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'A starting point'

Manager says Pine Point plan forums will welcome citizens' input

By David Harry
Staff Writer

A raw December day may not have seemed the ideal time for a walk by the beach, but a chance to view the landscape affected by a potential Pine Point land swap drew Planning Board members and area residents this week.

The site walk took place a week before Monday's meeting when the Planning Board will discuss revisions to parking plans submitted by Lighthouse Inn owners Peter and Nicholas Truman.

It also was an opportunity envision where a planned drop-off zone for beach access may be constructed as part of improvements next spring to Pine Point Road.

The Trumans are seeking Planning Board approval to create a parking area on a town-owned, 49 by 230-foot piece of land now known as Depot Street. In exchange for the area, the Trumans will trade a 21 by 230-foot area on the other side of Depot Street from the Inn.

The Town Council approved the swap in July, but deeds have not been transferred to complete the deal, said Town Manager Tom Hall.

Planning Board members Cory Fellows, Anne Littlefield,



Ron Mazar and John Chamberlain declined to answer questions from members of the Pine Point Residents Association about the plan they will consider next Monday, and said their purpose was to gain a better understanding of the area before the board meets again.

"I wanted a visualization and now I can talk about the plan with greater insight," Mazar said.

Members of the residents' association, including Judy Shirk, said they were disappointed they could not ask questions of the group that also included Town Planner Dan Bacon and Assistant Town Planner Jay Chace.

The board assured the Trumans they would be able to use the area they will gain in the land trade for parking.

A site walk at the Lighthouse Inn by members of the Planning Board also drew members of the Pine Point Residents Association. Plans for a parking area at the Inn on land traded to owners Nicholas and Peter Truman will be discussed at the Planning Board meeting Monday, Dec. 14. (David Harry photo)

However, board members did not vote on the initial plan presented to them last month. Instead, they said they preferred to wait until the task force examining the area finished its work.

Revised plans show the Trumans have widened the entrance to the parking area from 20 feet to 24 feet, reduced the height of stone columns marking the entrance from 6 feet to 4 feet and will erect a 4-foot open picket

fence at the front of the property.

Shirk said she had prepared about a dozen questions for Planning Board members, including whether requiring a 3-foot rail fence instead of the 4-foot open picket fence would ensure current views of the beach remain.

Also on her list were questions about the stone wall in

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front of the office at the inn that sits on the right of way for Pine Point Road. The site plan calls for removing a corner of the wall to create a rounded entrance for parking at the inn.

Peter Truman, who was on hand to watch the site walk by Planning Board members, said he had attended the last two task force meetings. Lester Berry, a civil engineer hired by the Trumans to create the parking plan, said changes to the plans reflect Truman's attendance at the meetings and his discussions with task force members.

As the Trumans seek approval that will lead to a land swap with the town, a six-member task force created by Hall to create

a preliminary plan for a drop-off zone for beachgoers has completed its work, he said.

"This is a starting point as opposed to a finish line," Hall told councilors last week.

Preliminary drawings call for a lane where beachgoers could unload vehicles that would fit two cars. It would be added to the edge of Pine Point Road where it curves toward King Street. A path to the beach would wind between fences marking the abutting properties with room for bicycle racks and stone benches.

Hall expects to have three public forums for public comment on a path to Pine Point Beach nestled between the Lighthouse Inn and Beach Walk housing development.

The public will be allowed to mark drawings of the plan and submit written

comments.

As of Tuesday, no sessions had been scheduled. Hall said he would like to finish them by the middle of January so the task force can reconvene to revise the plan based on comments and suggestions. Members of the task force are Hall, Public Works Director Mike Shaw, Town Engineer Jim Wendel, Beach Walk subdivision developer John Wiggin and Pine Point residents Jack Callahan and Joan Lourie. Hall said he intends to have a final plan to present to the council in February.

Hall said any final plan also will be submitted to the Planning Board for its advisory opinion required by town charter for municipal buildings or land use.

Shaw said the plan to create the two-car drop-off zone can be incorporated into

plans to resurface Pine Point Road and delineate 11-foot lanes to help slow traffic along the road.

The road work also will include improvements to drainage near the Pine Point Fire Station. Hall said the initial estimate for the job was \$170,000 and a current estimate is closer \$140,000. The remaining \$30,000 can be used to build beach access, Hall said.

Because the zone is intended for quick use, Shaw said he feels it is the right length. But Pine Point resident John Barrett said he is worried the zone's length would lead to traffic jams and unsafe conditions.

"It's a lawyer's dream," Barrett said.

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