



TOWN OF WESTON

Planning Board Meeting March 3, 2021
Document Prepared by Susan Peghiny

Approved 7/28/21

Video Recording: [Click Here](#)

Meeting called to order at 7:16 PM. Chair Alicia Primer read Governor Baker’s Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

| Planning Board Members | Present | Staff Members | Present |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--|----------------|
| Alicia Primer (AP) - Chair | Yes | Imaikalani Aiu (IA) – Town Planner | Yes |
| Leslie Glynn (LG) | Yes | Dave Conway (DC) - Consulting Civil Engineer | |
| Steve Oppenheimer (SO) | Yes | Kim Turner (KT) - Consulting Landscape Architect | Yes |
| Sue Zacharias (SZ) | Yes | | |
| Alex Selvig (AS) | Yes | | |
| | | | |

Italics indicate formal action taken.

1.0 Public Comments

No public comment.

2.0 Information

Housing Production Plan Update

Jen Goldson of JN Goldson Consulting presented an overview of the Housing Production Plan Webinar being presented the following night, March 4, 2021. She asked for Board input on the direction of the strategies being considered, and/or for the Plan. After the webinar they will roll out a draft to start the public comment process and go through all the required approvals before being submitted to DHCD.

Some ideas that will be presented are:

1. Adopt a Historic Use Overlay District: she is trying to get at the new Housing Choice legislation. Can Weston promote housing being creating within existing buildings that meets the Housing Choice Legislation?
2. Appoint a Housing Choice Legislation Study Committee: this group would figure out if the plan would meet the regulations and if not, are there other ways to comply.
3. Historical Heritage Overlay District: integrate existing proposal with affordable units. This would be more inclusive, especially integrating a density bonus.
4. Consider more Flexible Planning Tools that can provide an attractive option to 40B: this gives the Board a lot of authority to really look at the design of more creative property developments, especially larger (like Regis College, etc.).
5. Adopt Open Space Design/Natural Resource Protection: a version of cluster development.
6. Revise Weston Policies & Preferences: this document is 11+ years old and should be aligned with whatever the result of the Housing Protection Plan is.
7. Allowing More Flexibility to Create ADUs: Open the criteria up the current requirements a bit more. This might help seniors stay in the community, provide caregiver housing, etc.
8. Explicitly Allow Congregate Housing and Co-Living: the current guideline for co-living is not more than 4 persons. This is limiting, especially to seniors.

9. Adopt a Residential Linkage Fee for Tear-Down/Rebuild Development: this discourages teardowns to keep older, more modest housing stock. The fee could go to the Housing Trust to create more units.
10. Adopt Inclusionary Zoning Provisions: tries to keep pace by requiring that a certain percentage of developments be affordable or provide an in-lieu payment to the Housing Trust. This is very customizable.

Ms. Primer asked if there would be a Public Hearing after the Webinar. Ms. Goldson said there is no requirement for a public hearing, but the town can (and many communities do). It was agreed to hold a Public Hearing.

Ms. Glynn asked about a Good Neighborhood legislation (which has an as right ability to build an accessory unit on any parcel larger than 5,000sf). Ms. Goldson doesn't know the status but would look into it.

Ms. Goldson suggested that she make a presentation to a joint meeting of the Select Board, Planning Board, and Housing Production Plan Steering Committee. That would be an opportunity for asking questions and receive public comment. This is usually done after the draft is complete.

Ms. Primer asked if the board would like to proceed with the above plan and hold a separate public hearing after that if needed. This was agreed to.

3.0 Policy

Standard Tree Conditions

After reviewing the standard tree protections to see how they had played out on site, Ms. Turner suggested some revisions. She is looking for something that could be put into decisions to avoid tree decline after construction, so applicants don't come back to the Board asking to remove a tree that the Board had hoped to save.

Pre-Construction change highlights:

- Requiring pre-pruning of deadwood is confusing to the applicants when the plot has a lot of trees to be saved. Some litter and debris is desirable, so she suggests removing this requirement entirely. Hazardous limbs and deadwood can be removed without Planning Board approval.
- She feels it is most important to inventory the significant existing trees and she suggests adding the requirement of a photograph of trees pre-construction so removal requests can be more easily made.
- The language regarding saving trees within 25' of the work zone was cleaned up.
- Root pruning: she suggests the guidelines not get too deep into the methods of how this is done. The message is that all efforts should be taken to minimize damage to the roots.

During Construction:

- Nothing was changed in this area.

Post-Construction:

- She suggests removing the two requirements, so the onus of the tree protection is put onto the builder and taken off the Planning Board. By removing these items there are no specifics about how to meet the requirements.
- Item I added to point out that the trees are protected in perpetuity: "All trees that are outside the Limit of Work shall be protected to the greatest extent possible, in perpetuity. If said trees decline and need to be removed, they shall be replaced per the Board's review."

Mr. Oppenheimer asked about the trees within the Limit of Work. Ms. Turner said new trees are captured in the Board decision and that there are no existing trees within the Limit of Work.

Mr. Oppenheimer asked if there is a definition of a significant tree. Ms. Turner said it is any tree that the Planning Board wants to save which are identified in the decision.

Ms. Glynn agreed that they should be more specific about significant trees. She suggested adding "or within a tree protection fence" to Item I under Post Construction.

Ms. Zacharias asked if the goal was to protect all the trees on a property that comes before the Board. Ms. Turner said the site plan captures trees that are 6” or great in diameter. Ms. Zacharias suggested changing the beginning of Item I to “All trees above a 6” caliper at DBH that are outside....”.

Ms. Primer suggested showing this to the Tree Advisory Group.

Ms. Glynn felt the details about root pruning should be kept, rather than letting the developer/building do what they wish. Perhaps change the wording to “An example of this is...”. Ms. Turner said she is thinking about smaller homeowners who wanted to do limited work and then found this requirement. Ms. Glynn suggested identifying whether it’s a homeowner or a developer. The Board discussed how to implement this and decided to show both options.

Mr. Aiu will do the edits and put it on a future agenda for final review.

4.0 Decisions

4.1 18 Columbine Road – RGFA Site Plan Approval – Finish Attic Above Garage on Existing 3,478sf RGFA House

Discussion: Ms. Primer explained that the Board had received further information from neighbors and asked the Board if they would like to vote tonight regardless of the new information, re-open the Public Hearing to review the new information, or decide to put the entire issue on hold.

Mr. Aiu reported that the neighborhood *could* go to the Town to asked for a solution, but according to Town Manager Leon Gaumond there is no obvious cause of the problem, and that the Town will not do a neighborhood scale solution.

There was a lengthy discussion of what proposed solutions/suggestions had already been discussed, and how to proceed, and who/what departments to include in the search for a solution to the larger, underlying problem.

The Board decided to ask Mr. Collins to review the previous drainage studies of the area and provide feedback at a re-opened Public Hearing. Mr. Oppenheimer asked that someone from DPW also attend the Public Hearing to explain why the Town cannot address the problem. The Public Hearing will be on March 31, 2021.

Documents:

- [00_2021_0206_Ferndale_Rd_Watershed_Study](#)
- [Architectural Plans for 18 Columbine Road - 12/23/2020 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Certificate of Action for 18 Columbine](#)
- [Diachronic Mapping of 18 Columbine Road \(PDF\)](#)
- [Irrigation System exception request - 12/14/2020 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Landscape Plan for 18 Columbine - 2/5/2021 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Nolan Letter - 2/9/2021 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Past Plans for 18 Columbine Road - 10/12/2016 & 10/26/2017 \(PDF\)](#)
- [RGFA Comparison for 18 Columbine Road - 12/14/2020 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Site Plan for 18 Columbine - 1/29/2021 \(PDF\)](#)

5.0 New Business

Update of Possible Planning Board Initiatives

- Incentivize Construction of Smaller Homes: Mr. Aiu reminded the Board that the goal was to get ideas out in the open to review, such as:
 - Homes on scenic roads that are under the RGFA threshold getting a lower level of review (making it less costly to build this kind of house to encourage this size).
 - Houses above a certain FAR requiring a Special Permit.

- Reconsider the RGFA number.
- Consider the size of the lot in relation to the house size.
- The Board will revisit this after the HPP Webinar.
- **Managing Size and Use of Accessory Structures:** Guidelines are needed to limit the size (as part of Zoning), such as above 400 square feet requires a Special Permit. Mr. Aiu showed information from the Assessor's Office that showed the size and build date of Pool Houses in Town. The Board discussed the information and what criteria that might be used to consider future applications. The Board agreed to move forward with considering this, possibly for next Town Meeting.
- **Sustainable Landscape Practices:**
 - Mr. Aiu discussed requiring low water usage irrigation systems in addition to the controllers.
 - Being more specific about what is required for plantings (it's more aspirational now), such as limiting lawn size, etc. Ms. Glynn would like to present draft guidelines at the next meeting.
- Preservation and Expanded Reuse of Historic Properties
- Accessory Apartments:
- Streamlining of Rules & Regulations
- Upcycling/Recycling of Building Materials
- Lighting Requirements
- Managing Construction Impacts
- Communication Towers
- Other Initiatives Presented by Board Members

Ash Street Sidewalks

Mr. Aiu reported that the Traffic and Sidewalk Committee will be coming before the Board again and requested that someone from the Planning Board sit in on their planning meetings, and asked for a volunteer. Mr. Selvig volunteered for this role.

6.0 Public Comment

Diana Chaplin expressed confusion (in reference to 18 Columbine) about whether the standard Town Storm Water review is the same as the standard of the Planning Board review. The Board said they shared her confusion about the issue, although there seems to be a difference between the theory of the review and the reality of that particular situation.

7.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting is March 17, 2021

8.0 Adjournment

Ms. Glynn moved to adjourn, Mr. Selvig seconded. The motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.