

**TOWN OF HOPKINTON
PLANNING BOARD**

WORKSHOP

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Hopkinton Town Hall

1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Al DiOrio called the December 2nd Workshop of the Hopkinton Planning Board to order at 6:06 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

As the meeting was conducted remotely, Town Planner Jim Lamphere and Senior Planning Clerk Talia Jalette were the only people present in the Council chambers. Planning Board Chairman Al DiOrio, as well as Planning Board Vice Chair Ron Prellwitz, and Planning Board members Carolyn Light and Emily Shumchenia were in attendance via Zoom from the beginning of the meeting, as were Town Council Liaison Sharon Davis and Planning Board Solicitor Sean Clough. Conservation Commission Liaison Deb O’Leary joined the workshop at approximately 6:45 p.m., and Planning Board member Keith Lindelow joined at approximately 6:55 p.m.

DISCUSSION:

Forestation Policy and Agreements for the Community, as requested by Planning Board member Carolyn Light.

Mr. DiOrio began the workshop by asking Ms. Light to provide some insight into how, where, and when she envisioned the application of this practice. After responding, Ms. Light asked Mr. DiOrio if her response had answered his question. Mr. DiOrio replied that it had not, and then continued.

Mr. DiOrio: “You, you understand my underlying concern in asking the question, is that I read through some -”

Ms. Light: “Yes.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Of the documents, and, when I see, oh, let’s see here – I’m scrambling through your, your, uh, your package here. When I start seeing people identifying, uh, thirty-inch trees, uh, at breast height, I start getting concerned, because this is gonna cost somebody a lot of money. Now, if it’s a large Commercial enterprise, uh, or it’s a Major Subdivision, then maybe that cost is warranted, but I’m very reluctant to impose this on small projects, uh, not, which is not to say that small projects can’t have a significant

impact on our forests, uh, but, I just, I just want to be – I’m just leery of foisting a significant impact on, you know, the guy who’s coming in with a two-lot subdivision.”

Ms. Light replied that she understood, and that “these are the things that can be tweaked”. She explained that what she had provided was “just a general format, a, a loose package of information, so that we could all get a feel for what’s going on”. She said that if there were a thirty-inch tree where a property owner wanted to subdivide, the Board could either prohibit the removal of that tree, or begin “charging a fee to take that tree down.” She continued.

Ms. Light: “Um, those are the things that we can work into this. I, I, I agree completely. We have to shape this around our community, and we have to encourage, uh, the continued development, but we need to encourage responsible development.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Okay.”

Ms. Light: “So, how do we shape this – this is what, what we need to know, um. You said small development. Your idea of a small development would be what? How much of a land footprint are we talking about?”

Mr. DiOrio: “Well, we already have a, we already have like, a template for this, right? We have Minor Subdivisions, and we have Major Subdivisions, and Major Land Developments. So, you could use those same categories, if you were so inclined, or, if, you could certainly create your own, that make take a little doing. So, the folks who are coming before us are using the categories that have already been established by the enabling legislation – Minor, Major, etcetera, so -”

Ms. Light: “Correct.”

Mr. DiOrio: “My, my thinking would be, you would be, you would use those same categories, just for, just for convenience.”

Ms. Light: “Mmhmm.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Now, so, to answer your larger question, here’s what, here’s what I would benefit from. We’re, we’re talking about, you know, we’re sucking stuff in from Maryland, and we got this idea and that idea. What I would really like to see is a specific layout of exactly how this would be implemented. So, we gotta – at some point, we have to move from the conceptual to something that, okay, this is, these, these are the mechanics of how this will work, and, the sooner we make that jump, the easier it’s going to be to bring this thing into focus. Now, that’s presuming that everyone is still on board with taking that next step, but, from my position, that’s what I would benefit from the most. Now, that’s gonna, that’s gonna take some serious effort, because that is, essentially, that’s drafting an Ordinance.”

Ms. Light: “Yep. We can do that.”

Mr. DiOrio: “I know we can do it. I just haven’t – having written my fair share of them, I know what’s involved. So, the first order of business, just as we are following the same line of thinking that we went through with regards to the uh, uh, revised Solar Ordinance that was, uh, put before us just last month -”

Ms. Light: “Yeah.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Is that the first order of business is to confirm that everyone is on board with this. And, if that’s the case, we take the next step. If anybody is opposed to this idea,

or has contrary thinking, uh, let's not spin our wheels. So, we need to hear from the other folks, too."

Ms. Light asked for input from the rest of the Board, and when she did not hear any responses, she jokingly asked if they were "the only ones here." Mr. DiOrio and Ms. Jalette laughed, then she replied that Mr. Prellwitz and Ms. Shumchenia were in attendance, they just "[hadn't] weighed in yet." Ms. Shumchenia said that she was "deferring to the hierarchy we normally adhere to", but that she was ready to comment.

Ms. Shumchenia: "Um, I'm supportive of moving forward with this. I like the idea to use the structure that we already have, um, for, you know, specific criteria for Minor Subdivision, Major Subdivisions, Major Land Development projects. I also agree, um, with the idea that we would think about focusing on some of the Major Subdivisions, or Major Land Development projects, and not the Minor Subdivisions. Um, one of the things that came to mind as you guys were discussing is that Rhode Island DEM [Department of Environmental Management] already requires, um, landowners to get a cut permit if they're gonna clear more than five acres of land, so it's not so simple for an individual homeowner to just clear-cut their property. So, there are already some checks in place that, um, you know, maybe there's some coordination between DEM and the Town that, you know, we would be made aware if that was happening, or something, I don't even know if we would be able to do anything about it, but, um, just to, just to mention that, as sort of in the context of like, what if a homeowner wants to cut down a tree – they can, and that's their right to do on their land. Um, it's just when it gets above the five-acre threshold that they start having to notify or apply for permission to do so. Um, I also like thinking about function, and how these, um, additional measures would be implemented, um, knowing that that means writing an Ordinance, um, and the challenges that that proposes, but, uh, we touched on something last month that I, I, admittedly, did not have time to do research on, but would still love to, and that's the concept of, um, Conservation Design. Um, I'm – being new here, I don't know the entire history behind it, but I know that there are resources out there, and if we can pull in elements of that concept, and that framework to help us move forward, I think that we should."

Ms. Light: "Mhmm. I, I personally was enjoying my reading time on the, uh, uh, Rhode Island woods, with, with URI [the University of Rhode Island]. Uh, there's a boatload of information, and it was my thought that I would want to pull them in, um, at some point. Now, with Al [DiOrio] pointing out that we are basically, uh, walking towards drafting an Ordinance, I guess now would be the time to reach out to them for that kind of support, since they seem to be the pros here in Rhode Island, you know."

Mr. Prellwitz commented next. He had a few questions.

Mr. Prellwitz: "Okay. Now, what does everybody think of the idea of getting – now, Carolyn [Light] mentioned contacting URI, and using some of their expertise, for lack of a better term right at this moment. What about contacting some states other than – along the eastern seaboard. Now, Maryland is a fairly affluent state. Rhode Island is. What about if we got input and ideas from, say, Montana, or one of them other states, you know, and weigh out all of our options, you know, before we get headed down a path we

may end up regrettin' later. If we get a little bit more information, maybe it's gonna help us out some."

Mr. DiOrio replied that he heard Mr. Prellwitz, and that he was "okay with exploring as much as we need to explore", but "again, having been down this road once or twice, the further we stray from home, the more retooling we're going to have to do." He continued.

Mr. DiOrio: "Montana is not Rhode Island, and I know you're not making that, that, uh, that connection, but, New England, and the Mid-Atlantic, there's a certain mindset that we can easily draft behind. Once we leave home court, that mindset doesn't exist anymore, and I'm just concerned that when we start doing that kind of investigation, uh, we're just going to find that, well, there's a whole different way of thinking, and it's probably not for us. So, if you feel like looking at Montana, I say, 'Go for it.'"

Mr. Prellwitz explained that he had "just pulled Montana out of thin air", and that "there are other states much closer to us that, you know, they might have a little bit of usable information for us, like Vermont or New Hampshire or something." Mr. DiOrio said that "they should, most certainly, be explored", and that he "would agree with that." Ms. Jalette then asked if she could make a recommendation. Mr. DiOrio replied in the affirmative. She began.

Ms. Jalette: "So, in, in all of the studying and – that I've done over the course of my life, both in my undergraduate career and also in my, uh, graduate school career, the best way to compare Ordinances or programs is to take two places that are similar. So, instead of maybe focusing on places that are in New England or the Mid-Atlantic, or on the west coast, or in the middle of the United States, I would recommend that, if you were going to be looking at other places, you would want to find some place that is comparable to Hopkinton, in regards to, uh, the, the amount of Commercial development, the amount of Residential development, the amount of Industrial development, things of that nature, because you're going to want to find what people are doing in places like where we are, because that's going to be the most useful information. So, that's just my, my two cents."

Mr. DiOrio said that he got that, and then asked if she was "suggesting that we look at communities that are like Hopkinton." She replied that she was.

Mr. DiOrio: "Okay, okay."

Ms. Jalette: "I just think that that information would be the most applicable."

Ms. Shumchenia responded.

Ms. Shumchenia: "This is Emily [Shumchenia]. I really like that idea. Um, I had been poking around, um, when we were discussing, uh, after we were discussing the Solar Ordinance, to learn a little bit more about how other towns are dealing with that. Um, you – as we all know – Hopkinton isn't the only town dealing with large-scale solar developers wanting to buy up our relatively affordable land, um, and so there are lots of opportunities to learn from how they're dealing with that, and there are towns that have

this, very similar structures, um, and makeup as ours, um, that are being sort of targeted in the same way by developers for the same reasons. One that comes to mind is – I think it's Dartmouth, Massachusetts – um, there might be sections of these towns that have a little bit more Commercial development than Hopkinton does, of course – we're not going to find a perfect match, but, um, it might be worth looking fairly, uh, close-by, at how some of these neighboring towns – they're grappling with a lot of the challenges we're grappling with – are addressing them.”

Ms. Light: “Okay.”

Ms. Shumchenia: “And I'd be willing to do some of that research. I'm not just, you know, uh, proposing that into the ether here, um, so, happy to, happy to look up some of that stuff before our next meeting.”

Ms. Light: “Okay. Thank you, Emily [Shumchenia]. That would be great. Um, I, I did, um, just for reference – when, you know, Talia [Jalette] was talking about weighing this against another community, I, uh, I did find information, uh, last November, from the Bureau of Land Management on the west coast, and, just, the FYI [For Your Information], this was pertinent to large solar developments on the west coast, and, you know, we know what those look like, they're, they're pretty big, but, in any case, uh, there, they were required, uh, to place, um, that a developer would need to pay the Bureau of Land Management ten thousand dollars per acre of land disturbance, in a bond, in a bond amount, and that is for, uh, the – not the decommissioning, but the, uh, returning the land back to its original state, after the, the solar farm, is, uh, dismantled and decommissioned, so, there are, are huge differences in the way that we could read into this, and, and, um, I, I agree that we need to stay closer to home, maybe north, maybe, maybe Dartmouth [Massachusetts] is the place to go, I don't know.”

Ms. Light continued. She said that “it was mentioned a couple of times that we don't have a, a tree warden”. She said that “an Ordinance would, um, kind of speak to some of that,”, but “one of the things that bother[ed her] about what we're talking about over here is that we don't have any way to manage it, other than going through the Subdivisions and the Planning Board.” She said that the Town did not “have, um, administrative support for this, and I guess that would be something we could address at a later date, but that fact is, in the back of my mind is, okay, so, you know, you've got this plan, now what?” She said that that was “some of the information that [she was] continu[ing] to look for is like, we're, how do you administer this, uh, just for the management purposes of it, and I've spoken about managing a, uh, decommissioning twenty-five years down the road, you know – it's costing the Town money to execute these agreements today, monitor them for twenty-five years at the end of the day who, who is going to be handling that, and, and this – that also speaks to what we're talking about over here.”

Mr. DiOrio said that he “appreciated that, you know, most municipalities have larger staffs, and they can bring that staff to bear on monitoring all these wonderful that we're going to put in place.” He continued.

Mr. DiOrio: “I am not really sure that that's the answer for us, because that just speaks to increasing the expense for the taxpayer, right, as we back up our community, uh, the taxpayer has to pay for all the staff. I would be breaking that -”

Ms. Light: “Right.

Mr. DiOrio: “An idea that we could consider, so, you know, here’s the analogy. We have an on-call engineer. The engineer is paid for by the applicant. Why don’t we have an on-call, I’m going to use your term, tree warden, and the tree warden position is paid for by the applicant, on an as-needed basis. So, if somebody has to monitor a plan, just like we went out for an RFQ [Request For Quotation] on the Town Engineer, let’s go for an RFQ on whatever the person is that manages these, or monitors these programs. That way, it doesn’t cost the taxpayer anything. We don’t have to keep somebody in a room, whether they’re being utilized or not, and the - it’s at the applicant’s expense, which, you listen, it’s a user fee. If you want to play, you have to pay.”

Ms. Light: “Okay. Alright. That gives you some comfort.”

Mr. Prellwitz asked if he could “throw two cents in there”. He said, to “go along” with what the rest of the Board was proposing, they should pick someone “that is a registered forester”.

Mr. Prellwitz: “People that we deal with, and do it as a specific, site specific job number. For instance, Mr. [Marc] Tremblay – not that we would, you know, I’m not promotin’ him, but somebody in his position. We would call him up and say, ‘Alright, we want you to take a look at this, here’s is a day’s pay if you go do that’, or whatever, you know, instead of like, outside, having somebody sit around and rest on their laurels until they’re required.”

Mr. DiOrio replied that the thought that that would be “the easiest” solution. Ms. Light said that “the State law requires that we used licensed people”, like a licensed arborist or forester. She said that she agreed with Mr. Prellwitz “that that’s the direction we would need to go in.” Mr. DiOrio replied that “that was easy”, and then provided “a couple of other thoughts.”

Mr. DiOrio: “I would like to reach out to, uh, Scott Millar on this topic. I don’t know how many of you know Scott [Millar], uh, he’s been very helpful for me with regards to the whole solar fandango, and, uh, he might have some insight as to direction in this regard, so, I will, uh, I will fill that responsibility and reach out to Scott [Millar].”

Ms. Light: “Great.”

Mr. DiOrio: “The other element that I, I wanted to touch upon while it’s right here, on top of my notes is, uh, Emily [Shumchenia]’s comment about Conservation Design. I have two thoughts -”

Ms. Light: “Yeah.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Number one, number one – if my memory serves correct, the Town of Charlestown is going through this investigation right now. So, we could reach out to the Planner in Charlestown to figure out what they’re doing. I saw this advertised – it must have been part of the Planning Commission’s agenda there recently. So, that’s a thought. Right along the same lines, we’ve already covered a lot of this ground, uh, and Jim [Lamphere] can jump in where my memory is faulty, but, we already took a shot at this. It didn’t go over well, uh, back then, but there’s no reason why we can’t resurrect that material and take another look at it. So -”

Ms. Light: “That would be great.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Jim?”

At this interval, Mr. Lamphere weighed in.

Mr. Lamphere: “I think that’s a great idea, Al [DiOrio]. Um, you’re one hundred percent right – we did, uh, attempt to do that in this Town when Ashley [Hahn] as here, the Planner. I, I attempted to do it in Charlestown when I was the Planner over there, and we both got, uh, dismissed from that effort. So, um, uh, so, it, but again, you know, times are different, times have changed.”

Mr. DiOrio: “It’s a different time, right.”

Mr. Lamphere: “And, and I think that, uh, I think that’s a good way. Now, now, again, when we were talking about Conservation Development, we were principally looking at Residential Subdivisions, and, uh, again, Conservation Development is all about developing with the land, okay? The contours, the trees, you – and flexible, flexible lot, uh, configurations, and, and lot dimensions, so that you can preserve the qualities of the parcel. Um, now, applying this to Commercial and Industrial, uh, projects, uh, we really didn’t attempt to do that yet, um, but that’s, that’s something that we can probably weave into it. I mean, I think that’s a good way to, you know, getting back into Conservation Development is a good way to achieve some of the goals that the Planning Board seems to want to put in place here, and I think, I think it may have some legs now. We have a new Town Council, um, and I think, I think it’s worth another try. So, that would be a pretty good start.”

Mr. DiOrio began to respond, but Mr. Lamphere had more to add.

Mr. Lamphere: “We’re talking about Ordinances here. Um, do, uh – a couple of ways to approach this is you can embed things in our Subdivision Regulations, or – keep in mind – an Ordinance, an Ordinance, when you actually talk about an Ordinance, that is something that’s gonna have to be approved by the Town Council. So, and, and go through the Public Hearing process, etcetera. So, that’s, uh, that’s a little bit more involved than embedding or amending our Subdivision Regulations. So, um, just, just give some thought to that. Now, another thing, too, is, um, in addition to looking at communities that are like Hopkinton, rather than creating an Ordinance from scratch, which is a lot of work, uh, you might want to look at some towns that already have done these things, as a start, and then bring that, bring that right in, and then you can amend that to, uh, and tailor that to the Hopkinton’s needs. Um, and, again now, as far as Conservation Development? We have a lot – probably got all this stuff in my office, uh, somewhere, if not on my computer, uh, where we, where we made a start, so, um, we, we don’t have to start off from, uh, from scratch with, with a lot of this stuff. So, that’s all I have to add.”

Ms. Light replied that that was “kind of exciting”, as Mr. Lamphere had “given [the Board] a jump start”. He replied.

Mr. Lamphere: “Yeah, well, I, I was kind of quiet, because I wanted to hear what the Board – I wanted to get a real good sense of what the Board wanted to accomplish, where you wanted to go, and, naturally, I have my experience behind me, of twenty-some odd years, and so, I’ve been through, like Al [DiOrio] once or twice, I’ve been through these things, so I, I just wanted to see what my, what my clients wanted here, and then, I’m here to help you, I, I’m here to facilitate things for you, help you to the extent that, you know, whatever you want, we’ll, we’ll try and get in place.”

Mr. DiOrio replied that he had “a couple of follow-up thoughts there.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Do you think that we could impose on you, for the next go-around, to, uh, take a look back at your Conservation Development materials, and maybe send us all just a little something, so we can, number one, become conversant in the theory, and, I don’t know if we got as far as a proposed Ordinance. I don’t know – something along those lines, so that we can continue the discussion.”

Mr. Lamphere replied that that was an “excellent idea”. He said he would “certainly do that”. He said that it would “give [the Board] a really good point of departure here for a discussion going forward.” Mr. DiOrio said that “the last time [the Board] took a shot at this, it was focused on Residential development”, which he said was “okay, by the way”, as he thought “that’s in line with [the Board]’s objective.” He continued.

Mr. DiOrio: “I know that Carolyn [Light]’s focus has been on, you know, the larger projects, mostly Commercial, but, as I open some of the discussion, we can’t, we can’t negate the impact that Residential development has on our resources as well, so, let, let’s do that, and, uh, the other thing I want to endorse is, and forgive me for not remembering this – the idea of utilizing the Subdivision Ordinance as opposed to creating an Ordinance. I very much think we should move in that direction. It’s gonna be much easier to deal with if we work within our Subdivision confines, rather than start creating new Ordinances.”

Ms. Light responded.

Ms. Light: “Um, and to validate that, the, the communities in Maryland that I was looking at do, in fact, have these things, uh, embedded under the Subdivisions [Regulations], so, we’re good there.”

Ms. Shumchenia then had a “couple questions”, and said that it was a “great discussion.”

Ms. Shumchenia: “When you guys say that you looked into Conservation Design at some point in the past, and it didn’t go over well, how long ago was it, and what were the reasons – was it the Planning Board at the time wasn’t really into the idea, or what? Did you get public pushback? I’m just curious.”

Mr. Lamphere responded.

Mr. Lamphere: “Um, my experience in Charlestown was, uh, the development community came out against it at a public hearing before the Town Council, and that kind of deep-sixed the whole thing right there. Uh, it – all you need is a few key, influential members of a community to come out and rally some troops and friends on the Town Council, and, you know, you won’t go anywhere if a Town Council doesn’t want something. So, that’s where you win or lose the battle right there, but, ironically, uh, I had – I worked with a developer, Commonwealth Engineers, and we did a wonderful, uh, subdivision in Charlestown, off of Shannock Road, uh, just, just off of Route 2, um, a short distance, and, basically, I wanted to use that developer, and I asked him if we could, if we could employ Conservation Development principles to the extent that we could within our Zoning Ordinance as it, as it stands, and within our Subdivision Regulations as it stands, and he agreed to do that. He, he said, ‘Yeah,’ I said, he says, ‘I like the, uh, the concept,’ he says, ‘and I’d be willing to do that on this particular subdivision.’ So, that subdivision is in existence today. It was done, like I say, it was done to the extent that it could be done, uh, and it came out very, very well, and, actually, this developer was, was, uh, the, the sole proponent. I asked him to come to the Public Hearing, and he spoke in favor of Conservation Development, but he was drowned out by, uh, some key, influential developers in town, who, who came, who, ironically, came in at the eleventh hour, did not participate in any workshops, any public hearings, or anything, anything to do with putting this thing together. But, people came who were educated, in about thirty minutes, as to what this was, and [were] told what to say, and they said it, and then it ended it. So, I mean, you know, a couple of years of good, hard work went down the tubes really quickly because word got around. So, that, that’s how things happen, but, again, you know something? Don’t let, don’t let a couple of disappointments, uh, dissuade you. If you think the stars are in alignment, and we have a new age right now, and we have some momentum on our side, you know what, bring it back and try it again, and maybe the time is right now.”

Mr. DiOrio thanked Mr. Lamphere for his comments, and provided insight “from [his] recollection about what transpired here in Town”. He said that he believed “the Planning Board was behind it”, which was “back when the State was pumped up on this idea”. He said that “there’s a lot of merit to it, but one of the pivotal elements for Conservation Design is relatively small lots, uh, to try and minimize the impact of construction and maximize open space and protection of the resources.” He continued.

Mr. DiOrio: “Well, my recollection is the Town Council didn’t really buy into that idea. Town Councils here have never really endorsed small lots, smaller lots, uh, and I think that that was one of the stumbling blocks that we encountered when we, when we investigated this last.”

Mr. Lamphere: “Jim Lamphere, Town Planner. You’re absolutely correct, Al [DiOrio]. That’s one of the major, uh, stumbling blocks for it, is, uh – matter of fact, some people refer to this as a ‘Super Cluster’, because it really resembles a Cluster Subdivision, uh, but, but some people, folks do it, uh, refer to as a ‘Super Cluster’, and, and, again, that I, I agree with you – that’s exactly what happened here as well, is that people, um, resented being clustered together. I mean, there’s a strong sentiment in this Town for large lot, uh, zoning – ‘I want my home on my large lot, and I don’t want Open Space around me. I

don't want public, I don't want the public walking around my house in, in, uh, Open Space,' and there's, there's a lot, you know, a lot to be said for that, too, I guess. But, um, but we tried to make it – see, we tried to make Conservation Development at the developer's option. We just – all we wanted to do is give the developer an option to choose that, if a given developer wanted to do it, not mandate it. So, there's a big difference right there, so, I think you have to kind of present it in that fashion.”

Ms. Shumchenia replied that that was “a really helpful context.” She continued.

Ms. Shumchenia: “I'm just curious – I don't want to be, um, inflammatory here, but I'm curious, like, for the Brushy Brook proposals that we're looking at, I mean, that is [an] extraordinarily clustered housing development, and so, um, I'm sure it's not Conservation Development, it's not adhering to Conservation Development practices, but, um, are – do you think that maybe there are enough issues in Town recently, between these, you know, large housing development proposals, like the large solar development, um, that sentiment might be different, and maybe this is the topic of like, you know, a public forum of a workshop or something, to hear what people think about this, but I've – we've – heard a lot of commentary from the public over the last several months about this type of development in Town, and I'm just curious where people's threshold lies with, you know, balancing different development practices, um, and taking the risk that, every once in a while, you might get something like a Brushy Brook proposal, that a lot of people seem to not really see as desirable in our Town.”

Mr. Lamphere responded that the Brushy Brook proposal “came to the Town as a Comprehensive Permit, which allows [the developer] to basically take the Zoning Ordinance, or any other development regulations we have, and throw them right out the window, and ask for any waivers – [they can] ask for anything at all, uh - increased density.” He continued.

Mr. Lamphere: “So, I think you have to, um, I think you have to take a look, first, at exactly how does a specific project come before the Planning Board or the Town to begin with, and then once, once we, once we realize how that's being, uh, you know, presented to the Town, then we can decide how we deal with it in that particular, um, you know, method. Um, Comprehensive Permits are quite different from a Major Subdivision, uh, so, not, not to say that a Comprehensive Permit couldn't be done as a Conservation Development- that, that might give you an opportunity to do something like that, so, um, you know, there's, there's always opportunities to be creative on these things, um, so it's [a] good thought, good thought you have.”

Ms. Shumchenia asked Mr. Lamphere what the process was to amend the Subdivision Regulations. He replied that “the Planning Board would have to get together, uh, have a workshop, uh, talk about the specific, uh, amendments, and then there's a process to amend them, um, State process. Public hearing, etcetera. Um, so, can be done.” He continued.

Mr. Lamphere: “Now, you have to take a look at the specific amendments that you’re proposing. If, if they are also part of an Ordinance somewhere in Town, you may have to go before the Town Council and amend the Ordinance first, before you follow suit on the Subdivision Regulations, but, if it’s, if it’s not really embedded in an Ordinance somewhere, if it’s entirely within the Subdivision Regulations, then you can do that, basically, on your own, but you do have to advertise it. There is a formal process that the State lays out, um, to amend the Sub[division] Reg[ulation]s. So – but we don’t need Town Council approval for it if it’s not an Ordinance.”

Mr. DiOrio then mentioned the time, as the Board was “coming up upon [their], uh, [their] timeline for the conclusion of [their] workshop.” He asked if the Board could “focus on where [they were] going to go next.” Mr. Lamphere said that he would “attempt to round up some really good Conservation Development material for the Board’s packet next month”. He said that the Board could “take a look at that, and decide where [they] want to go from there.” Mr. DiOrio said that he “appreciate[d] that”, but he saw “that as a, uh, kind of like a corollary, running down the same track idea as what Carolyn [Light] [was] proposing.” Mr. Lamphere replied that he thought “that’s very, very closely related”. Mr. DiOrio said that he did not “want that to, uh, to take over what’s being proposed here.” Mr. Lamphere asked Mr. DiOrio “what would, uh, what’s being proposed that this would be taking over?” He said he wasn’t sure “what [the Board] came out with”. Mr. DiOrio replied that the discussion was about “the forestation package”, and that Conservation Development was “this thing over on the side”. He continued.

Mr. DiOrio: “They’re running down parallel tracks, but I don’t, I don’t want them to necessarily become the same thing, right, because they’re not. I don’t think that that is Carolyn [Light]’s objective here.”

Ms. Light responded.

Ms. Light: “I’m, I’m very curious to see the work that was done in the Conservation Development, and what I’d like to see is if there’s work that’s already been accomplished and completed, if we could incorporate it into the objective of having a forestation agreement at the end of the day. That’s, that’s what I’m hoping for.”

Mr. DiOrio asked Ms. Light if she would “be amenable to leaving this such that we’re going to review Conservation Development at our next gathering, and see how, or if, the forestation thing can fit inside it?” She replied.

Ms. Light: “Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah, if we, if we can do bigger work, um, with less effort, I’m all for it.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Okay. I just want to make sure that we’re not diluting your efforts.”

Ms. Light: “No, not at all. Not at all.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Okay.”

Ms. Light: “And this is, you, you wish – we’re, we’re moving away from concept development, and we’re talking about, uh, the actual implementation of ideas that have been executed elsewhere. I’m always – I’m excited to know that we actually have previous work that you guys had done, uh, right here in our community, let alone other communities to rely on. Um, we, we need to, uh, as a community, handle the forestation part of our relationships with these developers better than we have, and I guess the State of Rhode Island knows that this is the direction they need to go in. Different communities are now offering carbon credits, uh, to retain private forests and things like that. If, if we could get something started here, sooner than later, uh, I, I’d be happy, and the fact that there’s this pre-existing work that you guys have already hammered out is a huge step in the right direction. So, Jim [Lamphere] is committing to do, um, bringing forward that Conservation Development, uh, work, and Al [DiOrio], you said you were going to reach out to Scott Millar for us.”

Mr. DiOrio: “It’s already been done.”

Ms. Light: “It’s already been done? Okay. I’m gonna reach out to, uh, URI [University of Rhode Island] and see if we can get some insight and maybe participation from them as well. And, Scott Millar is familiar with these documents that I’ve been presenting to you, and the one that, uh, I had mentioned at another meeting, uh, the value of our forest. Uh, he was a contributor there, so, he’s like, the perfect person to bring in.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Excellent.”

Mr. DiOrio asked the Board if there was anything else that they needed to “discuss on this topic before [they] adjourn[ed]”. Mr. Prellwitz said that he had “one question”. He directed it to Jim.

Mr. Prellwitz: “Would it be beneficial to reach out to, say, Burrillville or Exeter, our next-door neighbor, and see what they have for thoughts on, on these different things. What they’ve done, what they’re thinkin’, or whatever?”

Mr. Lamphere said that that was a “good idea”. He continued.

Mr. Lamphere: “We should, uh, we should look and see what communities have done, done this already. I believe South Kingstown has, uh, adopted Conservation Development, uh, to, to, at least some degree, so we can, we can take a look at South Kingstown. See how far they’ve come, and I’ll look at other towns as well, and see who’s, who has it in place.”

Mr. Prellwitz said that he had suggested Burrillville and Exeter “because they are more in-line with Hopkinton, as far as the way the whole town is configured, than South Kingstown, which is more densely packed”. Mr. Lamphere replied that he would “look around.”

Mr. DiOrio asked if the Board could “consider the Workshop” adjourned. Ms. Light replied in the affirmative. Mr. DiOrio began to ask if they needed a motion to adjourn, as it was a workshop, but then he elected to just “do it.”

Mr. DiOrio: “Anybody care to make a motion to adjourn the Workshop?”

MR. PRELLWITZ MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE WORKSHOP, AND SET A DATE FOR ANOTHER ONE.

Mr. DiOrio asked if the Board would consider continuing with the six o’clock meeting time. Ms. Light, Ms. Shumchenia, and Mr. Prellwitz agreed.

THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. LIGHT.

Mr. Lindelow arrived in time for the vote.

IN FAVOR: DIORIO, PRELLWITZ, LIGHT, SHUMCHENIA, LINDELOW

ABSTAIN: NONE

OPPOSED: NONE

THE MOTION PASSED. THE WORKSHOP WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:00 P.M.

By: Talia Jalette, Senior Planning Clerk, 12/8/20