

MINUTES

Cumberland Town Council Meeting
Town Council Chambers

Monday, December 11, 2023

6:15 P.M. Call to Order

Present: Councilors Copp, Douglass, Filson, Segrist, Storey-King and Vail

Excused: Councilor Edes

- I. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** pursuant to Title 36 M.R.S.A. Section 405 (6)(E) consultation with the Town Attorney.
Motion by Councilor Copp, seconded by Councilor Vail, to recess to Executive Session pursuant to Title 36 M.R.S.A. Section 405 (6)(E) consultation with the Town Attorney.
VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS
TIME: 6:15 P.M.

Executive Session concluded at 6:53 P.M.

7:00 P.M. REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING BEGINS

- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
Motion by Councilor Copp, seconded by Councilor Vail, to accept the November 27, 2023 meeting minutes as presented.
VOTE: 5-0-1 (Segrist abstained) MOTION PASSED

- III. **MANAGER'S REPORT**
School Board Member, Megan Lichter, gave the following update on two large events; a book challenge and the new school:

Book Challenge Update:

In late September a community member submitted a "citizens challenge" to the book Gender Queer which is in the Greely High School library. This put into action the challenged materials procedure per policy IJJ. Per policy IJJ, a committee was formed with members chosen by the superintendent and included an administrator, teacher, librarian, and a parent. The committee read the book, checked general acceptance of the book by reading a range of reviews, and "weighed the value of the material" in light of MSAD51's educational vision. Specifically, the committee addressed the following as they related to the book:

DID THE BOOK:

- Support student achievement?
- Support the goals and objectives of the school unit's educational programs?
- Enrich and support the curriculum?
- Take into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served?
- Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards?
- Be accurate and, in the case of non-fiction, current?
- Reflect high quality scholarship and presentation?
- Represent significant authors/composers and works from diverse groups?

The committee submitted its findings and recommended keeping the book in the High School library. The complainant then appealed the committee's decision. Appeals come directly to the board, and we were tasked with reading the book and then either upholding the committee's findings or not. The vote to uphold the committee's response was unanimous. There was significant community comment at the last meeting where the vote was held and the overwhelming majority of public comments were also in support of the book, the librarians, and keeping the book in the High School library. It was reassuring to see that the board voted in concert with the majority opinion as expressed in person at the meeting and via emails to the board leading up to the meeting. It was also reassuring to see that Policy IJJ was comprehensive and effective in this scenario. To my knowledge, there are no current book challenges.

New School:

As you are likely aware, our elementary schools are grossly overcrowded. As an example, the number of kids being educated outside Mabel I. Wilson School in portables is higher than the number of kids being educated inside the school. While the portable/temporary classrooms are working out for now, they are very expensive and do not meet the need for permanent, cost effective, safe classrooms long term. As you also know, a new school project at 80 Gray Rd was proposed, but the referendum to fund the school did not pass in Nov 2022.

Fast forward to July of 2023 when the purchase of 2.3 acres abutting the school was approved via referendum. We closed on the purchase in late July, and in early October the superintendent asked architect Steve Blatt to review the physical space and to comment on whether a new school to accommodate Pre-K through 2nd grade would fit. Why Steve Blatt? Steve Blatt was asked because of his work on the overall MSAD51 master plan from 2018 and his familiarity with our campus. Steve Blatt found that the space was indeed buildable, opening a potential new option for a much-needed new school.

As we have been working with two architects on the MSAD 51 campus and in relation to the 80 Gray Road school option, both firms were asked to consider the physical space and to then answer specific questions about how they would approach a new school on that property. They were also asked to comment on how they would tackle the many challenges a new school and construction project pose to the campus and community in general.

The facilities committee was tasked with reviewing their answers both in writing and in-person meetings with each firm, and making a recommendation about whom to move forward with as we consider this on-campus option. The questions included:

- What would the footprint or size of a building look like and what is the most suitable placement for the building on the designated parcel? #of students?
- What are the essential characteristics that would be included in designing a PK-1 school?
- How would you design traffic flow, access, and parking for the school site?
- What is your experience with intergovernmental agencies in relation to building projects? For instance, how would you work with town officials, state agencies like MDOT and DEP, etc. and how does your experience assist with this project?
- What environmental considerations and energy efficiencies would you recommend for this project?
- What is the timeframe you would need in drafting a concept design that could be ready for voter approval?
- What is your preferred role in helping to educate stakeholders about the concept design?

- How would you address safety and security?
- Does your plan require more land?
- What is your plan for the facilities building?
- How does your plan account for potential expansion of Pre-K? Expansion in general?

The facilities committee agreed that Steve Blatt's answers were most in-line with our priorities and officially recommended we move forward with his firm. The board then voted on December 4th to approve Steve Blatt as our architect and to move forward with a contract for concept design.

The timeline for a final concept meeting, public hearing, new referendum, etc. is not settled at present. We would very much like, if this option proves to be feasible, to push this forward for a vote in June of 2024. More to come.

A note on enrollment projections:

In light of this new school option, the superintendent asked Rebecca Wandell, our enrollment specialist, to revisit her enrollment projection. She presented her updated findings to the Board at the end of November and confirmed that enrollment continues to increase.

- Pre-K - 1st grade is expected to increase over the next decade to 428 students, +64 from the 2022 study. The new school is planned to accommodate this.
- Overall numbers are also up - total students Pre-K - 12th is projected to be 2,757 in 2033. Compare that to 2,000 students in 2013 and 2,174 this year.
- DATA comes from
 - Resident Births (Maine CDC Oct - Oct)
 - Enrollment data (at MSAD51 and non-district schools including district and non-district kids)
 - Housing Data (Sales data from ME real estate listings and Housing Units - which she has noted as TBD).

MSAD 51 is presently fully staffed from an educator perspective including a fully staffed special education department, no small feat.

IV. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Bruce Sherwin of Blanchard Road said that he wants to talk about TIF financing. TIF financing cannot be used for general expenses or school expenses. It will increase property taxes. We have a TIF Committee made up of 3 Town Councilors and that is not a big enough committee, in his opinion. Currently, there is a proposed 72-unit housing project in West Cumberland and TIF money will be used to pay for public water connectivity. This means an additional 72 households will be using our general services (police, fire, library, school, etc.). We are using TIF money to increase our property taxes and the same thing will happen with the proposed new ball fields. This is not good for our town.

Scott Jordon of Cumberland said that he was the complainant who filed the book challenge. Megan Lichter just outlined the process for everyone, but ironically a lot of the steps that took place were not mentioned tonight. There were no dissenting opinions on the committee. When you look at the registered voters on that committee, it's all one particular party. During the public comment portion of the appeal process, he asked for the pledge of allegiance to be recited, as a veteran, especially with the number of veterans that were in the building. He was instantly told no, and a large group of high school students that were present laughed. This is where we are today. No respect, no morals, no values. When he brought a picture of a page from the book to the Town Council meeting, Councilor Vail said he was out of order, but that same picture is still in the book in the high school library. He asked Councilor Vail why he was out of order.

Councilor Vail responded that this is a public forum that is broadcast where everybody has access from ages infancy to 100. He found that content to be objectionable to young children. If something comes before this Council that he feels is objectionable to young children, he is going to take a stand against it.

Mr. Jordan said that Councilor Vail just made his point, and the hypocrisy is mind blowing.

V. LEGISLATION AND POLICY

23 – 128 To hold a Public Hearing to consider and act on authorizing the Town Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Westbrook Development Corporation for the purpose of pursuing the affordable housing development set forth in their proposal dated November 2, 2023.

Town Manager Shane presented the following:

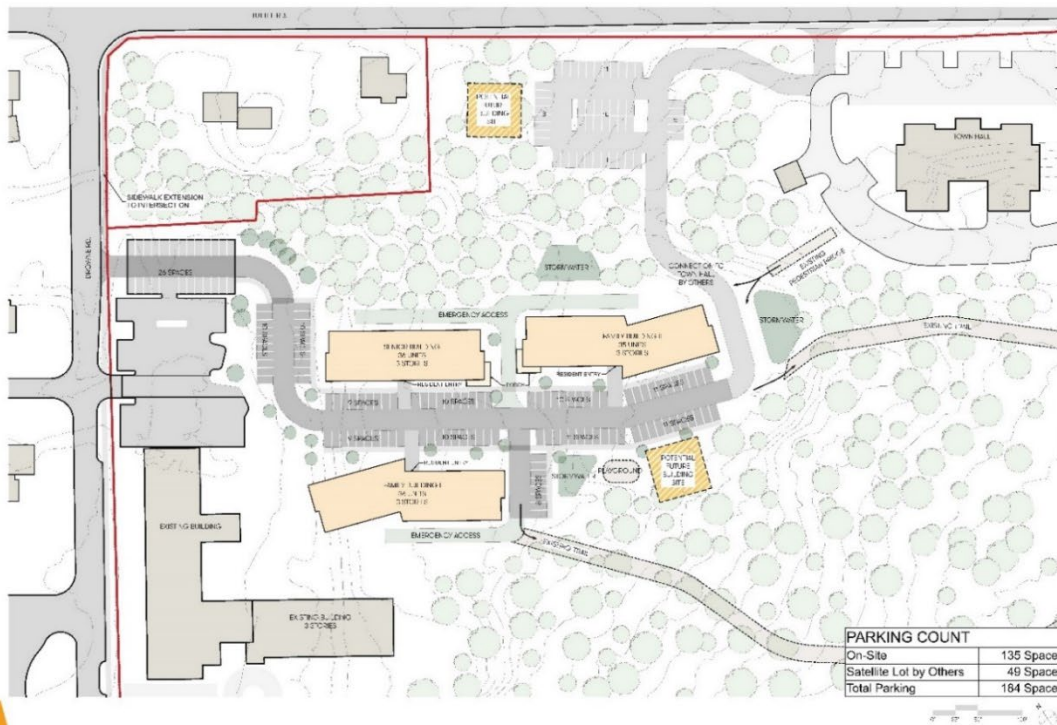
107-unit Affordable housing Complex off Drowne / Tuttle Road

The Project will be paid by Westbrook Development Corporation below:

71 – Single Bedroom (36– Senior Units)

21 – Two Bedroom

15 – Three Bedroom



SITE MAP

CUMBERLAND HOUSING
OCTOBER 31ST, 2023

Eligibility:

60% of Area Medium Income – From Table Rents \$1243 to \$1845 per month utilities included.

MaineHousing - Rent Restricted Programs
Income Eligibility Limits and
Maximum Rent Levels

Income and Rents Effective 5-15-2023

FedHOME Rents Effective 6-15-2023

Housing Trust Fund Income and Rents Effective 6-15-2023

	% Median Income - Adjusted by Family Size								Maximum Gross Rents				
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	0BR	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
Portland HMFA: Cape Elizabeth, Casco, Cumberland, Falmouth, Freeport, Frye Island, Gorham, Gray, Long Island, North Yarmouth, Portland, Raymond, Scarborough, South Portland, Standish, Westbrook, Windham, Yarmouth, Buxton, Hollis, Limington, Old Orchard Beach													
HERA 30%	25,350	28,950	32,580	36,180	39,090	41,970	44,880	47,760	633	678	814	940	1,049
HERA 40%	33,800	38,600	43,440	48,240	52,120	55,960	59,840	63,680	845	905	1,086	1,254	1,399
HERA 50%	42,250	48,250	54,300	60,300	65,150	69,950	74,800	79,600	1,056	1,131	1,357	1,568	1,748
HERA 60%	50,700	57,900	65,160	72,360	78,180	83,940	89,760	95,520	1,267	1,357	1,629	1,881	2,098
30% AMI	24,850	28,400	31,950	35,500	38,350	41,200	44,050	46,900	621	665	798	923	1,030
50% AMI	41,450	47,350	53,250	59,150	63,900	68,650	73,350	78,100	1,036	1,110	1,331	1,538	1,716
60% AMI	49,740	56,820	63,900	70,980	76,680	82,380	88,020	93,720	1,243	1,332	1,597	1,845	2,059
80% AMI	66,250	75,700	85,150	94,600	102,200	109,750	117,350	124,900	1,656	1,774	2,128	2,460	2,743
Low HOME	41,450	47,350	53,250	59,150	63,900	68,650	73,350	78,100	1,036	1,110	1,331	1,538	1,716
High HOME	49,740	56,820	63,900	70,980	76,680	82,380	88,020	93,720	1,243	1,421	1,708	1,964	2,171
HTF	24,850	28,400	31,950	35,500	38,350	41,200	45,420	50,560	621	665	798	923	1,030
FMR Effective 4-11-22									1,243	1,448	1,859	2,344	2,732

Typical Renters:

- Public Works Equipment Operator – single earning \$44,000 per year
- Retired individual with SS earnings of \$49,000
- 2 Bedroom- Young couple (Retail worker & Daycare worker) or a Single Teacher with One Child Earning \$55,000
- 3 bedroom Teacher with two children earning \$62,500
- EMT / Paramedic & a Daycare Worker with two children earning \$70,500

Once you qualify for and occupy a unit **you are not required to leave** because your income exceeds the maximum allowed to rent. Often, people will move as their income increases to find more room or to purchase their first home.

Taxes :

	FY 24	Percentage
School ***	\$15.35	69%
County	\$0.79	4%
Town	\$6.01	27%
	\$22.15	100%

The breakdown above is typical of how our property taxes are apportioned each year. The State Department of Education has a form known as the ED 279 and that is how General Purpose Aid to all the Towns in Maine is apportioned. It is how our annual state subsidy is calculated. The number of Cumberland students this year according to the ED 279 is 1,423.5 from 10/23/23. According to the State we comprise 67.83% of the total students.

Our cost for education this year is \$23,103,879. Divide that by the number of students 1,423.5 and that cost per student equals:

\$23,103,879 (Education Costs) / 1,423.50 (Total Cumberland Students) = \$16,230 per student

Our developer conservatively assumed the following for our project: 70% of all bedrooms in two and three bedroom units potentially could have a child.

- 71 – Single Bedroom – (36– Senior Units) **0** Children
- 21 – Two Bedroom – **21 extra** bedrooms **15** Children estimated
- 15 – Three Bedroom – **30 extra** bedrooms **21** Children estimated

Total of 36 children estimated. While that number is less than 3 per grade level (K-12 36/13 = 2.8/grade), it **does not match-up with our existing data** in similar neighborhoods. The number of students is far less and that is the same in communities like Auburn, Scarborough, and Westbrook.



45 Homes

96 Apartments
in 8 buildings

45 Single Family Homes off RT One near the Falmouth Town Line. The **96 apartments in the 8 buildings** (12 units each) and the 45 single family homes generate a **total of 12 children** in our school system. The source of the information was the MSAD 51 Superintendents office.

The 36 number estimated is very high compared to the norm, but regardless of what we choose there is a real dollar value in educating children and that amount is somewhere between:

$$\begin{aligned} \$16,230 \times 12 &= \$194,760 \\ \$16,230 \times 36 &= \$584,280 \end{aligned}$$

The highest cost in any type of residential project is education.

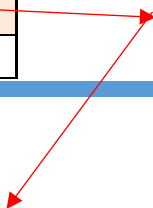
What happens when education costs are in a TIF district where the money cannot be used to offset education?

That is the case where this development is proposed. The development is part of TIF District #8. In this case, what costs in our capital planning budgets could be offset by the monies generated in the district? The TIF District will exceed \$50 million in value within 2-3 years. Most of the district is Oceanview with 105 units of Senior 55+ housing. Currently 50% of the taxes generated in Oceanview are captured in TIF district # 8.

\$50 Million x \$22.15 = \$1,107,500 50% = **\$553,750** to General Fund and 50% to TIF Fund.

Taxes:

	FY 24	Percentage
School ***	\$15.35	69%
County	\$0.79	4%



Town	\$6.01	27%
	\$22.15	100%

So, 69% of the non-TIF money **(\$553,750)** is **\$382,088 currently spent on education**. This would educate about 23 children, still a high number for apartments but I think a better estimate than 36.

If we use the 36 children estimate that is $\$16,230 \times 36 = \$584,280 - \$382,088 = \$202,192$ still to be accounted for to offset education cost.

What types of projects can be built with the Tif District # 8 monies that would offset the education expense? This district is estimated to generate \$553k each year until 2048.

- New Little League fields and parking \$ 3M
- New Public Safety communication towers \$ 2M
- 2 Fire Trucks \$1.5 M
- Road paving \$ \$250k / mile
- Sidewalks \$200 / ft
- Paramedics \$100k
- Future Train Service with a Transit amendment
- Future Bus Service with a Transit amendment

\$553,750 x 24 years = \$13.29 Million

What about other costs?

- Buildings and grounds - all by Westbrook Development Corporation
- Trash – by the developer
- Snow plowing – by the developer
- Paving- Private Road and parking area all by developer
- Water & Sewer – paid by developer
- Police, Fire, Rescue – no additional expected but offset costs are listed above

Items built through TIF Monies not General Fund (In Today’s dollars \$553k x 24 years = \$13M +)

- Road Connection – through TIF monies - \$250,000
- Little League Fields – \$3M
- Parking Area by Town Hall - \$250,000

How do TIF Districts and education funding work?

The State Department of Education uses a formula-based set of calculations known as the ED 279. It calculates how much Student Aid each school district receives.

A critical step in the ED 279 is Expected Local Contribution. Each year that \$ per thousand of value is adjusted in order to fund education throughout the state.

This year follow the red stars below:

STATE CALCULATION FOR FUNDING PUBLIC EDUCATION (PreK-12) REPORT

ORG ID : 839

RSU 51/MSAD 51

2023 - 2024

Section 4 : Calculation of Required Local Contribution - Mill Expectation

Section : 4

A) Subsidizable Pupils (Excludes Superintendent Transfers for SADs, RSUs & CSDs) by Member Municipality

Member Municipality	Average Subsidizable Pupils	Percentage of Total Pupils	Oper., Othr Sub, & Tchr. Ret. Allocation Distribution	Municipal Debt Allocation Distribution	Total Municipal Allocation Distribution as a Percentage of Pupils
Cumberland	1423.5	67.83%	19,385,826.00 +	470,118.88 =	19,855,944.88
North Yarmouth	675.0	32.17%	9,194,191.69 +	222,965.12 =	9,417,156.81
Total	2,098.5	100.00%	28,580,017.69	693,084.00	29,273,101.69



B) State Valuation by Member Municipality

Member Municipality	3-Yr Average or Previous Yr State Valuation	Mill Expectation	Total Municipal Allocation Distribution per Valuation x Mill Expectation
Cumberland	1,508,166,667	6.97	10,511,921.67
North Yarmouth	596,933,333	6.97	4,160,625.33
Total	2,105,100,000		14,672,547.00



C) Required Local Contribution = the lesser of the previous two calculations :

Member Municipality	Total Allocation by Municipality	Required Local Contribution by Municipality	Calculated Mill Rate	State Contribution by Municipality (Prior to adjustments)
Cumberland	19,855,944.88	10,511,921.67	6.97	9,344,023.21
North Yarmouth	9,417,156.81	4,160,625.33	6.97	5,256,531.48
Total	29,273,101.69	14,672,547.00		14,600,554.69



Preliminary FY 2023-2024 Governor's Recommended Funding Level Budget - Adjustments may be made to these printouts throughout FY 24

Step 1: **Cumberland** will cost under EPS **\$19,855,944.88** for its 1423.5 students

Step 2: Every Town in the State must contribute \$ 6.97 mils to education for us that is **\$10,511,921.67**

Cumberland's State Equalized Value (Adj to 100%) \$1.508 Billion x \$6.97/mil = \$10,511,921.67

Step 3: The difference between Step 1 and Step 2 is \$9,344,023.21 – The State's Contribution to Education for Cumberland Students.

So, if \$25 Million was not in a TIF district: \$25M x 6.97 = \$174,250

Cumberland would pay more toward Education and receive less in State aid for education.

TIF versus No TIF- show me the difference:

\$25,000,000 additional No TIF – \$25,000,000 Value x \$6.97 expected contribution = \$174, 250

- Less State Aid for Education from Cumberland more in local taxes.
- An additional 1.17% to the costs over EPS on \$15M (\$176,056) – Total Additional \$350,306 in School Contribution without a TIF – per year District 8

Why are we here? 2018 to 2023 – 5 dramatic years of change in Housing

Maine State Housing uses the Median income of our area x 120% for the income that should be required for an affordable home. That Income is \$143,400 and would be able to afford a home at \$395,000.

	Houses	Median	Average	House - \$400k
2018	161	\$386,250	\$526,660	81
2023	80	\$800,000	\$952,400	8
	Through Sept.			

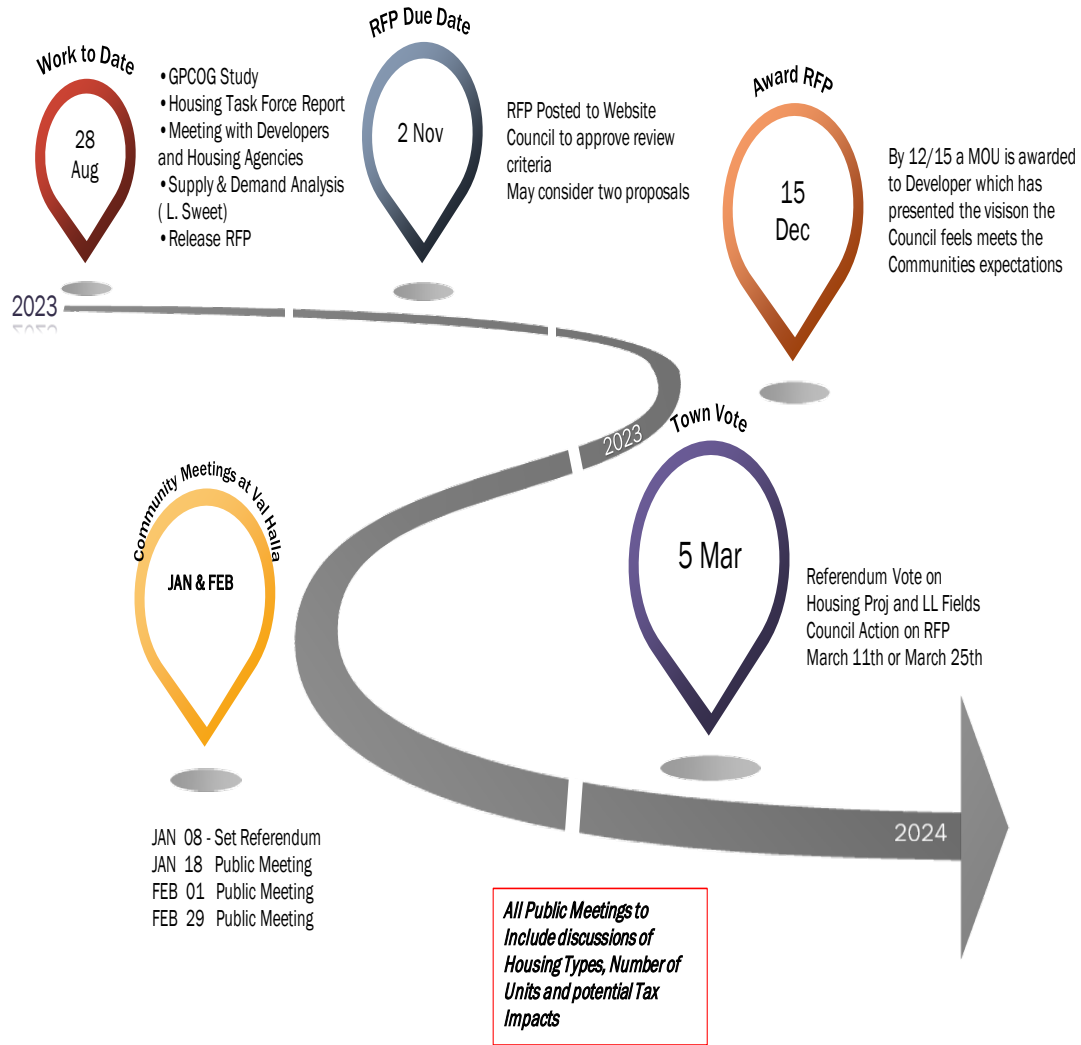
Meetings at Val Halla:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508044FA8A622A1FA7-46797591-community>

January 18th
 February 1st
 February 29th



Presidential Primary & Town Referendum
VOTE March 5th



Chairman Segrist opened the Public Hearing.

Katherine Pelletreau of 55 Drowne Road thanked Town Manager Shane for the very good presentation. It gave her a lot of new information that she had not considered prior to tonight. She appreciates that, but it is also

frustrating because her neighborhood prepared comments for this evening. Now they have to prepare more based on the information. She has lived here for almost 30 years, she has 2 kids who are in their 20's, and she wants them to be able to live here if they choose to. She wants to be very clear that the letter that came from the Village Green neighborhood today is not an opposition to affordable housing letter. They are in favor of affordable housing, but not in this location. They were never notified about this project. Nobody in their neighborhood knew about this location. That just doesn't seem right to her. The idea of having 107-unit worth of vehicle traffic using their neighborhood as a thoroughfare, is concerning to their neighborhood. The road is currently not built to allow 2 large vehicles to travel in both directions. This is a huge problem. She asked the Town Council to please look at other locations.

David Nicholas of 61 Drowne Road said that to reiterate what Katherine said, his neighborhood is not opposed to affordable housing, just this location. People have come into Village Green and made major life investments. Many of them are in their forever home. Traffic and noise are concerning. This is a walking neighborhood that will be turned into a road with heavy traffic. The road is not engineered to handle that. Planning is important for a community. The Town would never consider putting this project in Cumberland Commons. Please consider that fact that you're making a substantial change to the environs of this neighborhood which pays \$600,000 a year in property taxes.

Joyce Baughan of Blackstrap Road urged the Town Council not to sign anything with a development company at this point, because she does not think that we have asked for the correct fit for this Town. Why do you want to add 100 new households to this Town? Part of the problem with the cost of this Town is that we have been adding households for quite a few years at a rate of 20%. We have been adding households to this Town without a clear vision as to what it's going to do to us. Our school system is bursting because we've invited everybody in. It's about time we started taking care of the people we already have. The more expensive it gets, the more the people who don't have kids in the schools and are paying their taxes, which helps pay for those kids, are being forced to move out and are getting replaced with more kids. The Housing Task force recommended 50 new units of affordable housing in all three overlay districts, not 100. The model of the senior housing units at Cumberland Meadows is a good model. Why can't we copy this model? She does not think we should pursue the one proposal that was submitted.

Cindy Dexter of 89 Wyman Way said that she is not opposed to affordable housing. She gave her medical career at Maine Medical Center to take care of immigrants and people of poverty. We absolutely need affordable housing and people deserve a place to live. However, she is concerned about the density and location of this project. Wyman Way is being used as a cutoff for the rest of the Town, including construction vehicles, commercial vehicles, buses, and service workers. She cannot imagine what it will be like with the construction of the project and 107 additional households. She quoted the Town Manager as saying nobody wants the kids crammed into that space and that's why we have to leave the little league fields. Why do we want to cram 107 families in there if there's not enough room for the ball fields?

Jodee Mosher of Reid Lane said that she is opposed to this project going into this particular location. Traffic through their neighborhood is already a problem. This project will completely destroy the character of the neighborhood. She is also concerned about the impact on the trails in the Town Forest.

Bill Dexter of 89 Wyman Way said that he feels that transparency from our Town Council has been lacking. This is not how a small town should behave and we all deserve better.

Gail Witherill was on the Affordable Housing Task Force. Land is very expensive and when you want to build a project, you need land, and that land has to be affordable. The Town owns this land and that was one reason that the Task Force looked at this area. There aren't many places in our community where land is available. We need workforce housing. She hopes that we can look at this and realize that there are so many things here that

work against providing affordable housing in this community. We need the land, and we need a willing developer.

Ron Bancroft of Tuttle Road said that he appreciates what the Town Council is doing because it's not easy. He learned a lot of new information from the Town Manager's presentation this evening. He found it unbelievable that there are only 8 units of affordable housing in this Town currently. That is unacceptable. That is not public policy that we want to support in this Town. We support people being able to live in this Town. We have to take advantage of the land that we have if we want it to be affordable. We have to get beyond the neighborhood issue and get to the Town issue. The Town issue is affordable housing.

Reverend Allison Smith of the Congregation Church said that she is thrilled about this project. The vision is beautiful. It has families living near seniors, and allows people who are serving our community to come and live here. She does not want to be part of a community where only millionaires live. She heard the concerns of the people who live in Village Green and thinks that the workshops that the Town Manager spoke about will give everyone a chance to talk about their concerns. It will help everyone come together and use our best minds to think through the problems and solutions to make this work.

Jana Spaulding of West Cumberland said that she is so tired of being told that those of us who are terrified of losing our homes because taxes keep increasing, should open our hearts to welcome other people to our community. We're being asked to give up our homes so other people can come into our community. She is not opposed to affordable housing. She is not opposed to affordable housing on Drowne Road. She is opposed to the process. She is opposed to the infighting that has happened within the Town Council. She is opposed to people not caring about the people who make below the median income in this Town. The people who live under the median income in this Town are being harmed. This is not a case of not in my back yard. It is a case of I want to keep my back yard.

Kevin Balvan of Longwoods Road read the following statement:

First off you can turn that thing off (the 5-minute timer). The fact that you will only listen to your constituents for 5 minutes on a topic that is this complicated and has a huge impact on our community is frankly disgusting and shows that you ACTUALLY DO NOT CARE what we have to say...

You have zero business moving forward with this project. Zero. The reason is, you cannot even provide basic oversight of our MOST important town service and that is Public Safety. I do NOT feel safe in this community.

Currently Cumberland FIRE is short 2 Full Time Firefighters, and multiple are looking to leave.

There is 1 Deputy chief, which YOUR study said they needed 3. Why is this important. Well, there are currently 13 forces for this month and 21 forces to start 2024. State Police Leadership EDES, what happens to a force when a small number of first responders get forced constantly because of staffing issues. Does that positively or negatively impact citizen safety.... Am I safer or less safe? What are you doing about it? You know hiring is an issue... WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HELP? What oversight have you provided? NOTHING? I KNOW, because we have a Medic ready to go to work BUT YOU ALL STILL WILL NOT PUBLICLY SUPPORT THEIR MY BODY MY CHOICE. YOU all are actively making us all less safe because you do not have the intestinal fortitude to publicly state your support for them..... SHAME, SHAME on all of you.

So, if you all cannot provide effective oversight to one of our MOST important aspects of local government WHY ARE YOU HERE? Why should I trust any of you to provide oversight to a building construction project when you have shown you can't keep us as safe as possible? Where is your ability to look at the larger picture in all of this. Our town is ripping itself apart because YOU ALL listened to the wrong developer that said we didn't need all the Drowne Rd or Memorial schools. And these 1st world upper middle class parents can't stand their child in a modular classroom. Quote "NO CHILD SHOULD HAVE TO GET THEIR FEET WET TO GO TO LUNCH" Meanwhile you want those same wet footed kids to ride on electric buses that 3rd world children mined rare earth materials for.

You won't say crap about the BILLIONS and TRILLIONS of dollars wasted on ILLEGAL wars, money that is being directly funneled away from your children's futures.... How many 80 Gray Rd schools could we have built instead of supporting a war that has killed HALF A MILLION SOLDIERS, but golly if there is a questionable book in the library let's all get our friends and STAND UNITED hoot and holler at the "bigots" in this town.

Frankly NONE of you deserve a new school, NONE of you deserve this building project. You need to wait until after the school situation is figured out, after our taxes get adjusted. Because right now, you're biting off way more than you can chew.

And lastly..... THANK GOD I DIDN'T DIE IN THAT ILLEGAL WAR FOR THIS IGNORANT ELITEST APATHETIC PUBLIC Citizenry.

Bruce Sherwin of Blanchard Road said that he is not opposed to affordable housing. He is opposed to the way it is being financed. It is going to cost us money in property taxes.

Bill Young of Hedgerow Drive said that he finds it interesting that conversations regarding TIF's would seem to take place in a back room. It's hard for people to understand TIF's. The only way that the Town Council can be transparent is to have conversations about this in the open.

Christina Mitchell of Cumberland said that she understands the concerns of the Village Green neighborhood, and she trusts that the Town Council is very aware of this and are willing to listen in other meetings that will take place. She is a Wyman and wants to point out that we are all new at some point. Her Wyman branch left almost 300 years ago because they couldn't afford to stay here. There are a lot of reasons to consider options for people who want to stay here and new people who need homes. Those who come from the Wyman Way neighborhood, welcome to Wyman land.

The following comments were made via email:

Dear members of the Cumberland Town Council,

Please do not sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Westbrook Development Corporation to build a 110 unit affordable housing building on the Little League Baseball Fields on the Drowne Road. This proposal will RAISE OUR TAXES and change the character of the area. Cumberland currently has THE HIGHEST PROPERTY TAX RATE IN THE STATE. The cost of Cumberland's high growth over the recent years is making the town unaffordable for long-time residents like us.

Regards,

Joe and Sharon Kumiszczka

To the Town Council/Manager

Ahead of the meeting on 12/11/23, I wish to express my deep concerns regarding the development proposed for Drowne Road. Among my concerns:

- negative financial impact on the town (both town and SAD 51 budget), this is a bad deal for Cumberland
- environmental impact (loss of greenspace, impact on town forest, loss of field space)
- traffic (esp. on Drowne Rd) which was not designed to handle high volume traffic and is already being used as a 'cut through' to avoid the town center
- impact on the Village Green neighborhood
- process (neighbors were never informed of process nor were concerns or opinions sought, this was simply pushed forward by a few Councilors - this is NOT the way a small town should behave!)

- the developers own documents note a lack of information on which to move forward. Please reconsider this. At the very least, pause, get more information and engage those who will be most impacted by this project.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

William W. Dexter

89 Wyman Way

Hello,

My name is Zach Bouchard and I am resident of Cumberland. I am voting to say please move forward with the proposal for affordable housing solutions. This is desperately needed for our town to solve the affordable housing crisis. Thank you!

Dear Council Members:

I live in Yarmouth but as a neighbor I thought you should know that affordable housing benefits everyone and needs our support.

I know this issue is fraught with emotional baggage. I know it can feel divisive if peoples' feelings about culture and safety get triggered. I also know that it is easier to respect all of our citizens if we are not sequestered geographically into places where the well off live and the places where the poor and working class live.

I have attended some of the meetings where affordable housing has been discussed and salute the council members who want to hear from the community. I will be out of town Monday which is why I am writing this email today.

Sincerely,

Jeanie Barnard

I am strongly in support of this proposal and it being put forth as a referendum for voters.

Thx Alan D. Newton DMD

4 Ole Musket Road Cumberland Foreside 04110

Great work on the Affordable Housing Proposal. I support this initiative. Thank you for your efforts in supporting sustainable and inclusive growth for our wonderful town.

Kent Collier

5 Lantern Lane, Cumberland 04110

Dear Town Council and Manager,

I am very concerned about the proposed affordable housing project off of Drowne Rd. We purchased our home and moved to Cumberland because of its New England village feel, lack of congestion from traffic, ability to walk safely within our neighborhood and into the town center for coffee and meals. As it is right now, we have more traffic going through our neighborhood than originally planned. The two speed bumps that have been installed do little to slow traffic and rarely do people even stop at the 3 way stop at the end of Drowne Rd. The Wyman Way road is also a hazard currently as it is not very wide and cars coming off of Route 9 have a tendency to drive in the middle of the road which is a hazard when multiple cars traveling in opposite directions nearly miss each other. In the wintertime it is even more dangerous since the road is even narrower due to snowbanks. Purposely adding a potential of 100 more cars is a very bad idea and increases the chances for accidents and personal injury to the numerous walkers and cyclists that come through our neighborhood today.

While I support an increase in affordable housing it needs to be done in a beneficial way for all. To my knowledge Cumberland does not have the support system in place for this effort. We do not have a bus line, we do not have a grocery store within walking distance of the town center and there are no social services or medical facilities close by. If you look at the efforts in Brunswick at Cooks Corner you will see the right way to do this. They have established traffic patterns with the appropriate road set up, grocery stores within walking distance, doctors' offices and emergency medical facilities all within easy access from the new housing being built.

In addition, our schools can't handle the current population and our taxes are some of the highest in the state. I would encourage the council and management to look for more business opportunities for the town that could help with our current fiscal responsibilities instead of adding more burden to the residents.

Please do the right thing for our town and do not support this proposal.

Respectfully,

Kathi O'Grady
53 Drowne Rd, Cumberland

Dear Town Council members:

I am not able to be present at Monday evening's meeting, and I'd like to express my unqualified support for moving forward with the affordable housing proposal that is on Monday's agenda.

The proposal under consideration would be a great step forward for Cumberland, in providing increased rental options and in diversifying the economic profile of town residents.

I wholeheartedly urge your support as well for moving the process forward.

Thank you,

Sukie (Susan) Curtis
8 Pine Ln, Cumberland Foreside, ME 04110

First of all thank you for your service.

These comments are in regard to December 11th agenda item concerning a proposed MOU for an Affordable Housing Project with a primary entrance on Drowne Rd. This is from Curtis and Cornelia Scribner residing at 306 Tuttle Rd. which directly abuts said proposed site.

We are not opposed to the Towns efforts to introduce affordable housing to our community. However, the scope that has been floated for this site must be fully vetted and it appears that we perhaps have the cart before the horse.

- A) This site abuts and includes major drainage route and substantial wetlands
- B) This site is a major habitat for multiple wildlife and as well as their travel route.
- C) This site includes a number of rare tree growth which should be preserved.
- D) This site would substantially increase the traffic flow on a residential neighborhood
- E) One should beware of the cost and location of for the relocation of the town ball fields
- F) What is the anticipated cost of the increased school population and associated Town services.

Thank you for your consideration and it is our hope that should this proceed that the above questions will be answered by independent experts and not representatives of interested parties.

Curtis and Cornelia Scribner

Good morning, Town Council Members,

I can't make the meeting this evening, but I want to continue to voice my support for the effort to make Cumberland a more inclusive community from a socio-economic point of view.

If you think we don't need this, allow me to offer an example of the extreme need for inclusive housing: My daughter is 22, studying for her masters degree in education. It is her deepest desire to return to Maine in her mid 20's to settle down, teach, and make a life.

Currently, teachers starting out make 45k, MAYBE. Which means she can afford to pay about \$1,200/month for housing. Below are two links to searches on Apartments.com

<https://www.apartments.com/yarmouth-me/under-1400/>

<https://www.apartments.com/cumberland-me/under-1400/>

I urge you to try to look for housing.

As you progress on this path of building a more inclusive community, I'd like you to imagine starting out again, and trying to solve your issue of housing.

Sincerely,

Mike Perfetti

Main St., Cumberland

Dear Mr. Shane and Councilors,

I am writing to express concern about the MOU to be discussed tonight.

I would like to highlight two concerns that particularly worry me.

The location of the proposed housing surrounds the beautiful Cumberland paths, now bordered by only elderly housing and green space managed for birds, the butterfly garden and public resources.

The walking trails are a beautiful resource, a safe and well maintained place for all residents to use. Though it is not large, one feels a sense of being in the woods, surrounded by nature.

I fear that surrounding them with additional housing will change the experience of the woods, and impact how comfortable and safe our elderly neighbors feel walking on the trails.

The town put the needs of the elderly in the forefront when it negotiated for development of Village Green, and it was wonderful to see the old school building transformed to apartments for them.

To add this large development right in their backyard seems to be inappropriate at best, and possibly harmful.

To have vehicle access right beside their building, adds to the noise and air pollution that they are already accommodating from school buses and town trucks across the street.

I certainly underscore my neighbors' concern that Drowne Road will become an overused access way to RT9 for Portland commuters, but others have spoken effectively about this.

I would ask that you reconsider the placement of this development in the interests of two resources we do not want to harm: our elderly citizens, and our Cumberland Trails.

Thank you,

Mary E. Plouffe Ph.D.
82 Wyman Way
Cumberland, Maine 04021

Dear Council Members,

As a member of the former Affordable Housing Task Force I am a strong proponent of creating more affordable housing for low income residents as well as young families buying their first homes in Cumberland. Sadly, I cannot support the Drowne Road project as I believe the town should first solve the school crowding problem before adding new homes.

As you know several towns, including Cumberland, have turned down new school building proposals. I hear many people who have historically supported the schools complain about our high taxes. I fear that even a smaller building could be voted down and therefore hope that you do all that you can to minimize the school population growth as well as any tax increases. I am forwarding you an email I sent to Mark and Bob with specific population growth data.

Thanks for listening and for all the hard work you do. I am unable to attend tonight but wanted to share my thoughts.

Best,

Lu Gallaudet

Sorry for another missive but I have the feeling no one is looking at the big picture of the growth of our town. Looking at data from a study for the school district, from 2012-2021, 486 housing units were added in Cumberland- 354 single family houses and 132 duplexes and multi-family units. This data is in sync with the census report that states that from 2010-2020 we added 451 households. Furthermore the census shows that our town grew 18% in those ten years while the county grew 7% and the state grew 2%.

In the minutes of the Dec. 6 meeting of the Lands and Conservation Commission Bill Longley reported the following approved projects.

Ocean view phase 2 - 52 units
Christmas Creek -Vining Way- 19 of 20 homes completed
Orchard Road- Courtland Court- 8 of 10 building permits issues so far
Snowy Owl, off of Gray Rd-10 units approved - still blasting
The Mark off Rt. One- 45 units now under construction
Ross Estates off Blanchard Rd.- 3 units approved, pre-con complete
White Rock off Skyview Dr. -55 senior units awaiting MSHA

Total- 195 units

Add

72 proposed units in Chase Pit
107 units proposed on Drown Rd

So in this year alone 374 units are either underway or proposed- almost as large a growth as in the 10 years in the data. Shouldn't we put the brakes on? As you know I am especially worried about the school population and the possibility of another construction project being rejected but I am also concerned about the pressure on town services not to mention the "character" of Cumberland.

Thanks for listening.
Lu Gallaudet

Dear Members of the Town of Cumberland Town Council,
We, residents of Village Green (VG), are writing to express concerns about the potential affordable housing development on Drowne Road. As close neighbors to the new project who will be directly impacted, we have been woefully uninformed by the Town. No notice has been given to the HOA Board or VG residents directly. We only found out because one of us came across the information by chance. It does not seem to us to be too high a bar to expect notification of something like this, especially to residents living close by and on the same road.

Given the conflicting views about whether more affordable housing is needed in Cumberland (see Councilor Storey's [remarks](#) at 1:43 from the August 28th, 2023 Town Council meeting), and where it should be located, it makes sense to send it to referendum. However, the Council is proposing a **non-binding referendum** suggesting that **Councilors are seeking the ability to not heed the results if the Referendum is voted down. This is troubling.**

The specific language of a referendum question is critical and proposed language needs to accurately and fairly present what voters are being asked to take a position on. For example, the question "Do you support more affordable housing in Cumberland?" does not fairly represent what is being proposed like "Do you support the Westbrook Development Corporation's proposal to build 107 units of affordable housing on Drowne Road?" does.

The WDC proposal notes on pg. 5 that the concepts presented were created "*without the benefit of typical due diligence, such as surveys, geotechnical reports, or environmental phase I analyses.*" Further, the MOU disincentivizes changes to the Plan by making all costs of revising, finalizing, evaluating, or carrying out the proposal the responsibility of the Developer. We fear this position suggests the public meetings scheduled for January and February can have limited meaningful impact despite assurances to the public that this is not the case.

If the project does ultimately move forward, **we are concerned about the size (107 units with associated cars) and resulting negative impacts on our Village Green community and neighboring communities as well as the taxpayers of Cumberland.**

Drowne Road is not the right location for a project like this. It is a low-density housing area without public transportation, with very limited access to food and groceries, and no medical care nearby.

Traffic volume, exhaust, and noise

- **The MOU map only shows one road directly into the development: Drowne Road, with parking for all cars (155 car estimate) off Drowne Road.** There is reference to another "road

and parking via TIF” but no image of it on the map, therefore we are unclear about its planned existence. We do not think a second access point via town hall will have much impact on the increased traffic on Drowne Road.

- Traffic volume, exhaust, and noise will increase, especially on Drowne Road, Baxter Lane, Reid Lane, and Wyman Way through to Route 9. Our neighborhood will be a main thoroughfare to avoid the center of town and access I-295 and the Turnpike.
- Drowne Road and VG were deliberately designed to encourage interaction between neighbors, walkers, and families. Children, dogs, and walkers are present on our roads at all hours which is not compatible with high traffic volume.
- VG roads are built to support our neighborhood, not as a major thoroughfare. The roads are narrow and have insufficient capacity for the increased traffic the new project would generate. As evidence of this, **on Drowne Road, the yellow line indicating two lanes is discontinued once the road passes Public Works and becomes narrower going into VG. A school bus and a heating oil truck could not occupy the road at the same time** along with countless other examples. This is a pedestrian street just as the Town planned when it approved the VG plan.
- **The Town is poised to violate its own Plan by producing a project that is not compatible with either the Plan or current use. People invested in homes in the neighborhood with the expectation that the Town Plan was real and would be honored.**

Environmental Impact

- Loss of green space, including the highly utilized Little League fields, conveniently located in the center of town. This project envisions large buildings replacing ballfields and part of the Town Forest.
- **Asphalt parking lots will cover what is now well-utilized green space and the community Little League field between the Town Hall and the Drowne Road senior housing. Paving over these town resources is short-sighted and contrary to actions all over the country to restore green space previously destroyed to accommodate parking.**
- Increase in noise, light, and air pollution associated with high density housing and accompanying vehicles.
- A significant reduction in the quality of land use adjacent to the current senior housing on Drowne Road. People who live there are now looking at a ball field with youth playing games, green space, and trees. With this project, they would instead be viewing large residential structures along with enduring months of construction noise and disruption.

Fiscal Impact

- The fiscal impacts associated with this project are significant and could be quite high. **Full scale fiscal and environmental impact analyses need to be conducted so that the Town and its citizens understand the impacts before moving forward.** The WDC acknowledges this in its proposal, noting in its Preliminary Financial Analysis on page 30 that *“there is a lack of comprehensive information....To produce a dependable and more thorough estimate, additional information such as surveys, geotechnical reports, environmental reports, and further conceptual plans will be required.”*
 - Cost of increased town services such as fire, police, public works
 - Cost of education for new resident children
 - Cost of new infrastructure including water, sewer, energy
 - Town subsidies for building costs, land, taxes (via TIF)

- **Taxpayers are already facing real estate tax revaluation as well as a new school building on the Greely campus. Layering on the cost of this project exacerbates an already growing tax burden.**

We respectfully **request that the Council delay entering into an MOU** for this project with Westbrook Development Corporation until there is more certainty that Town residents want the project and its associated costs and uses.

Sincerely,

John and Nancy Law, 7 Baxter Lane
Debra Merkel, 74 Wyman Way
Kathleen O'Grady, 53 Drowne Road
Janet Greene, 54 Drowne Road
Arnold and Nancy Klugman, 7 Bradbury Way
Katherine Pelletreau, 55 Drowne Road
Karan Katyal, 66 Wyman Way
Sakshi Katyal, 66 Wyman Way
Miguel Argueda, 88 Wyman Way
Cynthia Farris, 29 Wyman Way
June L. Briggs, 9 Brackett Lane
Steve Briggs, 9 Brackett Lane
David C. Niklaus, 61 Drowne Road
Janny Kerkhof, 61 Drowne Road
Kaylene R. Graham, 4 Tacoma Lane
Charles Graham, 4 Tacoma Lane
Linda A. Shrader, 10 Brackett Lane
Joseph B. Shrader, 10 Brackett Lane

Good afternoon,

My name is Katie, and I'm writing to express my support for the affordable housing proposal. As a member of the affordable housing committee, I know this issue was chewed over and discussed from all sides, with a wide variety of viewpoints that I truly believe represented a cross section of the Cumberland community as a whole. The recommendation that was made to the council is the result of hard work and much deliberation and discussion from that group, and I am proud to have participated in my small way.

I believe much of the pushback on this issue owes largely to the very human response to change: fear. Very few people embrace change with open arms, and even less so a community that has seen less than the average share of change over the years. I would encourage the conversation to shift whenever possible or reasonable to the potential benefits/upsides to this change. Because I guarantee fear is preventing many from seeing those upsides.

I believe bringing the issue to the voters directly is the right thing to do. Thank you for considering my comment.

Best,
Katie Magoun

Town Council-

I received an email from Mark Segrist regarding a large affordable housing unit proposed for Drowne Road.

I am a resident of North Yarmouth, but this project concerns me.

1. The email says we need updates to the fields. Not sure where the fields would be or if there's even a plan in the works??

We have loved the LL aspect of our rec department and haven't found those fields lacking.

2. Where are all these children going with this large unit?? We have no room as it is at the school. We cannot get a new budget passed and I am concerned about the influx of new students these units would bring without any room to offer our current students.

Thank you for your time and look forward to hearing from you.

Rachel Mutchie

Good afternoon Members of the Town of Cumberland Town Council,
Katherine Pelletreau shared her email and after reading through the specifics, please add my name to the list below of concerned residents regarding the project and the potential impacts.

Additionally, my more immediate concern is around the increased volume of traffic, the narrow road that winds through the neighborhood (not built to handle high traffic volumes) along with the continued issue with vehicles that do not abide by the posted speed signs.

Sincerely,

Stephen Johnson, 56 Drowne Road

Dear Councilors,

I am not able to make the meeting tonight, but please accept this email as my profound support for affordable housing in Cumberland.

I support affordable housing for the following reasons:

1) housing prices have increased over 100% over the span of the last 10 years, obviously incomes are not increasing at the same rate which is squeezing out the middle and lower class.

2) too many residents of Cumberland are spending over half of their income on rent.

3) we do not have affordable options in our town, and we desperately need them to provide options for our seniors, for our young adults, and for all the dedicated and appreciated people that work here - in our schools, in our town services, etc.

Thank you for your consideration on this issue.

Sarah Russell

Tuttle Road

First of all, thank you for your service.

I'm emailing to express support for giving Cumberland citizens the opportunity to vote on an affordable housing project next March. Southern Maine, and Cumberland specifically, needs affordable housing to allow low and middle income citizens an opportunity to settle in our town. I'm sure that you're looking at the data, but (since I'm a broker and can look real time), I'll share that the median sale price for a home in Cumberland stands now at \$822,500. And that's a 7.5% reduction from last year! Had we not bought our home when we did, we would not be able to live here.

My home address is 6 Stornoway Road. Thank you for your consideration,

Chairman Segrist closed the Public Hearing.

Councilor Storey-King read the following:

In the last two weeks, I have had my integrity questioned by Councilors who support this measure. One called into question two decisions that may have been "perceived" as conflict of interest. Neither involved a TC vote. For those of you who don't know me, I have family in 27 homes in Cumberland: There are 5 homes belonging to family ages 70-90, in my generation there are 11 homes, and in my children's generation there are also 11 homes. All are taxpayers, to the tune of over a quarter of a million dollars annually in property taxes. That said, I would challenge anybody to find a decision I have made in the last 17.5 years that favored my family over any citizen. Yes, I am enormously proud of my family, but I serve the citizens of the Town as if they are family. And try, not always successfully, to treat others as I would like to be treated.

A colleague challenged me for not supporting the rail-to trail initiative, claiming I rallied support for my viewpoint. The facts are, after meeting and learning about it from Martha Leggat, I originally supported it until my neighbors, some of whom but not all are family, had questions and concerns they felt were being disregarded by the process. I did what I thought was in their interest, including testifying to the Legislature. I remain less against the trail than I am for protection of personal property rights. You'll see why I mention this in a couple minutes.

This weekend, when I learned that a Councilor was soliciting people to come support this project, my integrity was again called into question. This concern was brought to my attention by a citizen; it was not my concern. What I learned was that at the August vote for the RFP, the room was packed with supporters encouraged by said Town Councilor. Again, my relationships with the public are diverse and varied. I agree with some and not others. I have encouraged people to attend Council meetings, but I can't recall ever rallying residents to come support me or my agenda items. I believe Town business should be conducted in the full light of day and strive for transparency. And I wish we had more public information and participation.

I spoke with this Councilor yesterday to share this citizen's concern and to ask if I might have a copy of the emails he had sent out. He refused, and then went on to attack my association with the Cumberland North Yarmouth Taxpayers Advisory Group, asking me if I would share correspondence. Absolutely! This group is really trying to change exactly what is happening here tonight, where some residents are trying to pit us against each other. I think and hope I have been helpful to the group. I was honored to be invited to join them. I believe in their mission of civic education and transparency.

As of tonight, I have shared all text correspondence between myself and one member of the Advisory Group with the entire Council and Advisory Group. I have shared all email correspondence with our Town attorney in the event that the information be FOIA'd, not because the group has anything to hide, their mission is quite the opposite. She can be the one who decides how to protect individual citizens. I have no secrets and nothing to defend in my association with them. In the interest of full transparency, I also shared an entire FB messenger

thread among people who are likely here or watching, but again, I don't have the right to share private information.

Do I think I have the right to share information with the public? Yes, as does any other Councilor on this board. But I do not think it is in our Council's best interest to actively go out and drum up support in this manner.

I have had questions and concerns about this project since it was proposed. There are concerns brought to light in our very own commissioned housing report in June of this year that I feel are being dismissed. For example, 1,122 households live on annual incomes of 100k or less; 385 households live on incomes of 50k or less; and 88 households live in poverty. Let that sink in for a second. It is illogical to think these families, who are living paycheck to paycheck, trying to build equity and support their families, are going to choose to live in these apartments. It has been frustrating to me to be unable to communicate this paradox to my fellow Councilors. It is wrong to increase the taxes of citizens who are already paying more than five percent, and likely closer to eight percent, of their income in property taxes in order to support this project.

It has been assumed that people who oppose this project are afraid. I will challenge that narrative. I taught middle school age children in this community for 34 years, 38 overall. I embraced inclusiveness before it was even a thing, having two students with significant special needs in my sixth grade classroom in the eighties. Way before I had a child of my own with similar needs. I taught about culture and religion for over three decades, always encouraging my students to develop their own opinions and support them on current, world events. I taught about the Palestinian conflict and apartheid in the nineties and until I retired. Just before retiring, I created an additional unit of study for seventh graders centered around the UNs Global Goals. To assume that in any shape or form I am afraid of diversity would be wrong. My own extended family is an example of diversity: racial, ethnic, religious, intellectual, physical, gender, and socio-economic diversity. I'm proud of that!

You have heard that there is a wait list for senior condos at Hawthorne Court. Of course there is; they are beautiful low rent units operated by the Cumberland Housing authority. What you haven't heard is the affordable senior units at the former Drowne Road School struggle to maintain full capacity. Tonight we have heard we should have more units for singles. What our June housing study told us is there is not much difference between affordable single units and market rate single units, and the ninety-six apartments at Cumberland Foreside Village have an annual turnover of 20%, so there is often availability there.

There is no doubt Maine has a housing crisis. In fact, the Cumberland Town Council has actually been visionary in addressing this crisis for at least the last two decades, and even before my service to the town with the creation of Crossing Brook. We have approved at least three Contract Zones Agreements that led to the construction of over a hundred "affordable" homes and scores of apartments. Unfortunately, we did not have a crystal ball to see that those homes would only be affordable to first time buyers. Nor do our newer Councilors see the work that has already been done.

I do not have answers to the housing crisis. I have thought about it a great deal. I've done a lot of reading and research. I learned that the most affordable place for seniors is in their homes. I learned that 70% of Mainers could not afford to buy their own homes if they went on the market today, and I know that applies to many of us in Cumberland.

I just don't think this is Cumberland's problem to solve right now, considering the impact on current taxpayers, which in large measure is unknown. I think your Councilors with such passions need to get to the legislature and advocate and testify for a statewide and national solution. I think they need to advocate for relief for

graduating college students who have debt more than or nearly equal to a mortgage, so less of their income goes to college loan interest.

We have a lot of young people in our community, and they're figuring out their way. You may have heard that only the rich can afford to live here. That's not true. There are young people living with extended families, and while that's the norm in some cultures, we tend to think it's a curse. There are young people sharing apartments, or building what they can afford to build equity for a future dream. Twenty-five percent of our students are in k through two which alone challenges the narrative that young families can't afford to move here. Many of those families are feeling the relief of not having to pay childcare which is another area where Councilors could get involved to help our community. Cumberland has far surpassed growth, that's residential growth, than the rest of the state and yet 13% of that growth are people ages 22-44. These are not likely all independently wealthy people, but more likely dual income families living paycheck to paycheck and hopefully investing in 401k's while they're at it, or you can start worrying now about your social security.

Finally, I would like to defend the work of the Manager. There are many times he and I have disagreed; I'm better for it. It may look like he is pushing this project, and while he may personally favor this project, I need you to know that under our form of government, he is doing what he perceives is the will of this Council. That is his job. It has not been an easy task for him in the last year and a half, as larger societal forces become more involved in local governance, but he is and remains passionate about our community.

Councilor Vail said that this has been an issue and a concern of his for as long as he has been on the Town Council. He asked that a committee be formed to study the issue and the Housing Task Force was created. Tonight, we have a concrete proposal before us, and it is a good one. He stands ready this evening to move ahead on this. All the questions and concerns will be answered. This is not simply a rubber stamp and by putting this out to the voters it will allow the community to have their say. He asked former Town Councilor Allison Foster to speak on this item and about the Town-wide survey that was conducted. She was not able to attend this evening, but sent in the following comments:

A little over a year ago we conducted a community survey and, in the response, there was a clear majority support and recognition that affordable housing was needed in our community. However, that doesn't mean we blindly pursue an end objective. In fact, dissenting perspective is what led us down the path of the market assessment which was tremendously valuable to understand the direct need in our town and available supply of affordable housing in surrounding communities. Dissenting views are not only important to voice opposition but to ensure that a majority view is listening to varying perspectives and ideas and making the end "answer" better than it would have been if formed but a bunch of like-minded individuals.

I am very proud and impressed by the methodical manner in which this council has pursued this path. It would have been easy to just jam this through a year ago as a majority vote was on the council HOWEVER the council listened to the appropriate ask by dissenting views to gather more information and specifically to limit the size of the development.

I am confident that the past behavior of this council is indicative of its future, and I support the continued progress the council is looking to pursue this evening.

Councilor Douglass thanked everyone for coming out and for their comments this evening. She asked the Town Manager to explain what signing the Memorandum of Understanding means for us.

Town Manager Shane explained that it tells the developer that we won't take their proposal to somebody else to see if they can do it for less money. It simply tells the developer that we will take their proposal and accept it

until the referendum vote and allow us the time to hold the neighborhood meetings to answer everyone's questions.

Councilor Douglass said that everybody is concerned with the financial aspect of this project in tandem with a new school. She asked the Town Manager what a realistic timeline looks like to get the financials of where we are headed.

Town Manager Shane said that all the municipal services are being paid for by the developer in this case, so the real cost to us is the cost to educate each child that comes out of this. This development is part of a very large TIF District that generates a lot of money each year. Those monies have to be spent on items that we put forward to the Department of Community Development and were listed earlier. The other costs are hard to measure, such as the impact on our trails or the impact that additional traffic will have. Beyond the reoccurring cost of education, it's hard to quantify how this project will impact us when it's all essentially contained within a campus. We will work on coming up with a list of other costs.

Councilor Filson said that the one thing that we can all agree on is that affordability is an issue and we have been endeavoring to find solutions around affordability. Regardless, if the project makes to the next phase or not, affordability is still going to be a problem for people in this community. She wants to hear people's concerns and dialogues. This is very important to her. We need to give this project our due diligence, and hold the public meetings to talk about all the concerns together. She will personally stand by whatever the referendum vote states.

Councilor Douglass agreed with Councilor Filson. If this project is a no at referendum, she will not want to vote for this project to go forward. She thinks that the rest of the Town Council would agree.

Councilor Copp said that nobody on this Council has anything to gain by approving this project. It is for the greater good of the community. Some of the projects that were approved by this Council and opposed by the neighborhoods are Louie's Grill and Atlantic Credit Union on Main Street, the condos on Main Street, the condos on Route One. Nobody wanted these projects in their neighborhood, but everybody seems to like them now. Let's allow the process to go forward and let the people vote to tell us if they want this project. This is a need in our community, and we are simply asking the Town of Cumberland if they think it is a feasible project.

Chairman Segrist said that this is a project that he is passionate about. It's not something that he initially ran on when he first ran for the Town Council. He talked about trying to broaden our tax base, bringing in more businesses so that a significant portion of the tax burden did not fall on residential property taxes. The Town Council has been actively working on trying to increase the number of businesses in the Town. When we talk about sustainability and affordability, he views the issue of whether your property taxes go up as one issue, and the other issue is working to construct affordable housing. Even if the Town Council said that we're going to freeze our budget for the next 10 years, and we're not going to raise taxes at all, that still doesn't create affordable housing as to what we are talking about here tonight. We're talking about housing that is considerably lower than where the market is. So, if the free market is what the standard is, the folks that we're trying to make a home for in our Town, from firefighters, to police officers, to EMT's, to Ed Techs, to all the different individuals that we want to create a home for, the market is not currently providing for that. There are tools, and bonds, and funding mechanisms, that allow affordable housing to be constructed. If it were not for these tools, we as a community would not even be able to contemplate this. The land is already owned by the Town, it is on public water and sewer, the utilities are already there, it's close to Town services, and we are partnering with a developer that has the resources and capability to actually get LIHTC credits that they need to build this affordably. He hears and understands the emotion from those who live close to the potential project, but also anyone else in Town who hears about the project. He is starting to realize now why there is such a shortage of affordable housing in our State, our region, and in our country. It's because it's complex from a tax

and financing perspective, but it is also complex emotionally. He has learned a lot in this process, and he feels humbled by that. But he also feels like it is in the right interest of the community at large and he would like to see the Memorandum of Understanding process to move forward and we all as a Council have agreed that we want this to go to referendum. We want the voters to decide and if the voters say no, he will stand by that decision.

Motion by Councilor Vail, seconded by Councilor Copp, move to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Westbrook Development Corporation for the purpose of pursuing the affordable housing development set forth in their proposal dated November 2, 2023.

VOTE: 5-1 (Storey-King opposed) MOTION PASSES

23 – 129 To set a Public Hearing date of January 8th to consider and act on scheduling an advisory referendum on the proposal for an affordable housing project on Drowne Road from Westbrook Development Corporation.

Chairman Segrist asked for any public comment.

Katherine Pelletreau of Drowne Road asked who writes the referendum question.

Town Manager Shane said that our Town Attorney will write the question, it will be specific to the project, and it will be a yes or no question.

Chairman Segrist said that because this is a voluntary, Council driven initiative that we are putting forward to a referendum, the vote is technically non-binding, but as clearly stated by the Councilors this evening, whatever those decisions are in March, would effectively be binding on all of us and we would respect that result.

Motion by Councilor Filson, seconded by Councilor Copp, to set a Public Hearing date of January 8th to consider and act on scheduling an advisory referendum on the proposal for an affordable housing project on Drowne Road from Westbrook Development Corporation.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

23 – 130 To consider and act on authorizing spending from reserve funds to prepare for and permit a potential playground at Twin Brook.

Chairman Segrist explained that there has been discussion about creating a playground at Twin Brook and the first steps in that process would be to permit the change. We will use reserve funds that have been set aside for this process, effectively the DEP permitting.

Chairman Segrist asked for any public comment.

Kevin Balvin of Longwoods Road asked if the location of the potential playground could be moved. The more central it could be located, the better.

Motion by Councilor Douglass, seconded by Councilor Storey-King, to authorize spending from reserve funds to prepare for and permit a potential playground at Twin Brook.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

23 – 131 To hold a Public Hearing to rescind Article IV (Low Impact Development) of Chapter 242 (Stormwater Management) passed 10/24/2022 with an applicability date of 7/1/2024.

Chairman Segrist explained that we put this ordinance into place because the Maine DEP said that this is what the standard should be. The standard was then challenged in a legal challenge by Friends of Casco Bay, and that challenge was successful. The DEP will amend their standard. Now, we as a Town must rescind the previous ordinance and wait for the DEP to publish the new standards.

Chairman Segrist opened the Public Hearing.

No public comment.

Chairman Segrist closed the Public Hearing.

Motion by Councilor Vail, seconded by Councilor Douglass, to rescind Article IV (Low Impact Development) of Chapter 242 (Stormwater Management) passed 10/24/2022 with an applicability date of 7/1/2024.

VOTE: 6-0UNANIMOUS

23 – 132 To authorize the Town Manager to enter into a 5-year lease renewal with Rachel’s on the Green at Val Halla.

Chairman Segrist asked for any public comment.

No public comment.

Motion by Councilor Copp, seconded by Councilor Filson, to authorize the Town Manager to enter into a 5-year lease renewal with Rachel’s on the Green at Val Halla.

VOTE: 6-0UNANIMOUS

23 – 133 To appoint John Brushwein as Tax Assessor.

Motion by Councilor Copp, seconded by Councilor Vail, to appoint John Brushwein as Tax Assessor.

VOTE: 6-0UNANIMOUS

23 – 134 To authorize the Town Manager to renew a 3-year contract with 207 Forestry Consulting Services, LLC for forest management and consulting services.

Mike Schwindt, Chairman of the Lands & Conservation Commission said that our Town Forester, Paul Larrivee has done a great job for us, and the Commission is requesting that his contract renewed. We still have plenty of work for him to do.

Motion by Councilor Filson, seconded by Councilor Copp, to authorize the Town Manager to renew a 3-year contract with 207 Forestry Consulting Services, LLC for forest management and consulting services.

VOTE: 6-0UNANIMOUS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Copp – he and his good friend, Dean both donated \$20 to the 4-H fund that benefits the food pantry.

Thank you to the other Councilors for their generous holiday gifts.

Councilor Vail – no new business.

Councilor Filson – thank you to all the Councilors for the beautiful gifts.

John Jensenius and the trails committee have been constructing walkways like crazy. They built a 46-foot walkway in Greely Woods, a 213-foot walkway on the yellow trail in Rines Forest, and a 72-foot walkway at Knight's Pond. Amazing work. John, you are awesome.

Councilor Douglass – no new business.

Councilor Storey-King – she and Councilor Douglass attended the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting last Thursday. There was discussion about the winter program brochure not arriving in mailboxes until after some programs were full. This was not our issue; it was a postal service issue.

On Saturday, February 3rd there will be a Winter Family Fun Day at Val Halla. This will be a fun family gathering.

On Christmas day, Davon Galvan (our Active Living 55+ Director) along with her husband and her son, will be hosting a luncheon at Val Halla for anyone who wants to attend. She already has 35 people signed up to attend. Devon is amazing. She is so grateful for her and her family and their generosity.

The firefighters hosted an incredible pancake breakfast. Firefighters for Kids is one of her favorite charities. There were so many people there. She is so proud of their work.

She wished everyone happy holidays.

Chairman Segrist – thank you to all the Town Councilors for the wonderful holiday gifts.

He had the pleasure of attending the employee appreciation luncheon, along with Councilors Copp and Edes. It was well attended and a very nice event. The level of time which certain employees have work here is unbelievable.

Thank you to all the residents who showed up this evening. A reminder that January 8th is the Council vote to potentially set a referendum for affordable housing. If that moves forward, we will have our first public workshop meeting on January 18th at Val Halla, then the second public workshop meeting will be on February 1st, and the final public workshop meeting will be on February 29th.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilor Vail, seconded by Councilor Douglass, to adjourn.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

TIME: 10:24 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Brenda L. Moore
Council Secretary