

November 10, 2008

Mr. George Turner, Chairperson  
Cumberland Town Council  
Town Of Cumberland  
290 Tuttle Road  
Cumberland, ME 04021

Dear Mr. Turner,

The Doane Property Advisory Committee was appointed by the Cumberland Town Council on November 26, 2007, and first met as a committee on January 7, 2008. The committee was charged with the responsibility of examining the uses of the town-owned 40.68 acre parcel known as the Doane Property.

Having met for close to a year, our research and activity is substantively complete. We are prepared to make our initial recommendations to the Cumberland Town Council.

The Committee met formally 10 times from early January through November. Meetings were advertised and open to the public. All discussions were noted and the notes were approved in Committee. Our minutes have been cataloged and the records are available for public review at the Town Office.

Early activity focused on gathering site data to learn as much as we could about the Doane property. We reviewed all available maps including tax, topographic, wetlands, flood and aerial photos. We also have on file a letter from the State of Maine Department of Conservation, which addressed botanical features of the property. We walked the site to see its unique qualities and environmental characteristics. We looked at sample "neighborhood" site plans as provided by the Town Planner. We explored certain "feasibility of housing and development" options with consideration for open space. We preferred to define the property as a "non-performing asset" and not a liability to the Town of Cumberland.

In January, we commissioned an independent fee appraisal which gave a current market value for the property. We further considered site access, road and utilities extensions and local impact. We looked at sample "total build-out housing unit" scenarios as provided by the Town Manager. We also discussed and voted on the "how" of any project with consideration for any costs that may be incurred by the taxpayers of the Town of Cumberland.

We considered Drowne Road including the Drowne Road School, Cumberland Town garage and neighboring parcels. We refined our focus with Cumberland Town Council liaison input and confirmed that our "charge" was primarily the Doane property. We voted and agreed that the Planning Board and site plan review process would best address traffic flow and safety concerns that may or may not arise as a result of any recommendations.

Concurrently, we moved to gather what we could from other developments. We reviewed similar projects in other communities including Biddeford, Scarborough, Falmouth, Yarmouth, Harpswell and more. We analyzed the Cumberland Comprehensive Planning Survey (Market Decisions, 2/07). We looked carefully at the work recently completed by The Route 100 Corridor Advisory Committee and the rezoning approved for the Route 100 corridor. From this research, we were able to assemble the foundation for our final land use recommendations.

We recognized that the existing RR 1 zone did not make allowances for many of the uses on our official recommendation list. We discussed current zoning, changing zoning and the practical and political impacts of changing a zone. We talked about overlay districts, contract zoning and looked at how other communities have accomplished their planning objectives. Finally, we decided that it made the most sense to create an entirely new zone for the Doane Property.

Our last several meetings focused on the creation of a new zone called the V-MUZ -- Village Mixed Use Zone. The details involved with our processes and decision-making are outlined more fully in the attached report. Our general recommendations are summarized below.

- 1) We believe the highest and best use for the site is to remove it from "non-performing asset" status and for the Town of Cumberland to encourage new development consistent with accepted rules, protecting environmentally sensitive slopes and wetlands and controlling impact on area neighbors.
- 2) We do not believe it is in the best interest of the Town of Cumberland or the taxpayer to participate financially in (any) said development and therefore recommend the site be sold to a private developer or developers.
- 3) We recommend the Town of Cumberland create a new zone to manage these uses and advise the adoption of the "V-MUZ Village Mixed Use Zone".

Throughout this process, our focus has been to come to a consensus about the best possible use for the Doane Property and the Town of Cumberland. We have reached our decisions after careful and deliberate thought and analysis. We hope our recommendations will provide opportunities for some positive but controlled growth in the center of our community. It is our intent that the zoning change will provide a balance between existing uses and new non-residential opportunities while staying sensitive to the needs of the residents of the Town of Cumberland.

We look forward to discussing our recommendations in more detail.

Respectfully submitted,



Pam Russell, Chairperson, Doane Property Advisory Committee  
Jeff Daigle, Assistant Chairperson