**MAURICE’S CAMPGROUND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Frequently asked questions**

**June 15, 2023**

**Note: It is our goal to be as open and transparent as possible. This is a large project and we know there will continue to be questions and concerns. We will add questions and our currently best response to the Master FAQ as new questions arise. FAQs from the pre-purchase phase (Summer 2022) are also posted. If you want to add a question please send it to info@wellfleethousing.org . Please know that, at this point, answers to many questions cannot be known. We will state that as well.**

**1. WHAT IS THE TOWN’S PLAN FOR MAURICE’S CAMPGROUND (MC)?**

The purchase of MC with funding approved at Special Town Meeting Fall 2022 was made specifically to provide property for dedicated year round housing and, if possible, some housing for the summer workers that are so needed in this seasonal economy. How much and what type of housing, affordability, and community amenities are as yet unknown and require the skills of professional planners. The desires of the community at large and in the immediate vicinity of the campground will be incorporated as much as possible in the planning process and final plan.

**2. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE CAMPGROUND AS OF MID-JUNE, 2023?**

Following a Request for Proposals (RFP) Julie Simpson was awarded an independent contract as campground operator. Currently the campground is operational with a mix of full season tenants (some vacationers, some summer workers, some people who are renting their principal Wellfleet home for the summer while living in the campground) and short term renters. During Summer of 2022 it was estimated that 70-90 seasonal workers resided at the campground.

The campground will remain operational for 5 more years after this unless the Department of Environmental Protection determines that the current wastewater systems (cess pools) are hazardous.

**3. WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE PLANNING PROCESS?**

The Maurice Campground Planning Committee (MCPC) has been meeting regularly since December 2022. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was created to engage a Master Planner or Planning Team. The intention is to contract with professionals to conduct the planning process including community outreach, clarifying numbers and types of housing units possible and/or desirable as well as many of the other highly complex aspects of a large project. This RFP was issued and generated a good response however, due to turnover in Town staff, delayed American Rescue Plan funds and the lack of a dedicated housing specialist at Town Hall, the RFP had to be pulled back. While most, if not all, towns on Cape Cod have a dedicated Town Planner and often also a dedicated Housing Specialist, Wellfleet has neither which slows progress toward meeting housing goals. In the future it is hoped that Wellfleet may allocate for these positions but, in the meantime, if certain key positions can be filled soon, the RFP can be re-released after a productive Special Town Meeting in the fall.

In the meantime, the MCPC, is investigating other projects regionally or nationally that might provide ideas for Maurice’s Campground. Initial infrastructure planning is also occurring such as the Annual Town Meeting (April 2023) vote to fund the extension of Eastham’s Town water to the Campground and pre-design services with regular updates from Scott Horsley, Wellfleet’s Water Resources Consultant. Scott is conducting preliminary investigations as to what kind of waste waster management system(s) might be most appropriate.

**4. Is the plan for AFFORDABLE housing?**

There are many ways to look at affordability of housing. On the one hand Wellfleet has many community members who have very low income and are spending most of that on housing, if they can find it. Many of these people have been forced out of the community by housing costs and those remaining will benefit from housing that is subsidized in some way. On the other hand, many local well paid positions in Town government, health care, education, social services are going unfilled because there is almost no rental housing at ANY cost and the prices of home for sale are well beyond the ability of even the highest local incomes to afford. These folks will be able to pay market rates on smaller, more diverse homes that are currently not available. We hope to provide a diversity of housing at MC.

**5. WILL THE HOUSING AT MC BE RESTRICTED TO WELLFLEET RESIDENTS?**

Fair Housing laws do not allow for such restrictions nor would that be desirable. Affordable housing allows for a developer to request up to 70% “local preference” which is dependent on a Market Study supporting the need. This type of housing is allocated by lottery to income eligible applicants. Local preference includes those who live, work or have children in Wellfleet Elementary and is for the first round of tenants. As tenants move out and new tenants are found, local preference no longer exists. In actuality tenants will generally tend to be local. For example at The Village at Nauset Green in Eastham, the majority of the 65 affordable rental units are rented by tenants that are local to the outer cape.

Any housing built at MC will almost certainly be deed restricted to year round occupancy (except for special seasonal worker housing). This will prevent it from being rented or owned for seasonal or short term use. Hopefully, people living in these homes will either be from Wellfleet or will soon become part of this welcoming community.

**6. WHAT IS HAPPENING CONCERNING WATER SUPPLY AND WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT?**

At the Annual Town Meeting in April 2023 funding was approved to extend Eastham Town water to MC. While the wells on site are meeting current demand and are tested regularly for various possible contaminants, a town water supply will be much more reliable and allow for greater density for the future residents of MC. This is an important step.

At the same Town Meeting, funding was approved for initial investigation of wastewater management needs for the site. This includes engineer testing of the soil , reviewing topography and gathering such information as will be required in the development of a comprehensive treatment system. The preliminary goal is for a system that will handle the needs of future housing at MC as well as possibly those of residents and businesses in the immediate vicinity while significantly reducing nitrogen loading over current Title 5 systems and cess pools.

The expense for such a system is, as yet, unknown but will likely be shared by a combination of grants, developer contribution and town (tax payer) contribution. Wellfleet and all Cape towns are under a mandate to reduce nitrogen loading. The Lawrence Hill project (AKA 95 Lawrence Rd) and MC may well provide models for doing this in a way that won’t require the greatly more expensive prospect of sewering the entire town or replacing individual systems home by home at homeowner’s expense.

**7. WILL ANY OF THE UNITS BE OWNED BY LOCAL BUSINESSES TO HOUSE THEIR EMPLOYEES?**

It is really too early in the process to answer this question. We do not yet know how feasible it will be to have some portion of the property in rental units and some portion in ownership. There are many variables to consider and this is why the services of a professional planner or planning team is essential. With the exception of any units built specifically for seasonal workers, there will almost certainly be a site wide restriction to year round housing.

The business community is encouraged to engage in the planning process. The “Barracks” in Provincetown provides one possible model for businesses to house employees. This is being developed privately for profit.

**8. IF SOME OF THE HOUSING IS INTENDED FOR SUMMER WORKERS WHAT PROTECTIONS WILL BE IN PLACE TO PREVENT “PARTY HOUSES”?**

It is indeed hoped that some provisions can be made to house some of the summer workers that make our town run in this seasonal economy. Currently the campground houses some 70-90 summer workers along with a mix of other seasonal residents and shorter term campers. Current summer worker housing at MC has not resulted in “party houses” but a stable year round neighborhood of families, seniors and working people that also includes housing for seasonal workers may be a welcome change.

Regardless, the great majority of the housing at MC will be for year round residents who will themselves not allow inappropriate behavior to continue unchecked. Also, depending on the number of rental units available, an on-site manager may be present and this would also discourage unruliness.

**9. WILL THE AFFORDABILITY OF THESE UNITS BE PERMANENT OR JUST FOR THE FIRST TIME BUYERS?**

Non-profit developers of affordable housing use complex formulas to determine affordability. Often there will be a mix of units at different price points ranging in rents from those available to individuals and families earning from below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI) up to Market Rate generally with the majority in the 30-80% AMI. The developer determines the numbers of units at each price point based on the the original RFP they responded too, state guidelines and the amount of rental income needed to “make the numbers work.” The ratios of units in each income bracket would remain stable for as long as the terms require (something between 20 years and perpetuity) although the actual rents may fluctuate depending on AMI which is recalculated yearly.

If, as hoped, some small homes or duplex/triplexes may be possible for home ownership as single family homes or condominiums there would likely be deed restrictions in place limiting re-sale of the properties to a certain amount of increased price. This model is used by Habitat for Humanity homes and for Wellfleet Buy Down homes to ensure continued affordability.