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## Town Center could shrink: Selectmen, Planning Board mull ways to revise project

By **Katie Liesener / News Staff Writer**

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**W**AYLAND -- In their second meeting since the defeat of the Town Center proposal in November, selectmen and the Planning Board discussed the idea for a smaller project.

"We spent many months juggling between what the developer proposed and what the town envisioned," said Planning Board Vice Chairwoman Rebecca Regan. "This is an opportunity to create that vision."

After discussing such factors as the number, size and type of stores, both boards agreed that 170,000 to 175,000 commercial square feet might be appropriate for a new Town Center.

The Boston-based development group, Twenty Wayland LLC, had proposed 200,000 commercial square feet.

The boards' envisioned Town Center would also include: a 35,000- to 48,000-square-foot grocery, three 10,000- to 15,000-square-foot shops, 10,000-square-feet of office space and several stores smaller than 10,000 square feet.

The boards also agreed that a 40,000-square-foot municipal building and residential property equivalent in square footage to commercial property would be desirable for Town Center.

The vision does not yet take into account zoning bylaws, a developer's input, or impact to the town in terms of traffic, wastewater or security.

"I personally think it's important to talk about a vision for how (the Town Center) is laid out, even if it's rough," said Planning Board Chairman Larry Stabile. "I'm not willing to leave that to some negotiations down the line."

The two boards do not have a history of a shared vision for Town Center. In the weeks leading up to the special Town Meeting, the Planning Board unanimously voted against its own bylaw on the proposed Town Center and the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously in support.

Lined up opposite each other at two long tables Wednesday night, the boards were off to a bumpy start when they approached the problem in terms of sewage discharge.

Planning Board member Lynne Dunbrack created a computer model to roughly calculate how much sewage would be generated by different Town Center concepts.

Her model predicted the originally proposed Town Center would have generated 156,210 gallons and a scaled-down version that included fewer restaurants (which use more water) would generate 44,550 gallons.

The selectmen objected to relying on the model and questioned some of the criteria used in its creation.

"Forget the wastewater for a moment, what is it that we want? What feels good for our town?" asked selectmen Chairman Michael Tichnor.

The boards put the model aside, agreeing it could be a useful tool, and focused on the Town Center of their minds' eyes instead.

Selectman Bill Whitney imagined a fitness center and a Roche Bros., a store he said would be "terrific for the shopper I'm married to."

The Planning Board acceded to the idea of a larger grocery store than it had originally imagined in exchange for a bookstore space smaller than would allow for a Barnes & Noble or Borders.

"I think people don't want large spaces," said associate Planning Board member Anette Lewis. "(The proposed Town Center) didn't feel cozy or town center-y."

Whitney said an aerial shot of Wellesley's downtown shows many stores stretching over several blocks, but the small storefronts make the area more intimate.

"We want to allow flexibility for aggregating stores," he said.

For residential property, the selectmen asked that development be limited to two-bedroom housing to discourage more children coming into the school system. The Planning Board emphasized that the units be interspersed with the landscape as much as possible, as opposed to a high-rise or gated community.

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Both boards agreed that following New England tradition, a municipal building should be the Town Center's focal point.

The boards decided to save zoning considerations for a meeting next week.

But Selectman Alan Reiss raised another practicality before the meeting was through: "What is it going to take to get that two-thirds vote at Town Meeting? I want to talk to the people who voted no, and find out what would make the difference to them."

The response among those who spoke during public comment was unanimous - still too big.

"It's starting to look a lot like a mall," said Malcolm Astley. "If you want it to pass Town Meeting, you have to make it look different from the previous proposal."

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