

DRAFT MINUTES

**The Charlestown Planning Commission Held a
Special Meeting on Wednesday April 4, 2018 @ 7:00 PM
Charlestown Town Hall, 4540 South County Trail, Charlestown, RI 02813**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was CALLED TO ORDER at 7:23 p.m. by Chair, Ruth Platner.

2. Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Ruth Platner	Chairwoman	Present	
Barbara A. Heavers	Commissioner	Absent	
Lewis E. Johnson	Vice-Chair	Present	
Sherry D. Krupka	Commissioner	Present	
Erin P. Russell	Commissioner	Present	
Kathryn M. O'Connor	Alternate #2	Absent	
Frances M. Topping	Alternate #1	Present	

Also in attendance was Ms. Weidman, Town Planner; Mr. Murray, Comprehensive Plan consultant and Ms. Van Slyke, Town Council Liaison.

3. Minutes Approval

Motion

A motion was made by Ms. Topping, seconded by Ms. Russell to approve the minutes of March 28, 2018. All in favor. Vote was unanimous.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Frances M. Topping, Alternate #1
SECONDER:	Erin P. Russell, Commissioner
AYES:	Platner, Johnson, Krupka, Russell, Topping
ABSENT:	Heavers, O'Connor

4. Advisory

A. Discussion and/or Potential Action/and /or Vote(S) Concerning: Potential Land Acquisition of AP 23, Lot 11, South County Trail for open space and recreation; Advisory to the Town Council.

After a brief discussion about the potential uses for the approximate 4+ acres of the open space and recreational parcel identified as Map 23, Lot 11, Ms. Weidman noted to the Planning Commission that she had been asked that the advisory be ready for the Town Council tomorrow. Below is the memorandum that had been prepared for the Town Council; as identified by the Planning Commission during discussion.

TO: Town Council
FROM: Jane Weidman, Town Planner

DATE: April 5, 2018

RE: Acquisition of Plat 23 Lot 11; Planning Commission Advisory to the Town Council

As requested, the Planning Commission considered the potential purchase by the Town of the above lot for public recreation and open space purposes at their special meeting on April 4, 2018. This meeting was preceded by a group site walk the same evening. Following discussion, the Commission voted unanimously (5 to 0) to send a positive advisory to the Town Council.

The Planning Commission feels strongly that this 6.5 acre mostly undeveloped parcel is an important acquisition for the Town:

- It adjoins town-owned land and its ownership will serve to complete the access to and use of Puchalski Field
- It has easy access and plenty of parking, both at Town Hall and alongside the field
- It includes wooded areas that can become protected open space and used for passive purposes
- It will serve as a permanent buffer between the athletic field and the residential area to the south

The Planning Commission found the acquisition to be in keeping with the comprehensive planning goals of preserving and enhancing open space in Charlestown. The Commission assumes that planning for the future use of the parcel will take into account the historic cemetery near the South County Trail end of the property, as well as the beautiful wooded nature of the land, which has potential for walking trails. They also recommend that at a suitable time after title is obtained, the zoning designation be changed from R-3A to Open Space / Recreation.

cc Mark Stankiewicz

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission found the Advisory to the Town Council favorable.

Motion

Ms. Russell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Topping to send a favorable advisory to the Town Council based on Ms. Weidman's memo. All in favor. Vote was unanimous.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Erin P. Russell, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Frances M. Topping, Alternate #1
AYES:	Platner, Johnson, Krupka, Russell, Topping
ABSENT:	Heavers, O'Connor

5. Comprehensive Plan Update

A. Review and Discussion of Comprehensive Plan Draft Chapters

The Planning Commission was provided a copy of the Housing Choice draft excerpt completed by Mr. Murray. Mr. Murray stated that the chapter consists of the following: the introduction and data sets, discussion of trends and some areas of housing need and opportunity in the community. As discussed on the 14th of March, he feels the chapter should have a broad context of housing and not just be an affordable housing plan. The first section is about the context the community is largely interested in, and that is to maintain the rural traditions, village orientation and to get the density issue out there right up front. He noted that the housing data set is in rough form and he is considering breaking that into a couple of tables and having better references for that.

The group discussed the trends in population and housing and Mr. Murray said that it seems like the market would provide Charlestown the upper end of the market and not so much for the starter home. He suggested that some of the older population might want single level living and smaller homes as they age.

Ms. Platner stated that the developers are going to build whatever the market will bear and what is most profitable for them. She recalled that owner built affordable housing was big back in the 70's.

Mr. Murray replied that they can think about and encourage housing production at the two ends of the market. He feels that in the housing market, you have to give something to find a balance point where it doesn't undermine the community.

Ms. Topping replied that they wouldn't be counted as affordable.

Mr. Murray replied that you would have to have a 30 year deed restriction and be at or below the 120% median income.

Ms. Topping asked about local preference.

Ms. Platner replied that they have asked of most affordable housing developers that they give local preference and that requires advertising heavily in Charlestown. For Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded housing such as Churchwoods, there has to be expanded advertising as relinquished under fair housing law.

Discussion ensued about rental housing opportunities in Charlestown and Ms. Topping wondered about the number of low and moderate income (LMI) owned properties.

Ms. Weidman replied with Edwards Lane.

Ms. Platner replied by stating Ninigret Hamlet has a lot of rental units.

The Commission brought up the example of Village Farm being a mixture of housing styles and mix of market and affordable housing

Mr. Murray talked about Charlestown's progress with affordable housing since 2004 and that although it is not at the 10%, the town is demonstrating steady progress.

The Planning Commission had discussion about housing needs in the community such as the maintenance of distinctive/ rural and small village character, preservation of existing housing stock, growth in the community, the need to address local affordable housing, the need for diversity and balancing housing needs and tourism.

Mr. Murray brought up mobile home parks and that they might consider a way to convert them to manufactured homes or very small homes. He feels that should certainly be discussed in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Murray then wondered if inclusionary zoning should be a consideration in the plan.

Ms. Platner replied that the issue is that they can't do that in the Special Area Management Plan (SAMP). She said in general, they do not like to increase density.

Mr. Murray replied that it pushes them in another direction such as considering the mobile home parks.

Ms. Platner replied that if they do not ask for inclusionary zoning, could they ask for affordable housing, such as a conversion of an existing unit or a requirement that they put money in a fund.

Mr. Murray stated that with a fee-in lieu, he thinks they would have to give a density bonus to get the fee.

The Planning Commission then went over the Mason Draft (March 28, 2016) for Goals, Objectives, Policies and Actions for Housing Choice and made some minor edits. It was agreed that this needs to be rewritten and the number of action items reduced. Ms. Weidman stated that this section should be guided by the discussion of housing issues, which needs to be written.

6. Adjournment

Motion

A motion was made by Ms. Topping and seconded by Ms. Russell to adjourn the meeting. All in favor. Vote was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Sherry D. Krupka, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Erin P. Russell, Commissioner
AYES:	Platner, Johnson, Krupka, Russell, Topping
ABSENT:	Heavers, O'Connor

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Beauchaine, Planning Commission Clerk