

Freedom Planning Board
July 18, 2019
Freedom Town Hall

Members Present: Chairman Anne Cunningham, Bill Elliott, Paul Elie, Pam Keith, Paul Olzerowicz (A), Peter Park (A)

Members Absent: Jeffrey Towle, Les Babb, Dale McConkey

Others Present: Stacy Bolduc Recording Secretary, Carol McIntyre

Quorum: Met

With a quorum having been declared the meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Chairmen Anne Cunningham presiding.

Anne has contacted Scott Lees to see if they can hold the joint meeting with the ZBA in September because she will not be here in October. Scott will get back to Anne after he talks to the board.

Minutes:

Peter made a motion, seconded by Bill to accept the June 20, 2019 minutes with the following amendment: On page 3, second paragraph from the bottom last sentence change *medals* to *metals*. All were in favor.

Discuss Master Plan Recommendations

Anne opened the discussion on the Master Plan recommendations and stated the basic issue the board is grappling with is the consistency on the Master Plan Vision vs. the Master Plan recommendations. She recapped at last month's meeting it was discussed that in the vision statement it is stated that Freedom supports a mix of ages and families in Freedom, but Pam pointed out that the housing recommendations don't support the vision statement. There was further discussion on feelings that everything is fine the way it is, and there is no need for change. Lack of Job opportunities was identified as a part of the problem for attracting a mix of ages and families.

Anne stressed this board is not the economic development board of Freedom, we are the planning board and posed the question should something happen where the people who are working on this in Conway manage to generate the kind of economic development that is needed in the valley, what would this board do from a land-use perspective to attract young families to Freedom. Anne agrees that housing is the biggest issue. Last month it was discussed that there are a lot of houses for sale. To get the conversation started, she handed out a sheet outlining Freedom house sales for 2017-2018. Janice is on vacation so she could not get the accessors database through July 30th. The information discussed is as follows

- In those two years, there were 379 lots sold between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2018.

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- Of these, 194 or 51 % were qualified sales, that is, sales the assessor determined to be “market rate” transactions.
- The assessor determined that 185 or 49% of these sales were unqualified. These transactions are not “arm’s length,” the sales of 125 of them was \$0, 2 at \$1, and the rest were sold at significantly below the assessed value. This number could represent estate planning.

The 194 lots had the following land Use:

- Current Use 2
- Residential 50
- Water Access (residential) 118
- Waterfront (residential) 24

Using median price and distinguishing between lots with building and lots with no buildings/raw land was discussed further to get an idea of what housing cost are in Freedom.

- 39 residential homes with buildings sold at a median price of \$210,000
- 2 residential lots with no buildings median price of \$67,000
- 79 lots with buildings/ Residential water access the median price of \$154,000
- 38 lots with no buildings/ Residential water access the median price of \$35,000
- 20 with buildings/ Residential on the waterfront the median price of \$550,000
- 56 sales Spindle Point /no buildings median price of \$36,100

The median price of all these sales is \$185,000. Residential lots with water access are more affordable but still not considered affordable housing and some zones you cannot live at year-round such as Totem Pole, and Danforth Pond RR. Freedom Village Condos are small for a family. Discussion ensued around annual income for two full-time workers is around \$46,000. This information was provided by Northway Bank based on mortgage applications. Other challenges people face childcare and student loan debt. Discussion ensued around debt and people having to work two jobs.

Anne commented if we say the median house price is \$150,000, of the 194 homes that sold there are very few at that price and if people are coming to Freedom, they are coming to buy a home. We do not have a lot of rentals. Again, she reiterated if \$150,000 is the number, a very small number of homes could be considered affordable and she reopened the question to the board what are we going to say about meeting the vision statements third bullet that states the following: Is a caring community with a mix of ages and families and the housing resources needed to attract and retain them.

Discussion went to the Demographics Recommendations, and Anne posed the question to the board, what can we do as a planning board to attract more kids to the school demographically? Peter responded that there are several kids being homeschooled and does not know if there is

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anything that can be done, Paul O. agreed. Anne said then this question needs to go back to the school.

Discussion ensued around senior services under the demographics recommendations. Cluster housing was briefly discussed. Bill stated the economic group needs to answer the question, and you need job opportunities other than minimum wage. He feels this is a very difficult subject and does not know if the planning board can solve the problem. Anne directed the board to the housing recommendations. The three legs of the stool that have been discussed are housing, jobs, and transportation. The planning board only has authority over housing. She stressed if the board chooses not to do anything about housing that's fine, but to choose not to do anything about housing because of jobs or transportation is not taking our responsibility to do something about the one thing we can act on. Anne stated the Master Plan has to say something about housing and the data supports that something has to be done to make housing more affordable for both young families and seniors. Anne went on to say, If the board chooses not to do anything about affordable housing that's fine but, she will not support the statement in the Vision that we want a mix of ages and families in this town. Pam responded that she supports smaller lot sizes and cluster housing. An engaging discussion ensued around availability, affordability to build and building affordable rentals.

Bill stated the recommendations are already in the Master Plan on page 11. Anne responded they are cautious and consider doing something, but they do not state the board will do something. At the very least, the recommendations should say explore the feasibility, and she thinks we should include having detached ADU's. Peter agreed with looking at ADU's to attract younger people.

Other recommendations, under Housing Recommendations Paul E. suggested changing the word consider to creating a sub-committee to explore allowing duplexes and multi-family dwellings in more districts. Discussion ensued around what changes in the zoning ordinances would be conducive to encouraging people to come to Freedom i.e., density bonus in cluster subdivisions, reduce the one-acre requirement and multi-family dwellings. No decisions have been made regarding housing recommendations; Anne would like the input of the board members not present at tonight's meeting before any decisions are made.

Discussion went to the Land Use Recommendations next.

Points discussed:

- Jobs that have the option to telecommute, being a benefit for people who want to come to Freedom.
- Needing to identify where housing and land use come together.
- Village residential district has little development opportunities.

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- Changing the word *consider* to *allow* in the third bullet under *Housing Recommendations*.

Anne will continue to work on the Land Use Recommendations language, and she is going to check with John Ratigan (town counsel) about replacing the word consider with allow, to understand the legal ramifications for the Town.

Site Plan Regulations will be tabled until next month when more board members will be present.

The Merger of Lots from last month's meeting was signed. The original had whiteout on it and, no whiteout is allowed.

Peter will not be listed as absent when he is not there because he is an alternate. Just the alternates presence will be documented.

There being no other business to come before the board, **Pam made a motion, seconded by Peter to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Bolduc, Recording Secretary

DRAFT