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[CE SBAC] Areas of Long Term Planning Overlap between Town, Schools

1 message

Kevin Justh <kevinjusth@gmail.com>
To: cesbac@capeelizabethschools.org

Fri, Feb 2, 2024 at 10:04 AM

Dear SBAC:

Thursday was a long, but important night. Lots of hard work behind, even more ahead. The town is grateful for your work, together with the strong guidance from our school and town leaders and our owners rep and design team.

In the interest of maintaining open lines of communication and transparency with other aspects of town planning, there are 4 specific areas that, while not critical to the design, have some overlap with the recommendations that the town is considering from the Housing Committee. These are being presented on Monday Feb 5 at the town council workshop; I will forward the slide deck once finished, but it may be of interest to your work.

1. Tax base impacts: The town will be considering a 10 year affordable housing goal, which naturally would include market rate housing as well. The town's tax base historically has grown slightly under 1% annually; this goal would raise that growth rate, with the goal itself likely to generate 2-4% tax base growth. Each 1% of tax base growth, all else equal, lowers the mill rate about 1.4%. Of course, there are marginal costs associated with growth, but the land use recommendations were structured to encourage development within existing growth zones, so it would be safe to assume that development would have positive impacts on tax rates from 2026-2034 and beyond (2026 is likely earliest to see any development.) The majority of this development would be commercial, investment property, thus diversifying the town's tax base as well. Again, this is not something you'd likely model, but the public has expressed an interest in understanding the other side of the ledger.
2. The committee has recommended the town complete a recreational needs assessment. This is applicable to the SBAC because most of the design options involve the need to replace or add field resources elsewhere in town. There are already ongoing conversations about additional fields for the growth of youth sports, and the Fort Williams master plan calls for work as well. Combining the town, school, and Fort plans could result in efficiencies (i.e. if a field needs created, the Fort plan already calls for that.) The recommendation from the Housing Committee involves the Gull Crest site, but to understand recreational uses and needs is a much larger conversation and given the school project could realistically necessitate early action, this is something I would assume the town would consider expediting.
3. There was public comment about what seemed like excessive parking in some of the scenarios. The Housing Committee is recommending a complete parking study in the town center area, as

this is an issue that has repeatedly come up. Because the schools are in the center of town, there are numerous shared parking resources - Community Services, the school campus, the library, town hall, and the fire station all have separate parking areas within easy walking distance. At the Feb 1 forum, I drove by each parking area and there was more than ample parking, and that was among the busier meetings in recent memory. As hybrid and remote meeting options grow, it's reasonable to assume parking needs will evolve; shared parking also has cost and environmental benefits.

4. Finally, I wrote separately on the 1934 building, so won't repeat that here.

The agenda and link to the Zoom: <https://evocloud-prod3-public.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/meetings/47/agendas/11737.pdf>

While it's early in the town deliberation, I think it is helpful to not live in a contextual vacuum. Long term planning, whether it be land use, recreational, or fiscal, requires regular level-setting and iteration. Ultimately whatever we collectively do, we are leaving a legacy to our kids, grandkids, and great grandkids.

Thank you again for your service, should you have any questions do not hesitate to reach out.

Warmly,
Kevin Justh
9 Spruce Lane
Chair, Housing Diversity Study Committee (exp. 12/31/2023)

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