

Route 2 and 102 Stakeholder Visioning Process
Meeting 4
October 25, 2012 6:00-9:00 pm
Wickford Middle School North Kingstown, RI

Draft Meeting Summary

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for November 7 from 6:00-9:00pm at the Senior Center.

Meeting Participants: See Appendix A.

Next Steps:

- Stakeholder Group Members – Brainstorm creative options that the full group might get behind.
- Ona Ferguson – Write up possible areas of agreement prior to the final meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

Ona Ferguson welcomed participants to the meeting. All meeting materials can be found on the North Kingstown website, <http://www.northkingstown.org/visioning-process-routes-2-and-102>. The meeting summary from Stakeholder Group meeting 3 was approved by the Stakeholder Group. Jon Reiner gave an overview of the October 16th Planning Commission meeting, at which the Commission decided to await the Stakeholder Group report before making a decision on the Rolling Greens application.

Feedback from the Public Engagement Meetings & Online Input

General Process - Ona then described the public engagement effort since the last Stakeholder Group meeting, which included three meetings and a way for people to give input online. Approximately 100 distinct individuals (not including Stakeholder Group members nor Planning Team members) attended one or more of the three meetings, which included two public workshops (October 4 and 15) and one neighborhood focus group (October 10). Most of the people who attended these sessions live near the study area. Approximately 50 individuals contributed their input online, and only a small handful of those (5-10) had also been at any of the three public meetings. Stakeholder Group members received a summary report from the three events and the exported results of the online input in advance of this meeting.

Themes - The themes of what public participants indicated they wanted for the study area included wanting a place with the following characteristics:

- Is safe for people in cars, on foot, and on bicycle, in the neighborhoods and along the major roads
- Adds value to the place, creates a neighborhood feeling, strives for a town rather than city feel
- Does not financially burden the town
- Protects open space and the golf course
- Has additional residential units, especially if a portion of them are age-restricted
- Uses landscaping for beautification and buffering between different types of uses
- Has some enhancements along the Ten Rod Road right of way
- With varied opinions on the capacity and appropriateness of any commercial, some saying there is room for limited, neighborhood-scale commercial, others saying this is not an appropriate place for commercial development beyond what exists now

- For any commercial spaces, buildings with a small footprint and not higher than two stories, and no big box stores
- For residential units, people like single family homes, some also like condos and duplexes, and a small number are also comfortable with apartments
- For uses, people liked the ideas of farmstands, winery, restaurants, small offices or none

Participants discussed the public input briefly, noting that those who gave public input generally loved the open space including significant support for preserving the golf course, and that some talked about preferring that development go on the Schartner parcel not the Bald Hill Garden Center, to protect residential interests of people on Plain Road and current residential neighborhoods.

Input on Specific Scenarios -Nate Kelly, Project Team member from Horsley Witten, presented the five development scenarios discussed since the last Stakeholder Group meeting. These were:

- A. Conservation Design - Presented on Oct 4 & 10.
- B. Mixed-Use Village Scenario (Residential Focus) – Presented on Oct 15
- C. Village Scenario (Commercial Focus) - Presented on Oct 4 & 10
- D. TDR Village Scenario (Commercial Focus) - Presented on Oct 4 & 10
- E. Current Buildout - Presented on Oct 4 & 10

See Appendix B for details on each of these five and the project website for a chart comparing the five scenarios and a graphic representation of each one. Ona gave a quick summary of feedback on each of these scenarios from the public input.

Final Questions on Topics Discussed to Date

Participants had an opportunity to discuss issues they are still unclear about related to overarching themes like economics, water, and the like. They raised the following, with questions in italics and answers from the Planning Team in plain text:

- *Why did the comprehensive plan change “future land uses” in the study area?* One possibility is that technology has gotten more and more precise, enabling us to create exact future land use lines whereas maps used to be hand drawn and therefore less precise. Gradually mapping has used more and more detailed technology, which then enables us to identify inconsistencies.
- *What is the urban services boundary?* A line drawn by the state to indicate areas where growth and infrastructure should be focused. This study area was in the Urban Services Boundary when first created by the state, then North Kingstown asked that it be taken out. The State Planning Office will be fine either way, we just need to be clear what we want to see here.
- *Can a golf course be used as open space in density calculations for number of houses allowed on a cluster development despite the fact that it is a working business?* Yes, it has been done before in North Kingstown.
- *How can we solve Statewide Planning’s concerns?* It depends on what vision this group develops. Depending on the vision for the future that the group reaches, assuming the Town adopts it and streamlines zoning and comprehensive planning to align with it, it should solve Statewide Planning’s concerns. The Schartner parcel was denied as commercial because it was outside of the Urban Services Boundary.

- *Do Exeter and North Kingstown have any control over each others' Urban Service Boundary delineations?* No, they are independent.
- *How are big box stores defined?* A big box in North Kingstown is defined as a space over 50K square feet in a commercial area and over 85K square feet in a planned business zone. Pharmacies are about 15K, so are not considered big box stores.
- *Can we get more clarity on the economic impact of future development in the study area, especially as related to Post Road?* We can't get specific answers comparing those areas and looking at their impact on one another during this visioning effort. But considering the question of how they impact each other and what a researcher might look at, Nate Kelly did a bit more thinking about this and believes that the ~25,000 people who travel through the study area daily are likely a very different group of people than the ~20,000 people who travel through Post Road frequently. The infrastructure, zoning and size of the different areas, and the routes people probably take, make it likely that there isn't much overlap or impact of what happens at the study area and what happens on Post Road, though there is potentially more competition or impact between this area and Lafayette. A stakeholder group mentioned that Post Road has its own problems that can't be addressed during this visioning process.

Discussion of Different Future Visions for the Study Area

Stakeholder group members discussed what they would like to see in the future, using the five scenarios as one frame of reference and looking at various combinations of options for different sites at once. Participants were reminded that the goal is to take others' interests into account enough to develop an option that will work for a broad and diverse set of representatives, and that the details of where the USB or Water Services District can go can be modified once there is a joint vision. Jon Reiner said that water issues can be dealt with in any of the options under discussion. Ona reviewed some notes from the first and second Stakeholder Group meeting in which participants talked about their hopes for the process and outcome and their key interests, and encouraged participants to keep those interests in mind in trying to develop package outcomes that might be feasible.

A member noted that it is difficult to know the geographic scope we are discussing (very local, town-wide, or broader) in different parts of the discussion. Ona noted that the Town Council selected participants specifically to represent all these different voices on the Stakeholder Group. Participants then started tackling the question at hand of what options for a single vision might be workable. They suggested and discussed the following, within a wide-reaching discussion:

- Many people indicated their feelings about Scenarios A-E, with many people indicating that A, D and E were not viable and B and C were of most interest. Some felt A ought to be in the running, and others said a compromise between A and B or between B and C might be workable.
- Some indicated that they don't think the area should be seen as a growth center given all the public input in October.
- Vaughn Oatley and Mark Hawkins talked about the current Rolling Greens as their proposal for what would be appropriate, to meet many interests they've heard over the past few years. They also noted the difficulty of suggesting what should be on other peoples' parcels.
- Some said the Compact Village Development does not meet Exeter's conservation interests.
- The Rolling Greens proposal currently suggests 50K square feet of commercial, but might be possible with less. Some suggested this would be more acceptable if the level of commercial development were set to a maximum of 30K or 40K square feet. Others suggested that it might

be better with more of a setback or reorientation of commercial development, e.g. oriented on a north-south axis in the parcel rather oriented east-west along the road. Someone replied that such an orientation might make the parcels less desirable for businesses.

- People noted that intra-district TDR, which has been discussed as an option, could be very problematic and undermine the purpose of TDRs (Someone asked where the limit is and who can or can't use sending and receiving credits).
- Several people noted that the South County Commons model is not desirable here.
- People talked about the design of different scenarios and noted that how the buildings are spread across given parcels will result in a very different feeling/character.
- People said the design quality of commercial spaces and what you see from the road is important to many around the table.
- Someone said that having commercial uses on all three areas under discussion was undesirable.
- Rit Schartner described his idea of creating a food hub for Rhode Island on his parcels that would include dairy production and processing, teaching centers, and farm to table activities of all kind.
- Many people said they do not like the large commercial buildings that are currently allowed in the study area.
- People suggested buying the difference between the development rights that land owners may not want to part with to get the level of commercial in the area to a level that neighbors can be comfortable with.
- Upon a request from some of the stakeholders, someone attending the meeting spoke for the Bald Hill Garden Center owners, saying that they want their parcel to be allowed to be developed as it was when they purchased it.

There was some straw poll testing of different combinations of scenarios done with the stakeholder group, but none got a high level of approval or support. The amount of commercial on different parcels remains one of the key unresolved items of discussion.

Stakeholder Group Business

The November 7 Stakeholder Group meeting will be this group's fifth and final meeting because the Town Council will be considering the group's input a week later on November 15. Participants said having a meeting prior to November 7 was not feasible for them given election activities.

Ona urged the stakeholders to contact each other prior to the next meeting and explore possible solutions together. She reminded Stakeholder Group members that they are permitted to talk together outside of formal as long as those participating together were a minority of the group as a whole. She offered to be a conduit for communication if one member wanted to email the rest of the participants.

APPENDIX A: Meeting Participants

Stakeholder Group Members & Alternates Present

Alternates are noted with an asterisk()*

Michael Baker
Ahren Cohen
Frank Digregorio
Paul Dion
Mark Hawkins
Meg Kerr
Thomas Kolling*
Al Lyons*
Kevin Maloney
John Nosatch
Vaughn Oatley
Colin O’Sullivan
John Patterson
Jon Reiner
Rit Schartner
Rich Schartner II*
David Schweid
Jeff Zucchi

Members absent

John Nosatch
Martha Pughe

Project Team & NK Planning Dept. Staff

Ona Ferguson
Peter Flinker
Becky Lamond
Nicole LaFontaine
Jared Weaver

Also in Attendance (this list is incomplete)

Jim Ganung
Ann Ganung
Ron Gillette
Ron Mann
Alice O’Sullivan
Jack Revens
David Samson
Marie Samson
Rick Thompson
Skip Ponte

Appendix B: The Five Primary Scenarios Discussed

The following is a quick summary of the scenarios discussed in the public engagement phase of this visioning project. Please see the project website for the five maps depicting what each might look like, a memo with a more detailed description of the scenarios, and to see the chart comparing the scenarios.

- A. Conservation Design Scenario – This scenario for the future development of the intersection is based on existing regulations for Rolling Greens, and changing the zoning on the other three parcels, Schartner Bald Hill Nursery, Corner Tavern, and Bald Hill Garden Center, to residential. The Rolling Greens property could be built under this zoning today. The Morris Farm property (in Exeter) could be built to this development option today. As for the Corner Tavern and the Bald Hill Garden Center, this is what the current Comprehensive Plan states should be built on these properties in the future. These two properties are both currently zoned commercial. This scenario has approximately 54 house lots on the Rolling Greens property, 17 house lots on the Morris Farm (in Exeter), 5 house lots on the Schartner property, the Corner Tavern still has the restaurant on it, and the garden center has 5 house lots.
- B. Mixed-Use Village Scenario (Residential Focus) – This scenario shows the current proposal for Rolling Greens except for a reduction in commercial area from 50,000 square feet to 30,000 s.f. Each of the two Schartner properties, as well as the Bald Hill Garden Center site, would have 20,000 square feet of commercial and 15 residential units. For each of the three properties, these are shown as a mix of five two-bedroom homes, and ten one-bedroom cottages. This proposal would require a zone change and comprehensive plan amendment changing the Rolling Greens property as well as the Schartner parcels, Corner Tavern and the Bald Hill Garden Center to a Compact Village District (CVD). The Corner Tavern current restaurant use would remain unchanged in this scenario.
- C. Village Scenario (Commercial Focus) – This scenario for the future development of the intersection shows the Rolling Greens property as what the applicant would like to build on this piece of property and conceptually expands that development pattern to other commercially zoned pieces of land to the south and west including the Schartner land, the Corner Tavern, and the Bald Hill Garden Center. This proposal would require a zone change and comprehensive plan amendment for all of the focus parcels at the intersection including the entire Rolling Greens property, the Corner Tavern, the Bald Hill Garden Center, and the Schartner Bald Hill Nursery piece to a Compact Village District (CVD). This plan for RG has approximately 50,000 square feet of commercial space, including approximately 5,000 for a new Oatley’s restaurant, and approximately 106 residential housing units. This scenario has 60,000 square feet of office or retail uses at each of the Schartner properties, maintains 6,000 square feet of restaurant at the corner tavern, and adds 67,500 square feet of retail/office at the Bald Hill Garden Center site. The CVD zone allows a commercial building footprint to reach a footprint of 15,000 square feet for a parcel 10 acres in size or larger. If a parcel is less than 10 acres, the largest commercial footprint allowed would be 10,000 square feet. Under this scenario, the maximum number of buildings with a 15,000 square foot footprint would be 3, 1 on the Rolling Greens property, 1 on the Schartner property, and possibly 1 on the Bald Hill Garden Center if they combined some of the land from the Tavern piece to their property to make it 10 acres in size.

- D. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Village Scenario (Commercial Focus) –This scenario for the future development of the intersection shows an example of a more dense “village development” option for the intersection. Using TDR, the 120,000 square feet of commercial/office space that could be built on the two Schartner properties would be transferred across the street, with 50,000 s.f. added to the Rolling Greens commercial area, 2,500 s.f added to the Corner Tavern property, and 67,500 s.f. added to the potential commercial development on the Bald Hill Garden Center site. This development option would thus have the same total amount of commercial development as the first village scenario, but the development would be more dense (2 or 2-1/2 story buildings instead of single story). Meanwhile both the Morris Farm and the Schartner properties would be permanently protected.
- E. Current Buildout Scenario - This scenario for the future development of the intersection shows what could be built today under the current zoning. These options could realistically meet all of North Kingstown’s groundwater protection requirements, and have sufficient water capacity to build at this development intensity. The specific development types and building sizes are indicated on the plan. This development scenario will include the loss of the golf course, the development of over 50 3-4 bedroom houses in North Kingstown at Rolling Greens, the development of over 120,000 square feet of office or retail on the Schartner property, approximately 75,000 square feet of retail on the garden center property, and either keeping a restaurant, or having a possible pharmacy or other large similar use on the corner tavern property.