

**Minutes of**  
**The Williamstown Planning Board**  
**WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2015**  
**7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Building**

**Members Present:** Elizabeth McGowan, Chris Winters, Ann McCallum, Carol Stein Payne.

**Others Present:** Andrew Groff, Leslie Reed Evans

Ms. McGowan opened the meeting at 7:03 PM.

**ANR**

**Near Thornliebank Road : Williamstown Rural Lands**

Ms. Reed-Evans from Williamstown Rural Lands (WRLF) explained the ANR proposal. This parcel is a donation of land that will provide a route for a new trail and help to provide new and improved access into the Hunter Property.

Ms. McGowan commented on the generosity of the gift.

Ms. McCallum moved that the Board approve the Approval Not Required plan for WRLF and The Smiths for land off of Thornliebank Road.

Ms. Stein – Payne seconded.

The motion carried unanimously.

**New Business**

*Hotel Building Committee: McCallum*

Ms. McCallum stated that the building committee met on the 26th and noted that Jim Kolesar of Williams College is working on getting various members of the community on the committee to comment on varying categories of the project impact. One of these is the wetlands issue. One problem with the wetlands on the site is that the on the street site favored by some might be more difficult to receive Conservation Commission approval than the setback site.

Ms. McCallum further explained the issues with Riverfront area and performance standards, it might not be possible to meet the required performance standards.

Mr. Groff offered some clarification on the Conservation Commission issues and agreed meeting the standards will be difficult.

Ms. McCallum added that the argument at the most recent meeting concluded with the opinion that hotel should be on the street when other factors were discussed. The wetlands issue however seems to be a quite problematic issue and might overrule the other factors.

Ms. McCallum added that Williamstown has many rural areas and not too many areas that are urban and promote walking and connectivity like a hotel on the street could. This could be an opportunity to create real walkability.

Ms. McCallum added that after the meeting she spoke with Vincent Guntlow for more information about the wetlands issue. If the plan was adjusted and enough area that had been the Legion parking lot was left open to create a buffer along Christmas Brook for a net gain of vegetated land it might be possible to build at the on street site.

Ms. McCallum further added that current storm water standards prefer Low Impact Development techniques (LID) and incorporation of these elements could be helpful in getting a plan approved.

Ms. McCallum added that the end result of her process with Mr. Guntlow is to attempt to create a plan that would be agreeable to DEP and the Conservation Commission.

Ms. McCallum discussed the location of the hotel and parking in such a plan.

The Board asked what parking can be placed in which locations. Does any rezoning have to be done to accommodate parking?

*Housing Planning Project*

Ms. McGowan stated that Amy Jeschawitz has prepared a schedule for looking into housing policy as an issue and create a study that is an update of housing policy in Williamstown.

Ms. McGowan stated that she would support creating assignments and defining the problem facing housing at the next meeting.

Ms. McGowan asked the Board what they consider the demands for housing in Williamstown.

Ms. Stein Payne stated that one aspect of the process should be working in concert with the Economic Development Committee to focus on creating “small a” affordable housing.

Ms. McCallum stated that perhaps the Board could begin research now.

Mr. Groff added that parsing out tasks to the Board members now to research demand could be a way of getting started so that each Board member has a solid foundation to discuss the issues at the next meeting.

Ms. McCallum noted that the Housing Authority should be included in this

Mr. Groff stated he will begin compiling some of the quantitative data present in various reports that have recently been conducted on the subject.

Ms. McCallum stated she will research college based demand from, alums, professors, parents. These are all groups are all interested in small residential units.

Ms. McGowan gave out a brief report on the progress of the Cable Mills project and the status of the lease out from Amy Jeschawitz. It was noted that demand has been somewhat strong. Occupancy is expected by December.

Mr. Groff was directed to send out tasks for research to individual Board Members.

The Board noted that they will continue this discussion at the next Board meeting in early June.

## **MINUTES**

Ms. McCallum and Ms. McGowan offered minor corrections.

Ms. McCallum moved to approve the minutes of April 2015.

Ms. Stein Payne seconded.

The motion carried 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.