

TOWN OF TEMPLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
PLANNING BOARD
June 18, 2019
MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

Board members present: Bruce Kullgren, Jr., Allan Pickman, Randy Martin, Brian Kullgren, Tedd Petro, Bill Ezell, Nicole Concordia

Call to order by Pickman at 7:01 p.m.

Public forum on affordable housing: An audience of 30+ attended the forum. Pickman offered an opening statement to provide information about what the board has been working on. There has been ongoing discussion about how to make Temple more affordable for young families, as well consideration of possible changes to zoning that might help facilitate this. One important action is to present information and ideas to the public and obtain feedback. This is the beginning of a long process that will go throughout the fall, perhaps involving a public survey, and if a strong consensus is determined then one or more zoning amendments could be put forth for a ballot vote in March.

Bruce Kullgren acted as moderator for the evening. He introduced PB members and staff, and mentioned that three sitting members also have had previous experience serving as members of the Board of Selectmen. A primary concern of the PB is keeping the town's elementary school open, and this open forum is to listen to comments and questions from residents. He added that affordable housing would not involve subsidized Section 8 housing or mobile home parks. Ultimately the board wishes to promote a diverse population, save the school, and preserve the town's rural character. The floor was then opened to audience participation (Questions, Comments, Answers):

Q. What are the board's thoughts/ideas?

A. Perhaps allow 2-family houses on a 3-acre lot; already allow auxiliary apartments; a developer could build and have two rentals, or an owner could live in one side and rent the other; mention of previous history and examples of 2-family homes in town including ZBA approval to allow 3 units in the old brick school.

Q. How did PB decide on affordability as a factor?

A. The PB only has oversight on zoning, and there could be other solutions but the PB cannot address them, ie tax structure, how to change paying for schools, and no control over real estate market. Encouraging building of smaller units or rental units could bring more people into town.

C. This is not just a Temple issue; jobs bring in young people with families; suggestion that jobs are in the Boston/Massachusetts area.

C: Lack of high speed internet in parts of town is an issue; can't attract younger people without modern services.

C: Lack of childcare is also an issue.

C. Young people need jobs and excellent school systems; entire state needs these.

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Q. Any data showing affordable housing brings in families? Feels there are better options, ie offering pre-school, daycare, swimming; not sure affordable housing is the answer; how might existing workforce housing regulations help; mention that only 50% of the 2019 ConVal graduating class is going on to further education.

A. Workforce housing is mandated by state law and the town is required to allow it, cannot refuse, and must allow some subsidized housing in this type of development; lets developers come in to build but PB wanted some control and restrictions; no one has yet built workforce housing in Temple.

C. This approach might not work at all - rural character is important to people.

A. Workforce housing is subsidized; the town should encourage other housing prospects such as 2-family and also over-55 housing.

Q. Any data showing people want to come to Temple?

A. There is a need; mention of one young family in town struggling to finally be able to buy their own home; local jobs don't pay a lot and young families cannot afford to pay \$250-\$300K for a house.

A. Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) has data; Congresswoman Annie Kuster has addressed the lack of affordable housing at the state level; the PB hosted local experts to provide their perspective on current housing market, rentals, costs of building lots, etc.

Q. Regarding subsidies for Section 8 / welfare – who pays?

A. Section 8 is state/federal government funded.

C. Data is available online at NHHousing.org, is done every 2 years. Proposal that the PB and Selectboard and perhaps the school form a committee and utilize a variety of voices, “not just construction and developers”.

C. The Selectboard is aware and would authorize a committee – needs volunteers. After immediate response from several persons, a suggestion to email the Selectboard indicating name and interest in participating.

C. Feels this approach is not the solution and is a bigger issue than just the PB addressing. Mention of possible new state housing appeals board being formed to deal with complaints about local zoning issues before heading to court.

C. Would like to hear technical aspects for requirements for “duplexes”.

A. PB is not there yet; town would decide some aspects; DES would approve/disapprove septic issues on any size lot through soils and perc tests.

C. Clarification that the term “condo” is a form of ownership.

C. The term “rural character” means different things to different people. Not in favor of building houses all over town on 3-acre lots as the build-out and sprawl would mean loss of rural character. Regarding entry-level buyers – young people have college debt and cannot buy a house here. Many ConVal grads do not stay in area, can do more elsewhere. Many people cobble together several part-time jobs to get by. Feels the focus should be on affordable housing for younger people, plus over-55 housing. Many people would like to live here but have a career and need jobs elsewhere to make \$\$\$. SWRPC has age-focused data and has been

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sponsoring a related survey. Mention of consideration of allowing “agri-hoods” as a different way to develop land and combine the best aspects of rural living; two agri-hoods are currently in process of being started in local areas (Peterborough and Amherst).

A. This probably could be done within the Planned Residential Development (PRD) ordinance.

C. Timing of notices on Temple FB page not sufficient.

A. Agreed could be more timely. Need more time to pull things together.

A. Come fall this will be the primary item on the PB agenda.

C. Referred to previous mention of ConVal graduate rate and student loan debt for college. Those not going to college need trades/jobs; local jobs are needed. Works with veterans and is not adverse to subsidized units.

Q. Could the town utilize town-owned land to help with housing? Almost 100 acres are town-owned.

A. Could set up a Housing Authority, find a bonding unit, and town could control what is built; could take a look at. Mention of Skladany parcel of 60+ acres.

C. Short timeline to save the school vs. developing a plan for the town that makes sense.

Q. Regarding Temple Elementary School (TES) – who controls, and what is needed?

A. Peterborough wishes to control taxes and would like to shrink number of schools; if Peterborough and Antrim work together they could control the vote to eliminate certain smaller schools.

C. Mention of “Articles of Agreement” and needing a 2/3 vote to close a school; feels the four smallest schools will stick together to not allow closure; feels Temple is not at risk, but does need more kids. “A school is too small when the parents tell you that”, and they are not. Also, ConVal budget is out of control; may ask for universal pre-school next; never cut programs or administrators; there is a sense that the ConVal education has declined.

C. ConVal issues are not Temple issues. TES offers a great elementary education here in town.

C. Agrees with assessment of ConVal school issues; one problem is ConVal never looked at long-term trends in child population; need to look at all age groups; other variables such as property values and housing also go up or down.

C. Reminder of special things Temple offers such as Drama Club and Trunk-or-Treat, with suggestion they be posted on the town website.

A. Can be sent along to the webmaster.

C. Wants more from the PB, not clear where they are going, would like more data and direction from them. Mentioned hearing Matt Cabana talk about 2-acre housing and condos – no apartment units.

A. The only reason the PB is talking about this is the desire to save our school, and otherwise the PB would not have brought to the table. The PB is limited to helping through zoning, and would like to listen to people and be able to put something on the table.

C. This is bigger than PB.

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C. Believes the town needs a place to swim, better internet services, a coffee shop, daycare, etc. Moved from MA to here because more affordable and loves the community, but works from home and had to pay big \$\$ to get high speed internet run to their home.

A. Selectboard is well aware of the internet issue; spoke of process in the town of Chesterfield working with Consolidated to get high speed internet provided to entire town.

C. Asked the audience to redirect the focus of conversation back to what the PB can do.

A. Can talk to the Selectboard about additional issues such as swimming hole, daycare, etc.

C. Warning from a previous MA resident to "watch what you wish for". Small MA towns they lived in grew and had a transient community, dense population, increased need and cost for infrastructure - too much growth.

An influx of people might mean a need for more services.

A. History of previous growth in Temple; not planning infrastructure growth; big boom was in the 1980's.

C. The town's population in 1985 was at 750; it has stayed between 1,300-1,400 for years now.

Q. What is PB considering for a 2-family home, possible to do a detached unit?

A. That would be currently allowed on a 6-acre lot.

C. That is not affordable housing; also need senior housing in town.

A. Use of PRD's could allow more units and provide open space; could tweak numbers to help preserve rural character.

Q. Any town limitations on building permits?

A. The town did have a Growth Management Ordinance in the 1980's but currently there are no limits.

Q. If the school is the whole reason, what would the timeframe be to make changes to the PRD ordinance?

Allowing a 2-family home would be faster, and need a solution that is practical in a short period of time.

A. Quick explanation about PRD's; currently workforce housing costs too much to build and there are too many regulations.

A. Second reference of a possible new state board that could overrule local zoning on appeal.

Q. Any data on the population of Temple? The state and town are dropping.

A. No specific data at this time.

C. Suggestion to consider converting existing homes into 2-family, could work well without building new dwellings.

A. Certainly something the board can look at.

Q. Any data if a property change to 2-family home could affect abutting property values? Also, feels the town should look at senior housing.

A. No specific data at this time.

C. Young families don't want/can't afford those big old houses.

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C. Mention of living here for a long time and needing/wanting to stay but need something smaller.

A. Looking at a 2-family home would drive building costs down, with one driveway, one septic, and one well instead of two; could be constructed with less carbon footprint.

C. In Temple the majority of renters are long-term, not moving in and out.

C. To save TES the town needs young families that have children – must consider what can they afford.

Q. Regarding Workforce Housing and state oversight – is Temple in compliance?

A. If a developer comes in and wants to build workforce housing, the town must allow it; must be a PRD and will have some subsidized units; data must be reported to state to prove the workforce housing criteria still being met.

Q. Have any other towns close by had to deal with a developer coming in to build workforce housing?

A. Temple has some protection; if the town had not enacted the ordinance, a developer could have come in and built what they wanted.

C. Towns that do this (WFH) have an anchor – such as Millipore in Jaffrey, the paper mill in Bennington – and tend to be larger communities. Mention of needed services such as drivers, stores as part of the big picture. Feels Temple is not an attractive community for workforce housing.

C. Glad the Zoning Ordinance was put in during the 1970's. Feels if it is not broken, don't fix it.

C. Listening to the “not broken” comment plus the earlier commentary about the school not being in imminent danger, might not need these changes.

A. What the board can do is make sure the school stays.

C. Temple needs the elementary school – keep that focus; it is the heartbeat of the community.

C. Agrees - need to keep a vibrant school.

Q. Is the state looking at affordable housing?

A. The state could come in and mandate, and the town needs protection in place.

C. There is a fine line between managing growth and controlling it.

C. Early PB minutes indicate the town used to concentrate on keeping families with kids limited/out.

Q. Asked for a straw poll from the audience by a show of hands: Question #1: How many do not want to modify housing to save the school? Response showed a scattering of less than five.

C. While zoning has worked in the past to control/stop growth, the PB may need to adjust.

C. This is a systemic problem in the state, not sure this is the way to address.

Q. How many houses/dwellings are needed at rental rates of \$1,200-\$1,500 vs. property taxes?

C. Rentals give young people a foothold, a start that may lead to buying.

C. Also keeps seniors in houses.

C. Need a combination of families with kids and keeping older people here to make a vibrant community.

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Q. Asked again for a straw poll from the audience by a show of hands: Question #2: How many think the PB should look at this right now (to modify housing to save the school)? Response showed many hands.

C. Establishing a committee is a good idea.

C. Some Hillsborough County statistics regarding qualifying incomes levels were offered.

C. If the town had affordable housing it does not mean families with children would move in; could be some workers, some older folks.

C. There is a very limited stock of housing available. People have been getting priced out of MA.

C. This is cyclical – no guarantees.

C. “Market the town”.

C. Do not “not do it” because it might not happen. Get the committee to investigate. There is no reason not to investigate this, it is not going to change the town.

C. There are 3 apartments in the Birchwood Inn; there are 3 apartments in the former Lillian Maynard house beside the library; there are 3 apartments at the old brick school. All these are within the village area, and people may not be aware of them. Still have rural character.

At 9:00 pm the moderator announced the public forum portion was closed. It is anticipated one or two more forums will be held, the committee will be formed, further data will be available, and this will lead to a determination by the board of what to offer to voters.

Review and approval of previous meeting minutes was postponed until the next meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Bruce Kullgren, second by Brian Kullgren, and so voted at 9:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Betsy Perry