

MILLSTONE PROPERTY HOUSING Community Engagement Report #1

Prepared by Barrett Planning Group LLC

October 14, 2019

Introduction

Barrett Planning Group LLC facilitated two recent community participation events regarding the proposed Millstone Property housing project on Parcel 98-12:

1. Individual/small group interviews: September 30, 2019
2. Community Engagement Meeting (1 of 3): October 3, 2019

This report provides detailed public responses in subsequent sections, but below is general summary of community feedback thus far.

Common Concerns

- Density of proposed project
- Compatibility with neighborhood
- Loss of privacy for abutters
- Disruption during construction (length of time, noise, dust, etc.)
- Lighting throughout the development
- Noise and disruption from occupants
- Loss of trees, foliage
- Suitability of access parcel
 - There is only one entrance/exit
 - The speed limit on Millstone is too high for safe access
- Traffic
- Reduction in property value for surrounding homes and/or difficulty selling
- Maintenance of development
- Not considering the abutters who will be directly affected by the project

Common Suggestions

- Include of a suitable buffer zone (25')
- Preserve mature trees and bushes (both within the development and as a visual buffer)
- Respect the land's natural topography
- Include tasteful architecture that suits the character of the neighborhood – Cape Code style (shingles, clapboards, landscaping)
- Target a variety of occupants (families with children, seniors, single people)
- Strong preference for single-family homes
- If multifamily structures are included, limit units per structure (preference for duplexes and triplexes) and consolidate them on northern strip closer to Ocean Edge
- Include community features such as a community garden and playground (not near abutters; inconclusive responses about pools, but mostly a preference against)
- Incorporate and preserve open, green space

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- Universal design (i.e., first floor living)
- No structures over two stories
- No large homogeneous apartment blocks
- No modern design
- No clear cutting
- No bright lighting

Different Perspectives

Community members shared a variety of perspectives on whether:

- The units should be ownership vs. rental.
- The plan should maximize density (to create the most housing possible) vs. minimize density (to preserve the character of the neighborhood).
- The development will significantly affect abutting property values.

Who Needs Housing?

Participants of both the small group interviews and the community meeting identified a wide range of populations who would benefit from access to affordable housing, including:

- Town employees
- Seniors
- Families with young children
- People with disabilities
- Lower income renters
- Single adults

Small Group Interviews: September 30, 2019

Alexis Lanzillotta of Barrett Planning Group LLC conducted interviews with 18 Brewster residents representing the following entities:

Abutters to the Millstone Road Property
Affordable Housing Trust
Chamber of Commerce
Community Preservation Committee
Conservation Trust
Council on Aging
Housing Authority
Housing Partnership
Select Board
Town Administration

Common Concerns and Suggestions

The concerns mentioned during interviewed mirrored those in the summary above, with an emphasis on excessive clearing of trees, loss of privacy, strain on infrastructure, buffer size, and the development not fitting in with the feel of the neighborhood.

Thoughts on Housing

The common challenges to developing affordable housing in Brewster mentioned included:

- Cost of property and construction
- Public attitude ("Not in my backyard"; stereotypes and fears about who will move in)
- Lack of available jobs
- Lack of public transportation

Multiple interview subjects mentioned that the town has difficulty recruiting new municipal employees (young teachers, police, firefighters) because they cannot afford to live in Brewster, and that young adults who grew up in Brewster often struggle to stay local.

Different Perspectives

Interview subjects indicated that they understood the need for affordable housing and that they were not opposed to it. However, their perspectives on *how* this need should be met differed. Participants were fairly divided as to:

- Whether density should be maximized to provide as much affordable housing as possible, or minimized to preserve open space and the character of the community. More respondents

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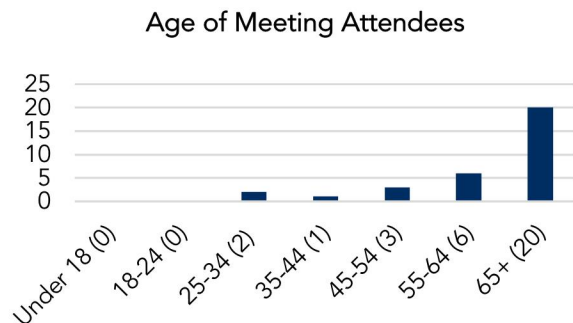
indicated a preference for the latter, but several interview subjects felt that the creation of affordable housing should be the priority.

- The ideal the tenureship of units (i.e., rental vs. ownership).
- Examples of housing projects that have been well-recieved; e.g., while most participants cited Paul Hush Way as a good example of a well done affordable housing development, some participants pointed out that the clearing of trees was problematic.
- The target AMI of residents (30-50% AMI and 80%-125% AMI were both mentioned).

Community Engagement Meeting #1: October 3, 2019

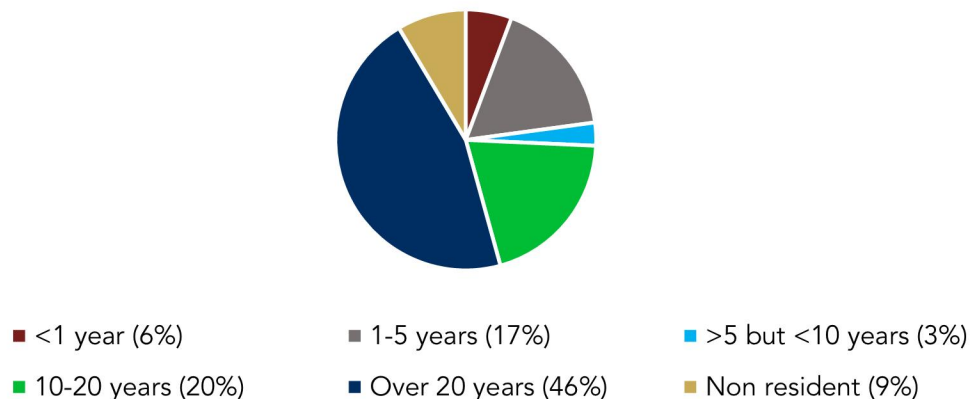
Meeting Demographics

Information below only represents those who self-reported demographic data during the meeting and therefore does not include all attendees.



Tenure	
Own	29
Rent	1
Year-round	23
Seasonal	3

Length of Time Residing in Brewster



Challenges and Opportunities

What are Brewster's biggest challenges for providing affordable housing?

The following responses were provided:

- High rate of seasonal housing. Need for year round rentals affordable to residents.
- Do we need affordable housing?
- Is there a waiting list for current units?
- Money, land, educating rich home owners of the needs of the common people.
- How many units does Brewster need to meet the 10% bar?
- Why wasn't Ocean's Edge required to provide 10%?
- Housing for diverse income levels
- Perception of density problems

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- Making affordable housing “affordable!”
- Brewster shares a regional housing crisis across the Cape and the state
- How can we serve the “in between” population that isn’t eligible for assistance but still can’t afford housing?
- Multifamily housing needed. What’s affordable if you make \$15/hour, not \$250,000?

What can the Town do to address these challenges?

The following responses were provided:

- Educate people and try to help them see the importance of the project.
- Educate people. Provide simple handouts, e.g., on the impact of suburban sprawl on infrastructure.
- Consider how the state and region will accomodate more subsidized housing and services for the homeless.
- Encourage seasonal owners to rent to year-round (i.e. HAC’s Rent 360 program).
- Build/rehab year-round affordable rented units. Low income.
- Engage in “friendly 40B” project.
- Create mixed use housing.

Site Plan Activity

Seven randomized groups were asked to lay out possible development plans based on building types (e.g., single-family, duplex, triplex, larger multifamily structures). Participants engaged in substantive and productive dialogue, mainly surrounding their preferences for or against prioritizing single family homes, overall density, and questions about where roads would be located. Below represents a summary of the activity.

Single-Family Homes

- Six out of the seven groups included single family homes in their site plans.
- Of these:
 - Three groups concentrated single family homes on the parcel strip running along Millstone Road.
 - One group placed single family homes along NE corner of parcel, surrounded by 3- and 4-unit buildings in both strips.
 - Two groups positioned single family homes within the northern strip.

Other Types of Homes

- Duplexes and triplexes were the most popular type of multifamily structures (as opposed to larger 4+ unit structures).

Number of Units

- On average, groups placed 26 units on their plans.

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Plan Photographs



Small Group Question Responses

While the introduction to this report provides a summary of general feedback received, all responses to group discussion questions are provided below.

What are your primary concerns about the proposed development of community housing for this parcel?

- Needs to be developed as a quality neighborhood, energy efficient, attractive, open space, set backs, good yards, majority (or all) single family homes
- Neighborhood compatibility
- Majority preference for single family homes
- Consider impact on adjoining neighbors
- Buffers
- Need to limit it to single family dwellings
- The parcel is an odd shape and seems that it would be difficult to develop. Single family properties in keeping with neighboring areas.

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- That neighbors will feel negatively impacted. I strongly suggest allowances for dense buffers and personalized spaces separate from shared spaces.
- Concern of clear cutting land as done at Paul Hush Way
- Too dense
- Coming close to existing homes
- Access road is on a bad corner.
- The housing will not fit into the neighborhood.
- There is only one entrance
- Value of surrounding homes will decrease; will be hard to sell home.
- The development will not be kept up over the years and will turn out like the Huckleberry development off rt. 39. Units are run down and the property is not kept up. Police are there all the time.
- Rental vs. ownership.
- Height and density of structures
- How far will the distance be from existing structures?
- Will there be landscaping between existing structures?
- Could there be fencing for visual mitigation?
- The existing rock wall backing up to Howland – will it stay?
- Keep landscaping neutral – don't use plastic or metal.
- Entrance and exit on Millstone (traffic) – the 40mph speed limit is too high.
- Layout/configuration of units and number of buildings/feasibility of land topography/septic
- Seniors need one level living
- Lawnspace for children
- That it's well planned and a good mix of single family and apartments geared for 2 singles to live together or single apartments
- Layout configuration, intergenerational planning; meet variety of housing need
- A mix of groups served and a mix of unit sizes
- Density of units
- Type of units/structures
- Clear cutting of trees – leave a 25' buffer around development
- Noise
- Construction time
- Loss of privacy
- Safe access from Millstone – car and pedestrian
- Unobtrusive lighting
- Property maintenance
- Respect for property and neighbors
- Fully utilizing property while also being sensitive to neighbors.
- Keeping as many trees as possible.
- Developing enough units to be financially feasible without overburdening the parcel and maintaining neighborhood aesthetic.

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- Developing for young families and older adults on fixed incomes
- Keeping the neighborhood design in mind with the style of dwellings and proper buffers for the abutters
- I don't want to see property values decrease due to unsightly or too dense development

What populations do you think could best be served by the availability of affordable housing on this parcel or elsewhere in Brewster? (Examples: Older adults? Families with young children? People with disabilities? Low-wage workers? Town employees?)

- All of the above, plus single people
- I don't think that the town should define a target as people in need come in all forms. (Low wage worker with children will most likely require subsidized housing, which I don't think this address.)
- Working people with a difficulty in purchasing property in a resort area such as Brewster. Teachers, firefighters, etc.
- Families with young children
- Young adult workers
- People with disabilities (ADA compliant)
- All of the above; hopefully a mixed neighborhood
- Lower income renters, >80% and >50% AMI
- Multigenerational – interspersed seniors and families with children
- Young and old; accessible
- Older adults, single young people; 2 br, 2 bath units mixed with family homes
- Town employees
- Intergenerational focus
- 3 bedroom for families
- Older adults
- Everyone – families with young and school-aged children, downsizing seniors, summer arriving younger workers
- Spectrum – singles, town employees, families with children, seniors
- Those not needing transportation – should have own cars
- Older adults who can possibly still be independent
- Low-wage and townies too
- Perhaps not conducive to families with lots of kids
- Young small families
- Older adults
- Town employees
- Senior housing
- Town workers
- Families
- Mix of older and families = community
- Families with young children
- Older adults

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- All of the above should have access
- Any who are in need of affordable housing
- Low wage workers
- Mix of seniors and families with children

What would you most like to see included in a plan for a community housing development on this parcel? Consider architecture, landscape, amenities, etc.

- Cape Code style architecture
- Natural barriers/setbacks that satisfy both sides of borders
- Walking path, playground, garden patches
- Attention to accessibility
- Traditional Cape Cod style architecture – NO modern architecture
- Should blend with topography of Brewster
- Community garden, community center, picnic area
- Single family homes
- Cape Cod style – shingled, clapboard, landscaped
- Mostly (or all) single family homes – Cape Cod style
- Yards, good spacing, top quality long lasting buildings, energy efficient
- I am a proponent of deed restricted rental units with the highest percentage of units targetted to lower income households (earning 50% or less of median income)
- Yards and garages are nice
- Control over and restrictions on out bildings, fencing, multiple vehicles
- Include proper setbacks
- Green space
- Trees
- Playgrounds
- Consideration for neighbors that already live there
- Owners not renters
- Cape/ranch design, preserve existing “feel” of Millstone and mature trees/bushes.
- Lawn/open space for families/kids to play
- One-level living (seniors)
- Community type recreation center for all ages, pool, gathering center
- Trees – some rolling topography
- Open space outside, mix of types of housing – like the neighbors – town houses, single family, duplexes, apartments
- Variety of size and “look” of units, “indigenous” lanscaping, open space
- 25’ border
- Leave as many trees as possible
- No clear cutting
- Open space – natural barrier to abutters
- Community garden

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- Solar panels
- No more than two stories per building
- Cape Cod style – shingles, clapboards
- Duplex, triplex to appear like single family home
- Colors acceptable to historic district
- Perhaps gravel roads
- No large scale movements of soil
- Playground, community garden, etc.
- Appropriate, aesthetically pleasing layout of single family or duplex units which have enough setback from abutters for fair equity to all
- Trees left in the development and proper buffers adhered to
- Attractive layout
- Sensitive to place type/neighborhood

*What would you NOT want to see in a plan for a community housing development on this parcel?
Consider architecture, landscape, amenities, etc.*

- The density of the dwellings to be too great for the size of the parcel.
- Clear cutting; characterless dwellings
- Too much density and/or too little buffer
- Nothing over two stories; clear cutting, too crowded
- Anything higher than two stories
- No clear cutting
- No straight line roads
- No large parking lots
- No contemporary architecture
- No brick/concrete facades
- No (built-in) pools
- No playgrounds near abutters
- No pools
- No clear cutting
- No more than two stories
- No pool
- All 2 story condo types
- No institutional looking buildings (i.e. apartment)
- All the same type of buildings, no tasteful landscaping
- Homogeneous apartment buildings
- Amenities that won't get used (tennis courts, pool)
- No more than 2 stories high
- Would NOT want to see apartment blocks all of the same design
- Large structures
- Would not want wooded area gutted

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- Multiple story structures exceeding two floors
- Rentals
- Non-Cape Cod architecture
- Excessive lighting
- Common recreation areas
- Not any (or many) multifamily homes
- Not just bare space (i.e., leave trees)
- No common recreations areas and no excessive lighting.
- No multi-unit buildings
- No block style apartment buildings
- Not rectangular layout – have angles
- No modern style
- No golf course
- Downward lighting