

Carroll County Lands Subcommittee

Date: March 29 2023

Location: Carroll County Administration Building

Present: Commissioner Matthew Plache
Commissioner Terry McCarthy
Representative Mark McConkey
Representative Richard Brown
Representative David Paige (remote)
Anthony Fallon, Architect
Wendy Scribner (UNH Cooperative Extension)
Mellisa Seamans, Executive Coordinator

Comm'r Plache: Discussion for about six months about issues here – lack of workforce housing, need for additional daycare, and the issue with addiction and need for a recovery center. Finding land is difficult in this area, particularly for the recovery center because no one wants it in their back yard. The County has a lot of land and let's look at exploring this and see what we can do. Focus on land that has access to roads and to the County water system. Avoided land that is valuable habitat for agriculture, forestry. Identified a parcel on Route 171 just beyond the Administration Building. Current study underway to determine capacity of the County water system. Also looked at parcels on Route 28, either side of Cornerstone Christian Academy. One the terrain is pretty steep. Other has a stream going through on the back edges of the property. Are we all on board with addressing these three needs?

Rep. McConkey: Workforce housing, we know we are underserved. I participate on the Speaker's special committee on housing. Lakes Region Planning Commission just completed their 2010-2020 housing study. There is certainly a need for this, childcare, recovery center. There were two previous committees – Carroll County Land Use Committee and Carroll County Farm Committee. Looked at natural resources, possible trail networks. Would behoove us to pull together all the information collected. Paid water users at a market rate is a great idea. Access on Route 171 will make developing property easier. Worth a conversation but believe we should spend quite a bit of time on this. Don't necessarily think protecting all the hay and wood resources should be our main driver here. When we look at net income for County haying operation if we come to conclusion that these lands would be better for housing or daycare, we should look at where best to site it.

Rep. Brown: Have you done a needs assessment to look at for the basis of determining whether those needs are realistic or justified for County residents to support? Or just the commissioners' priorities?

Comm'r Plache: Pretty well accepted that there is a need for workforce housing. Half the homes are vacant in Ossipee, second homes. When we try to hire, they can't find a place to live. Ossipee Concerned Citizens has a waiting list as do others. Hard to find childcare. This development could also jumpstart the local economy. At one point, 2013, Ossipee had the highest opioid rate in the nation. It's hard to get recovery centers approved.

Rep. Brown: Not questioning the ideas. We have what we think are priorities for the County staff. Would it be possible for us to develop what the basic requirements are and then the wants? Can any of these requirements be met renovating the old nursing home.

Comm'r McCarthy: We had looked at daycare at the Annex but it is not big enough. Before putting time, energy, studies, we wanted to get a feel for how the Delegation feels about it.

Rep. Paige: I agree with taking it slow and not eliminating options out of the gate. On the childcare piece, I am obviously enthusiastic about that. Field hearing in Conway April 19 at 5:30 p.m. at Conway Public Library. Loathe to do a study of childcare, we will just find out what we already know. There is a huge need and we have a lot

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of data. How can we actually make a sustainable center? How can a person make a go of a sustainable center when so many are closing or cutting back?

Comm'r Plache: The county government should not be in the business of operating a childcare or building houses or operating opioid recovery. We have been approached by various groups asking if land would be available. OCC looking to expand. Their building needs a lot of work. They can't accommodate their needs where they are and they know how to run the operation. There is grant money available this year for building childcare and they know how to run an operation. We can't just give them land. We develop a plan, accept proposals and a fair determination of awarding the rights to the land. We don't run a childcare center. We have enough trouble keeping up with the requirements of running a nursing home.

Rep. Paige: I just want to make sure that whoever we partner with for childcare has a clear path to sustainability. Because, quite frankly, most childcare centers today do not. We need the evidence that when we cede this asset we are going to be solving a problem for our County workforce, for our local families...

Coord Seamans: Would sustainability look something like partnering with other organizations – WIC, Head Start, Children Unlimited, etc.

Comm'r Plache: There are timing issues on the grant funding for childcare. There is a lot of money coming quickly.

Rep. McConkey: It will be an outside entity to run it. Our job is to make sure, if the Delegation wants to do this, is that they have a big enough footprint of land – parking, zoning needs, sewage – to do what they want to do.

Rep. Brown: Someone needs to let us know what the need is so we can meet the need now. I'd rather set that aside now

Comm'r Plache: Why are they closing? Is it workforce? Whoever wants to do this needs to show us a viable plan. The location we propose is right next to the administration building. The County water line goes right by it. Our role as a committee is to review their proposal. Are we going to own the land and lease it, give them the land, sell the land? What are we looking for? That decision may determine their funding mechanism. If we are interested in going forward, I would like to hear from OCC. It's a short fuse to get this started. Then we would decide if it makes sense or not and where to put it. Then we would put together a formal request for proposals to meet the need of childcare in the county.

Rep. Paige: There is very **good data. I can request something to be pulled together for us.** We can easily quantify the local need. There's the need of who is here and the need of who we are not attracting. We are failing to attract younger workforce to our area due to lack of housing and childcare.

Rep. McConkey: If being on County property is an aid to OCC, I don't think we should wait to have that conversation. If they are sitting on a tentative grant and need a siting and our workers need this, I don't think we should wait for the conversation. Are there any **reversionary clauses on the County property**? The water study should be at a point right now on capacity. That has sat way too long. If you can't sell community water at a market price that is true, that's going to make a difference. There is a need for daycare to be considered.

Mr. Fallon: Looking at all the parcels and all the options is welcomed. This is just a first swipe at what we think would be the best parcels. There is no maximum for the housing. We could fill every one of them. 50% of the housing in Ossipee is off the market. Don't think we could overdo it. As far as recovery, basing the campus on the Isaiah House in Kentucky.

Comm'r Plache: County has a longtime relationship with White Horse. They have become an integral part of the community.

Rep. Brown: I'm not arguing need; I'm used to getting quantifiable numbers. We need to size this for the need.

Comm'r Plache: We haven't budgeted for a study. These are three needs in New Hampshire universally identified. We don't need to do a study to know the needs are there. The approval will be how many houses will be built and why?

Rep. Brown: There is a group in favor of providing government housing for these needs. But there is another group of people totally opposed to providing land for workforce housing.

Mr. Fallon: White Horse cannot get financing if it doesn't own the land. We appreciate the consideration.

Coord. Seamans: Ossipee has the County listed at 815 acres.

Ms. Scribner: I would be happy to work with Mellisa and get her the information I have. I don't think there has been a formal survey of County property.

Rep. McConkey: What we're seeing is that if you want for-profit developers to build, they usually won't approach a location unless it has municipal water and sewer. Hundreds of units are in great need. We don't need a study, we know it. It would be more attractive if land was at a lesser rate and if community water could be supplied. We need to find out if community water is possible here. If we have to wait for the water piece, opportunities will be lost.

Comm'r Plache: Commissioners would make a decision to issue a public notice that we have determined there is a need and it will fill the need of county government to attract workers and in the community. We are accepting proposals to fill the need by a certain date. The proposals come in and we review, make a decision, public hearings at the commissioners and the delegation.

Comm'r McCarthy: I think we should decide are we leasing or selling before we put out RFP

Comm'r Plache: Long term lease for housing, daycare. To develop housing I don't think we are going to have enough water. We don't have our capacity yet. They are waiting for the snow to thaw then it will take eight weeks.

Rep. McConkey: There's absolutely no reason it is taking this long. We've been in this over a year.

Comm'r Plache: There was a delay in the Executive Council approving a grant then winter set in.

Rep. McConkey: **Can we get a public report of where we are?**

Rep. Paige: We should keep looking at maps. Communicating back to those who have already expressed interest that there is a general interest but we need more information from them. I will gather childcare data.

Rep. McConkey: I will provide the Carroll County housing assessment. There is a need from apartments to starter homes. Town of Dover has approved a large project for an employer putting in 40+ units. Don't use the term "tiny house".

Mr. Fallon: Farmington, NH on Fairway Drive is an example that I did

Comm'r Plache: Affordable? Subsidized? Section 8? I do know that subsidized is a guaranteed income stream and does help entice developers.

Rep. McConkey: I want workforce housing. Provide a reasonable home where an employee can start their family. When you talk Section 8, subsidized, there are plenty of other places a developer can do that. The purpose of this is to support the workforce

Rep. Paige and Brown: Agreed

Rep. Brown: There isn't any other parcel viable to be close to the County system, childcare center

Rep. McConkey: The Commissioners have never talked about increasing the size of the septic system, talked about what it would take to increase the aging facility. There are other parcels we can consider. 100 fewer bales of hay aren't going to make a difference.

Ms. Scribner: Some hayfields identified as prime farmland. The potential for someone to lease or some other use for food production, it would be nice to keep the resource intact as much as possible. Prime agriculture land is not easy to find.

Rep. McConkey: I don't see we could ever site something within earshot of corrections so you could farm that piece

Comm'r Plache: White Horse has been looking for land. It would be a recovery campus. It would include buildings for treatment, cafeteria, recreation, education...its own security force, job training, housing...full soup to nuts recovery center. We should probably get White Horse in to talk about their proposal. Half of White Horse services now are addressing mental health needs. Parents trying to get their kids into counseling, there is a 6-9-month wait, serious issue in the State.

Mr. Fallon: As you go through treatment start with 30-day intensives. Two to four houses with 16 beds each, transition, vocational, college courses, outpatient, administrative, possible incubator companies.

Rep. Brown: Question re: risk of recovery center

Mr. Fallon: In 30-day intensive sometimes people leave when they shouldn't leave.

Rep. Brown: Would like overall general description about the three priorities. Helpful to the Delegation to understand. Are we going to be able to attract people to work in a childcare facility?

Rep. Paige: It is hard to attract and retain people.

Comm'r Plache: We could develop a trail system on the County complex.

Ms. Scribner: We do have trail maps, old logging roads

Rep. McConkey: At one point we had a great equestrian group who came in with interest in the past. Dale Drew of Conway is interested in being involved as he was in the past.

Comm'r Plache: Do you want to look at the location and explore other options and how do you want to approach that?

Rep. McConkey: Is the Delegation in favor with proper arrangements in favor of lease, selling the land...? I don't see a lot of people opposed to the location of the daycare. Exploring housing needs, I have no issue. If you have a specific program for this campus, we could discuss. Even though County land you still need to comply with zoning, correct?

Comm'r Plache: Under state law if we are filling a County need we don't have to comply with local zoning. I think these are three identifiable County needs.

Rep. McConkey: Request documentation to support that. Copy of the status of the water system study.

Comm'r Plache: I don't want any of this cost to fall on taxpayers

Rep. McConkey: If the County was supplying water and had the ability to pump more water and if you were to build a reservoir on one of these higher locations so that you gravity feed and distribute down, the cost of that would be by the developer. And is it less money to do that and pay the County a monthly fee and pay the County for testing and everything else or does it make more sense for them to put in multiple wells to feed the need? If it made sense, we could provide drilled wells on the County property. There's a lot of solutions. I would think you have enough capacity now to take care of a daycare. We shouldn't be waiting any longer. You are paying a water consultant to come up with this.

Rep. Brown: The more difficult proposal is the workforce housing because of the septic and water issue as opposed to just doing the daycare.

Ms. Scribner: There is one more cost to consider for whoever is going to develop land. A good portion of the land is in current use and there will be that land use change tax to take it out of current use. Will look into what sections are in current use.

Rep. McConkey: What is affordable for an LNA to live in? Do they need a whole home? A comfortable apartment? Going to have to leave that to the developer. They have to build appropriate housing for what you're trying to do. If I have an investment for a certain number of those units being of varied sizes, I'm not looking at my return will be over 20 years and does it make sense or not. If we are going to discourage market value, which I don't want it to be. Maybe there is a foundation that wants to help support some of those housing units. If we have a project that makes sense for County employees, I think we should consider a sliding scale if there was a cost for the property to make it profitable for someone. We have been told there is less and less opportunity for increasing vouchers for Section 8 and it doesn't look like the developers are rushing out to build these.

Comm'r McCarthy: A lot of people are leaving their full-time nursing and doing agency because they make so much money. It's going to become tougher and tougher for us.

Rep. McConkey: I'd like to see more exploration of our properties on Route 28. I will do additional mapping.

Next Steps:

1. Reversionary clauses on County Land
2. Update on water system study
3. Conversation with OCC (spacing needs, # of children to estimate water/sewer for land)
4. White Horse timeline, estimate water/sewer

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5. Workforce Housing – estimate the land use change tax; possibility of selectmen ability to waive the tax if for betterment of the community of Ossipee
6. Current Use maps
7. Next meeting Friday, April 7, 2023 at noon

Rep. McConkey: Lakes Region Planning Commission will help with the Northern Borders grant

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