

**Town of North Yarmouth  
Board of Selectmen Public Hearing Minutes  
March 18, 2015**

Members Present: Chairman Steve Palmer, Vice Chairman Paul Napolitano, Mark Girard, Clark Whittier, and Alex Carr

**I. Call to Order**

Selectman Napolitano moved to open the Public Hearing to hear comments from the proponents and opponents regarding the Village Center Development. Selectman Girard seconded the motion. **Vote: 5-yes 0-no**

**II. Public Hearing - Village Center Development**

The broadcast schedule is available and will be rebroadcasted over the next two weeks. Selectman Palmer welcomed everyone, and read the Village Center Development proposal and outlined the format and ground rules of the meeting.

**Comments in opposition to the proposal:**

Mark Verrill, Walnut Hill Rd, is opposed to the proposal. He commented on the quarter acre lots and that they would be detrimental to the community as it is more rural. He also stated that there will not be any tax savings. He commended Selectman Girard for the proposal but doesn't believe it will work. He recommends changing the zoning to half acre lots. There is vacant property in the area that no wants for commercial development. He stated that there have been 2 offers to purchase the school and the opportunity has not been taken.

Turner Hansel, Sweetser Rd, believes that the residents have been misled by this proposal and that the Comprehensive Plan is not being taken into consideration. If the intent is significant development and the acreage, then it should be stated as such.

Paul Hodges, Sligo Rd, is opposed to the 300 homes development and the sewage aspect of the proposal.

Gerry Whiting, Mill Rd., expressed concerns that there is no dialogue with the Selectmen at this meeting. In previous presentations, questions have been asked, but there have not been any responses, regarding them and Wescustogo Hall as well. He believes that the proposal to incorporate Wescustogo into this project is something that the public doesn't know about.

Mark Napolitano, Mill Ridge Rd, believes that this is a waste of taxpayer money. The better use for this school is to sell it. The sewer aspect of this proposal would not benefit everyone.

Jim Moulton, Mill Rd, is disappointed that there is no discussion at this meeting. He would like to know more about any TIF aspects to this. He also asked how this topic will be written and placed on the warrant as it will there will be an extensive conversation for this.

Linc Merrill, North Rd, believes this plan is a top-down approach and that the school is not of good use to the community. He believes that this would create tax increases and not savings. The residents should have the opportunity as a group to decide what they would like. He



believes that there are better opportunities and that the school is not a good use. He stated that there has been interest in purchasing the building for senior housing.

Steve Frederick, Sligo Rd. believes that this will endanger the rural aspect of the community. He would like to know more about the potential traffic impact.

Gerry Whiting would like to know more about the economic development benefits for this proposal and cited Pineland as an example.

**Comments in favor of the proposal:**

No public comment.

**General Comments:**

Amy Horstmann, Henry Rd expressed concerns that the residents participating seem to be lacking families with children and that they may not be as informed as they should be. She asked about Sharp's Field and Sharp House would be sold as part of this project. She believes that there should be one athletic field available in the community.

Nancy Gorden, Heather Loch Rd commented on the sewer bonding and who will be paying for it as it would service only a limited number of residents.

Katie Murphy, Mountfort Rd is uncertain about the plan as she has a number of questions. The residents have the responsibility to gather all the information. She suggested an expanded FAQ section to address the plans and purpose for the school, the 300 housing units abatement/development, and the 85 acres that are usable.

Amy Horstmann, Henry Rd commented that there appears to be a focus on senior housing. She believes that single people and single parents cannot afford to live in the community and should be considered.

Peter Lindsay, Mountfort Rd. believes that he is not convinced that the school is the right building for the community. He commented on the Comprehensive Plan and that development has expanded in other areas of the community. The sewer proposal may be a benefit with the Comprehensive Plan as it would concentrate what is possible in the Village Center.

Kristin Roush, Walnut Hill Rd. expressed concerns regarding increased traffic in that area with the development.

Nelson Smith, Ledge Rd. commented on potential senior housing and sewage. He also commented on other areas and the acreage division. He believes the Comprehensive Plan doesn't help with development and should be changed to help with this process.

Turner Hansel, Sweetser Rd. stated that the proposed size of the sewer line is too small for what is being proposed.

Selectman Napolitano moved to close the Public Hearing. Selectman Girard seconded the motion.

**Vote: 5-yes 0-no**

The public comments ended at 7:48pm.



**III. Any Other Business - Q & A/Comments with the Board of Selectmen - Interest in the properties:** Selectman Palmer stated that there were letters of inquiry and interest and that should the town do something with the land, they would like to be a part of it. There were no formal proposals. Nelson Smith stated that he was prepared to get information for a proposal. Linc Merrill stated that he had a developer send a letter inquiry about the properties and that the Board did not request any proposals. Selectman Girard stated that without a process about where to do, but there was no request by the Board for any other town property. Mark Verrill stated that there was a written proposal from an excavator for the school and another proposal was also sent.

The process: Selectman Palmer stated that there were 2 informational presentations and 2 public hearings are being held to help determine if this is to be brought to Town Meeting on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Gerry Whiting stated that given the small number of people attending these meetings to determine whether or not it goes to Town Meeting is not appropriate and suggested it goes to referendum. Selectman

300 houses: Selectman Girard stated that the sensitivity analysis determined this figure if a larger, more an expanded project were to be considered. This does not mean that 300 houses would be built. He also commented on the cost factors and phases of the project. It would be paid for by the expected sale of the land and the tax revenue generated by the parcel would support the debt service to build the sewer for this. Any additional development would pay for the additional sewer necessities. The analysis was done to determine the anticipated costs for whatever type/size of development.

Wescustogo Hall/Historical Society: They are not a part of the plan. Residents were not happy that they were not being considered. The proposal states that there are potential options that may work to address this.

Not sufficient development: the proposal covers the cost of development with the sale of the town office lands.

Traffic concerns: Traffic impact has not been studied at this time. If further development arises, traffic will be addressed.

Sewer size: Selectman Girard stated that the sizing and design is to meet the greater need.

FAQ suggestion: Selectman Whittier suggested that the questions be sent to the Selectmen to work into the FAQ sheet. He also commented on the types of development. He asked what can be done to increase town participation on this topic and that referendum may be a possibility. Gerry Whiting stated that he believes it is important to listen to the public and that given that no one offered support for the proposal at this meeting is important.

Mark Verrill asked why there was no RFP for the school to explore all the options.

Mark Verrill asked what the back-up plan is if this proposal fails. Selectman Napolitano stated that if this one fails, they will come back to the town with another plan. Selectman Carr stated that he believes the town cannot go through another year with this school. Selectman Girard stated that the key factor for the potential RFP, offers and the like is the sewer system, as without it, it becomes a very different property. Selectman Palmer stated that the



Comprehensive Plan plays into this with the Village Center and that sewer and increased density may be a possibility to increase more development in the center of town and lessen growth outside of it to prevent sprawl.

Katie Murphy indicated that the PDI presentations were very eye opening. She asked about the Yarmouth Water District's participation. She commented on getting more information on TIF and zoning. Selectman Girard commented on the zoning. Zoning can be changed at anytime. Contract Zoning will be presented at Town Meeting which may be another vehicle for a property. Selectmen Napolitano stated that PDI was based on current zoning. Selectmen Girard and Napolitano outlined how the TIF is established and can be used. Selectman Girard stated that the Yarmouth Water District does not have enough information but that the proposed system can work. Should this proposal pass, the next step would expend funds to permit and design the system which would then move to the Yarmouth Water District. Steve Gorden of the Yarmouth Water District stated that they do not have enough information and that this is still in the proposal stage. They have received the PDI reports and then would need more scientific information. Selectman Girard stated that the proposed design isn't anything that they do not have. They have been given all the information to date from the town.

Nelson Small asked about the number of units at the town hall property. There was a discussion on the wording of the sewer and waste water system options in the Resource Protection Zone in the Comprehensive Plan. Nelson stated that an RFP for the school would be beneficial to the community. Selectman Girard stated that Comprehensive Plan is a guideline and later cited some information from the town's zoning.

Jim Moulton stated that the town had a long lead time for acquisition of the school and believes that this is a partial proposal and won't pass at Town Meeting. Selectman Napolitano stated that he agreed with him and voted against this proposal. Selectman Girard stated that the sewer issue is an important component to yield good RFPs.

Margie Hansel, Sweetser Rd. commented on the use of the school septic system and leech field and that there should be some active discussions with the State and the Water District to be sure that there isn't an overdesign. Selectman Girard stated that he agreed and the feasibility study by Sevee and Maher was requested to help with this information. They believe this system will work.

Jeannie VanDyke stated that the 3 pieces of the project are being lumped together and Wescustogo Hall is an important part of the conversation. Encompassing public and town hall space in one location is a different development than separate ones. She believes that an RFP process would have helped in the discussion with the residents. Selectman Girard stated that there are no substantial, structural issues for the use of the building. There are issues with aspects of the building (HVAC and the like.)

Mark Verrill believes that there is no incentive for the public to accept this proposal. He believes that quarter acre lots should not be permitted. Selectman Girard stated that the lot size is not being mandated but based on the type of development.

Nancy Gorden believes that this project is being pushed on the public in a short amount of time for Town Meeting. A referendum on this would help gauge a larger representation. Selectman Napolitano will recommend that this does not go to Town Meeting. Jim Moulton believes it is

not ready for referendum either and more research should be done. Selectman Palmer stated that they have been working diligently on this process and the loss of Wescustogo Hall changed things that required some changes and options. He outlined the issues and options they considered to help prepare a recommendation to the residents and they have worked very hard to do what they have proposed. Selectman Whittier believes that until the community decides what to do with the school, it is difficult to move ahead. He commented on an analysis he did regarding the savings from the sale of other town buildings and make use of the school.

#### IV. Adjournment

Selectman Napolitano moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting ended at 9:11 pm.

Recorded by: Nancy Trottier  
Town of North Yarmouth Recording Secretary

#### Board of Selectmen

  
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Steven Palmer, Chairperson

  
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Mark Girard

  
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Alex Carr

  
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Paul Napolitano, Vice Chairperson

  
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Clark Whittier