Town of Winchester

Planning Board

Minutes

7-10-23

Meeting opened: 7:00pm

Members present: Rich Pratt (Chair), Jordan Sharra (V. Chair), Jack Marsh, Ben Kilanski (SR), Colby Ebbighausen, Robert Browne, and Dean Beaman. Jenny Rhodes and Neal Stetson are alternates present.

Evan O’Connor is the LUA.

Public: Karey Miner (Town Administrator), Rik Ekstrom (Housing Navigator), Penny Seaver, Sara Pratt, Kelly Kilanski, and Todd Kilanski.

First order of business: The board reviews the minutes of 6-19-23 **J. Sharra moves to approve the minutes, R. Browne seconds. The vote is 5 yes and 2 abstain (JM, BK).**

Second order of business: The board reviews the Winchester Housing Survey draft presented by Housing Navigator Rik Ekstrom. It is covered that the survey will be sent via mail with summer newsletter to all residents of Winchester, as well as an online survey being available. Retrieval of the physical surveys will be via a drop off bin in the town hall, as well as the option to mail back to the town hall. LUA O’Connor clarifies that the physical survey/newsletter will have a link/QR code in order to fill out the survey online. Housing Navigator confirms that survey monkey or a similar service will be used for the online survey. D. Beaman asks how participation was in surveys conducted in other towns. The survey results in the other towns were less than expected, using Fitzwilliam as an example, only about 300 results were received.

R. Pratt raises the point that physical copies of the survey should be placed in specific locations, suggested locations include Kulick’s, the Arlington, The town hall, and the library. D. Beaman raises that it should be clear that the survey is exclusively for residents of Winchester. R. Ekstrom indicates that the title can be modified to imply it is only for residents of Winchester to fill out.

R. Ekstrom inquires about questions the board would like to add in order to make the survey more specific to Winchester. J. Sharra indicates that it is a good idea for the board to come up with Winchester specific questions.

R. Pratt notes that it was stated housing needs and regulatory review were said to both be in the scope of the housing navigator, however the survey only covers housing needs. The housing navigator answers that the survey is only covering one of the aspects of the scope as that is the information needed to be collected from the public. D. Beaman indicates that it seems that this is the first step of the process.

J. Marsh suggests an addition to the survey a question whether the person filling the survey out is a registered voter in Winchester.

R. Browne suggests to add a question on if the survey taker is a resident of Winchester.

R. Pratt indicates that not all residents are registered voters, so essentially two separate issues.

N. Stetson indicates that there should be an option for marking whether you are full or part time residents. D. Beaman indicates that not everyone who is a Winchester taxpayer is necessarily a resident of the town. R. Ekstrom states that it will be mailed to every mailbox in Winchester, not just landowners but residents and tenants. The mailing of surveys/newsletters will be covered by the HOP grant.

D. Beaman questions what the time frame on the survey is. The survey should be sent out this summer, and results expected to be closed in fall.

J. Rhodes voices that there may be confusion on what is covered by the HOP Grant and the housing navigator’s responsibilities. She goes on to read off 3 categories provided, Needs Analysis and Planning, Regulatory Review, and Community Engagement. R. Ekstrom clarifies that phase one, including housing needs analysis, is what is ongoing, and all 3 will run concurrently, with Master Plan Updates happening later.

B. Kilanski questions if these are the same questions that were on the dot surveys on voting day. These questions are similar but broader and more numerous, reaching more residents.

R. Pratt reiterates that it must be clear that only residents of Winchester should be filling out the survey.

D. Beaman asks to clarify on the survey what the survey is for and who should fill it out.

LUA O’Connor presents proposed changes, R. Ekstrom asks if the matter of being a Winchester resident would be on the survey and if it would be clarified what type of resident the survey taker is- full time or seasonal. J. Marsh clarifies that they will be sent to each mailing address.

LUA O’Connor presents the proposed changes: change name of survey to “Winchester Resident Housing Survey”, a question on the survey to ask if the survey taker is a registered voter, and the surveys to only be sent out and placed in town hall and town library.

**D. Beaman moves to approve the changes to the survey, J. Sharra seconds. The vote is 7 yes.**

Third order of business: Housing Navigator R. Ekstrom presents to the board for their consideration the proposal from Ivy Vann and Carol Ogilvie to work for further housing choice through the issued HOP grant.

R. Ekstrom explains that the HOP grant covers expenses for the housing navigation/regulatory review until July 31 2024.

J. Sharra clarifies that this is just informational and not a true request for approval at the time being.

R. Ekstrom states that a first meeting will be held with Ivy Vann and Carol Ogilvie to go over housing navigation and zoning/subdivision ordinances.

J. Marsh questions whether this is a matter for the planning board to approve.

R. Ekstrom asserts that these consultants are the few available and are needed to complete the work for the project. It is recommended that it be approved.

The board members discuss whether this is something for the selectmen to approve or if the board should be voting on this matter.

R. Ekstrom clarifies that the grant has already been received this is just a proposal to complete the work the grant covers. The board members clarify that this is the only real option for completion.

C. Ebbighausen states that it is the only option to work with the grant, and must be presented to the select board to be voted on. J. Marsh states agreement that it must be sent to the board of selectmen. B. Kilanski asks if the Planning Board should recommend the application to the selectmen.

**D. Beaman moves to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to consider the application for approval, J. Sharra seconds. The vote is 3 yes, 3 no, and 1 abstain (BK). The motion does not pass**.

**J. Sharra moves to adjourn, R. Browne seconds. The vote is 7 yes. 8:11 pm.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Evan O’Connor , LUA

Minutes approved by the board on:

Minutes signed by:

Rich Pratt, Chair