

8:00 am to 8:42 am

**Chairperson:** Rich Pelletier

**Vice Chairperson:** Keith Cobbett

**Commission Members:** Riché Colcombe, Kim Opperman, Bob Nash,

**Town Administrator:** Laura Buono

**Planning Director:** Robyn Payson

**Planning Board:** Susanne White

**Chamber of Commerce:** Keith Cobbett

**Supt of Schools:** Jennifer Crawford

**Select Board:** Rich Pelletier

**Water/Sewer Dept:** Dana Clow

**Excused:** Kim Opperman, Keith Cobbett, Bob Nash

**Guest:** Mike Tardiff

**Minutes 1/21/26** Susanne White made a motion to approve the minutes. Riche' Colcombe seconded the motion. The motion carried with Rich Pelletier and Jennifer Crawford abstaining.

### **Housing Survey/Gateway**

Mike Tardiff reviewed the results of the housing survey which showed support for senior housing and rehabbing existing buildings but not support for infill development. The survey found that cost is a barrier to buying a home, cost is a barrier to remaining in your existing home. He said he has been hearing this in every town.

The mix of using and housing types for our existing Gateway Zone. Residential and any type of commercial development. He saw a lot of comments about small scale commercial development.

Then they discussed future Gateway zones for Henniker Street or the Marina Road area. Henniker Street was the overall positive result.

Taking a look at density to the north along Center Road (Not in the Historic District) there are some larger parcels there. There was a question about being in favor of more density, there is a conversation to be had there. We will keep it in the Master Plan and have that conversation with the Planning Board.

Mike Tardiff reviewed the rest of the survey results and the responses from the participants. He said the conversation is coming out of the Master Plan starting with the Gateway Zone on Henniker Street, emphasizing rehab and 79E and education for the public. We want to do more education about infill development, talking about Center Road and the density there but a focus on the mix of uses within the downtown area. The work for the Planning Board is the Gateway Zone and thinking about the density on Center Road.

He said he is bringing that up with the EDC because it's a different perspective on economic development. We are always going to have infrastructure concerns and to be able to support whatever growth we are going to have.

He said his question was when we start working on the Henniker Street Gateway, do we want the same mix of uses as the first Gateway.

Robyn Payson said she would think Henniker Street would be more of an industrial area.

Mike Tardiff said further down, but coming into town, would there be other opportunities because there are vacant parcels there. That's the question of do we want to have the base in the housing chapter and the Land Use chapter later this year. It's the Planning Board's document so there is that economic development element of it all. Would it be a future TIF? How would that play out. We are trying to market the town. He was looking for other takes on the survey results.

Susanne White said the only thing she would add is the desire to keep the rural nature of the town and not over develop it which is a tricky balance. She said she thinks concentrating on doing the infill development in town and leaving the more rural areas rural.

Mike Tardiff said there is support for workforce housing development. How you promote that and what's the limit to that. He said making cluster development easier is one way to do that. Conservation Commissions like that because you are protecting open space. You get to the affordability thing with different kinds of design like cluster development. It's less expensive to develop that way. The least expensive way is infill development because the infrastructure and the roads are there. And there needs to be an economic development tool celebrating your trails and building more trails and being known for that. Younger families are attracted to that.

Riche' Colcombe said that is what concerns her when she hears Center Road and how far are we thinking because there is Fox State Forest and understanding that we can't do anything and she doesn't want too much building around it because it would still disrupt the wildlife that we rely on up there and that actually adds to the beauty of Fox State Forest.

Mike Tardiff said we have a map in the last master plan that did not go that far up. There's a couple of larger parcels there so it's really those two or three larger parcels just north of the residential zone. It's not getting that high up. But that's the type of thing we will have in the Master Plan if the Planning Board wants to keep it in there.

Laura Buono said if there's privately owned parcels the town doesn't have control over that, nor should we. And then when somebody wants to develop those, that is when people will get upset but the only way to prevent development is to purchase it yourself.

Susanne White said there are a couple of farms up there that she would hate to see developed. It's not like we could prevent the owners from doing that, that's the type of natural beauty that people drive by every day.

Mike Tardiff said that's the part of the process we are closing in on with the housing chapter. Here's a map, here are those parcels, this is the zoning right now are we talking about a little bit

more density in that area because that's the opportunity and we did have that in the last Master Plan. If there was a place that we would add some density that is close to services and closer to downtown, and it's staying away from those areas throughout town that should be protected and stay rural.

That's where we are with the Planning Board and the Housing Chapter, but it ties in then with Henniker Street. He said we are talking about Henniker Street but how far are we talking about. Say we are talking about a similar type of zone as the 202 Gateway Zone; a mix of residential and commercial, how far down are we going.

There was discussion about the possibility of the Gateway Zone on Henniker Street.

Mike Tardiff said he likes to overlay the ERZ with a Gateway. There would be an overlay with different types of residential density and a mix of uses.

Robyn Payson suggested a TIF down there as well. She said the Gateways lend themselves to TIF's.

There was further discussion about the possible Henniker Street Gateway.

Mike Tariff said this was great so it can all be laid out in the Housing Chapter, but it would be good to work through the year and talk with the EDC to be ready for Town Meeting 2027 just to be ready for what happens there.

Mike Tardiff said DOT is starting a soft start to update the 10-year plan. The direction they have been given is to not solicit new projects, talk about the projects that were proposed last time. He said they are going to make a case for Henniker Street to get back in as a proposed project for the 10-year plan. The other things that we are doing help with that.

There was discussion about the DOT 10 year plan.

Rich Pelletier asked about the existing TIF and if there had been any interest.

Mike Tardiff said there was one potential developer with the small raceway.

Robyn Payson said she hadn't heard anything from them.

There was further discussion about the housing survey.

Riche' Colcombe asked if the housing workforce was paying the same taxes as the rest of town.

Laura said he is. He is getting no breaks from the Town. Any tax credits would have to come from outside.

Rich Pelletier asked when the second workforce housing building will go up.

Robyn Payson said she believed it would be in the spring.

Rich Pelletier asked about Avanru's second phase.

Robyn Payson said that was coming before the Planning Board tonight.

There was discussion about the Avanru Development phase 2 development.

There being no further information Susanne White made a motion to adjourn. Riche' Colcombe seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned 8:45 am

Respectfully submitted,

Robyn Payson, Planning Director