations for new construction of Air BnB style rentals.

The proposed Moratorium Ordinance outlines the burdens that large developments could pose on the Town infrastructure due to the high demand for increased housing and the relatively low purchase price for land in the community. The document notes the impact on schools, safety, public health, and welfare. The Town of Washington has no police or rescue squad, and its fire fighters are volunteers. Town has no dump, water/sewer infrastructure, and no plans to expand into providing such services. The Moratorium proposal would extent a pause to all such development to the full extent allowed by law.

Steve Ocean motions to accept the proposed moratorium measures, Sam Collins 2nds . All in favor, the proposal will now be submitted to the Selectmen's Board for their review and approval before being presented at a public hearing to the community.

Micah Nelson asks Peter Drum what type of recourse is available if the ordinances are being misused. Peter notes that the new regulations give towns no pathway to report abuse at this time. Steve Ocean states that other communities will possibly experience abuses before Washington encounters them and those situations need to be monitored.

McDowell Farm:

The McDowell farm project has opted to plant the marijuana outside without use of a greenhouse and no longer requires Planning Board involvement. The project still needs to get approval from the Sheriff and local Fire Chief. Will Cassis wants to confirm that the project is still recreational, Steve Ocean confirms that is still the case as he understands it.

Scrapdogs:

Will Cassis also wants to note that when Scrapdogs come in for their new licensing they need to be made aware their odor mitigation systems need work.

Meeting adjourned 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Hassanein