

Wickford Plan Committee (WPC) Meeting October 19, 2017

Members Present: J. Ehrhardt, J. Shapin, C. Gibson, M. Morin, L. Piedra, J. Chirnside, P. Galster

Members Absent: M. Suvari, E Cooney, E Lemieux

Town Council Representative: K. Maloney

Non-members present: S. Lacey, G. Brennan

Meeting Called to order: 5:30

C. Gibson motioned to approve meeting September minutes.

Seconded by L. Piedra.

Motion approved unanimously.

### **Public comment**

G. Brennan noted regarding the proposed demolition ordinance that not every building is historic. Town does not want to be alarmist. Does not feel ordinance is too broad and hopes WPC take their responsibility seriously on this matter.

### **Draft Demolition Ordinance**

S. Lacey informed the committee on the status of a draft demolition ordinance. He stated that WEDAB was against a more broad demolition ordinance and had strong objections to ordinance as written. One worry was that the ordinance would stretch too wide through town as well as would be too overly burdensome.

K. Maloney inquired if a too broad ordinance would also include accessory buildings (sheds, mailboxes).

S. Lacey stated that current planning priorities take precedence over demolition ordinance.

The WPC inquired of the lag time between ordinance development and implementation.

S. Lacey stated the need to factor in outreach time to inform people of ordinance. Could be a 4-6 month process.

J. Ehrhardt stated concern that once sewers are in, there may cases where a historic building could be demolished without protection.

K. Maloney stated that an ordinance would only delay a demolition for 60 days.

WCP asked if there could be a 6 month moratorium on demolition until design guidelines are developed.

K. Maloney stated that there cannot be a moratorium until there is a new comprehensive plan.

C. Gibson inquired about other options.

J. Shapin suggested using Tim Cranston's document?

S. Lacey stated the town can determine the limits of historic zone.

J. Shapin asked if a demolition ordinance could be implemented before design guidelines.  
S. Lacey stated that the design guidelines contractor has a narrow focus. Ordinance would be a staff (town) task.

L. Piedra asked if property owners need to have a plan to rebuild in place before demolition.  
S. Lacey stated not at this time.

J. Chirnside asked if Main Street America has any guidance on this subject.

S. Lacey stated the adoption of design guidelines into municipal code would give it enforceability.  
Town needs to decide on enforceability aspects to guidelines and who is responsible for enforcement.

J. Shapin asked when will the comp plan be finished.  
S. Lacey stated that the planning commission is done review and plan is back in staff hands. Staff need to give its edits back to consultant. Goal is to bring it back to the council soon.

C. Gibson suggested bringing issue to state level and inquire about being in the state registry.  
S. Lacey stated that it warrants a phone call with State. Would inquire to the HPHC.

S. Lacey expressed uncertainty of the legality of a demolition ordinance at the town level.

The WPC expressed that residential properties have much more restrictions in historic zone than commercial.

Motion to draft a letter to Town Council stating WPC opinions on demolition ordinance made by J. Ehrhardt.

L. Piedra seconded.

Motion Passes unanimously.

### **Design Guidelines Update**

P. Galster and L. Piedra provided an update from the Design Guidelines committee. They stated that there was a great kick off meeting. Everyone was agreeable and consultant was a good moderator. Consultant gave a presentation on current state on guidelines. The consultant stated that there is currently nothing in place to keep investors from buying multiple lots and building 1 big building. No demolition guidelines currently exist. The committee agreed to identify most important buildings to protect. The committee also stated that the effect of noise from restaurant/bars needs to be examined. The committee will also bring up the demolition issue with consultant.

K. Maloney asked if the WPC was more worried about buildings being being knocked down or what would be built in its place.

### **Wickford Sewer Update**

S. Lacey provide an update. Some road closures in the near future.

Motion to adjourn

7:00