

At Town Meeting on May 17, voters will decide whether to amend the zoning by-laws by creating the Waubeeka Overlay District. The by-law provides a process by which the Waubeeka Golf Links can request the Zoning Board of Appeals – after public hearings – to grant a special permit to allow an inn with banquet room, swimming pool, and tennis courts, as well as a golf course clubhouse, pro-shop, and operations buildings in an area, **not to exceed 10 acres in total**, located at the northeast end of Waubeeka’s 203 acres.

Myth #1 – The by-law allows for a project of “unlimited size” which will result in “unfettered development.”

FACT: THE SIZE OF ANY PROJECT AT WAUBEEKA WILL BE TIGHTLY CONTROLLED. The by-law to be voted at Town Meeting provides all of the following limitations on any project at Waubeeka:

- (1) **Limited Area – 10 Acres.** The site of all buildings and above-ground improvement – the inn, pool, tennis courts, the golf pro-shop, clubhouse, and maintenance and storage buildings, as well as all parking lots **cannot exceed 10 acres in area in total. The bylaw refers to the 10 acres as the “Building Envelope.”** The remaining 193 acres will have no buildings at all, other than small (less than 600 sq') accessory buildings such as golf course irrigation pump houses, rain shelters, and restrooms.
- (2) **Limited Location – Northern End of Waubeeka Property.** All buildings open to the public must be located in a single building envelope and that envelope must be located in the northern-most section of the property, along New Ashford Road (in the location of the current clubhouse buildings and to the north of that). Golf course support buildings may be located in a secondary building envelope, but any acreage used for those structures gets subtracted from the 10 acres. The total developed area cannot exceed 10 acres.
- (3) **Limited Height – 3 Stories.** Buildings are “limited to three stories in height, and no higher than 40 feet.”
- (4) **Limited Number of Units – 120.** The inn cannot exceed 120 guest units.
- (5) **Limitation – i.e. prohibition – on housing.** For so long as any inn operates at Waubeeka, no housing whatsoever is allowed on any of its remaining land.
- (6) **Limited Design and Scale – Historic District.** The by-law **requires** that, “The overall development, including architectural design, shall be of **a form, style and scale** that maintains and enhances those qualities and historical traditions of the Five Corners National Registered Historical District in order to protect the historic and scenic character of the adjacent district.”

Myth #2 – If the by-law is adopted a developer will have an immediate right to begin construction, and the public will have no opportunity to be heard regarding the specifics of any project.

FACT: THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA) MUST CONDUCT A RIGOROUS AND COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC HEARING REVIEW PROCESS BEFORE ANYTHING CAN BE BUILT AT WAUBEEKA. THIS IS PRECISELY THE SAME PROCEDURE WHICH WILL BE UTILIZED IN CONNECTION WITH THE WILLIAMS COLLEGE SPRING STREET HOTEL PROJECT. Adoption of the by-law does not allow Waubeeka to build anything. The by-law allows Waubeeka to **make an application to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) requesting a permit. The ZBA has discretion to deny that request. A permit from the ZBA requires approval of 4 out of 5 ZBA members.** The ZBA process requires public hearings. As part of the public hearing process the applicant must submit materials confirming compliance with all the above limitations **as well as** the following requirements (references are to existing sections of the Williamstown zoning by-law): (1) **Access** to the project, Section 70-5.2.A; (2) **Water supply**, Section 70-5.2.B; (3) **Sewage disposal**, Section 70-5.2.C; (4) **Water quality** / onsite sewage / drainage, Section 70-5.3.A; (5) **Stormwater** management, Section 70-5.3.B; (6) **Erosion** control, Section 70-5.3.C; (7) **Impervious coverage**, Section 70-5.3.C.(4); (8) **Air quality**, Section 70-5.3.D; (9) **Plants and animals**, Section 70-5.3.E; (10) **Visibility** minimized (in Rural Residence districts buildings should be located to take advantage of topography and existing vegetation to minimize visibility); Section 70-5.4.A(7); (11) **Landscaping** requirements, Section 70-5.4.B; (12) **Lighting**; Section 70-5.4.D; (13) **Noise**. Section 70-5.2.E; (13) **Solid waste disposal**, Section 70-5.2.I; (14) Locus plan Section 70-8.2.C(1); (15) **Site plan**, 70-8.2.C(2); (16) **Existing and proposed buildings**, streets, ways walks, service areas, loading areas, fences and screening, utilities, waste storage and disposal facilities, wells and drainage facilities, 70-8.2.C(2)(c); (17) **Existing and proposed topography and vegetation**, 70-8.2.C(2)(d); (18) Indication of wetlands and other areas subject to control under the Wetlands Protection Act, 70-8.2.C(2)(e); (19) **Building floor plans and architectural elevations**, 70-8.2.C(3); (20) Documentation must be submitted indicating that all required **submittals** have been made **to other agencies**, such as the Conservation Commission under the Wetlands Act, the Williamstown Department of Public Works for utility connections, the Massachusetts Department of Public Works for curb cut permits, the Board of Health or DEP for on-site disposal facilities and an ENF to EOE for MEPA review, 70-8.2.C(4); (21) The ZBA **“shall permit no building or use injurious, noxious, offensive or detrimental to a neighborhood, and...shall prescribe appropriate safeguards and conditions in each case.”** 70-8.3.

Myth #3 – Waubeeka did not cooperate with the Planning Board or listen to its neighbors.

FACT: WAUBEEKA ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN TEN (10) PLANNING BOARD MEETINGS OVER AN EIGHT (8) MONTH PERIOD BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER OF 2015. Waubeeka's neighbors were, and everyone in the public was, given ample opportunity over the course of the ten (10) Planning Board meetings to participate and make suggestions. As a direct result of this painstaking, lengthy process numerous revisions to the by-law were made. These revisions include the following, all of which have been incorporated into the bylaw:

At the Planning Board's request, the by-law includes language which:

- (1) Requires the project to be deferential to the qualities of the nearby **Five Corners National Historical District**;
- (2) Requires the project **not detract from the viewsheds** described as Noteworthy by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management;
- (3) **Removes the right to build housing** on its remaining 193 acres as a condition to operating an inn. If the permit to operate the inn lapses, is permanently revoked or is permanently surrendered, this restriction likewise expires.

At the neighbor's request, the by-law includes language which:

- (4) Confines the Waubeeka Overlay District **to the Waubeeka's property only**, with no rezoning of the wider Five-Corners area (which would be advisable at some point in order to help the businesses there but which the neighbors did not want to do at this time);
- (5) **Removes of any reference to "retail"**;
- (6) Confirms there will be **no "amusement rides."**

Per the Town Manager:

- (7) Added a **new by-law definition of "Country Inn"** (to which Waubeeka added the 120 unit limit).

In response to concerns expressed at further Planning Board hearings:

- (8) Reduced the possible building envelope from 20% of the district (40 acres), which itself would have provided for 80% open space (160 acres), down to 5% - a **maximum of 10 acres** – which will leave 95% (193 acres) undeveloped.

In response to those desiring permanent conservation restrictions and those members of the Planning Board who took the position that "to get something you have to give something."

- (9) Adding a requirement that **67 acres**, which is **ONE-THIRD OF WAUBEEKA'S TOTAL LAND HOLDINGS**, be put into **permanent conservation** as a condition to the opening of an inn at Waubeeka. This restriction remains irrespective of whether the inn ever ceases to operate.

MYTH #4 – The town is fine and doesn't need expansion of its commercial tax base or more job opportunities; and if we do nothing things will stay the same and our town won't change at all.

FACT: WILLIAMSTOWN IS CHANGING DRAMATICALLY, AND HAS BEEN FOR OVER A DECADE.

FACT: WILLIAMSTOWN HAS THE FOURTH HIGHEST TAX BURDEN IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY. THAT RANKING WAS BEFORE THE GREYLOCK HS TAX BURDEN AND IS BEFORE ANY ALLOWANCE FOR A NEW POLICE STATION, FIRE STATION, OR OTHER MAJOR CAPITAL NEEDS.

WAUBEEKA ESTIMATES 100 JOBS AND ANNUAL TAX REVENUES TO THE TOWN OF \$500,000.

FACT: WILLIAMTOWN HAS LOST 21.2% OF ITS JOBS SINCE THE YEAR 2000.

FACT: WILLIAMSTOWN LOST 8% OF ITS POPULATION FROM 2000 TO 2010 AND FOR THE PERIOD FROM 2010 THROUGH 2013, OF ALL 351 MUNICIPALITIES IN MA, WILLIAMSTOWN WAS #1 IN PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LOSS.

FACT: THE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE TOWN INDICATES IT IS "GENTRIFYING."

MYTH #5 – An inn at Waubeeka would depart from the historical traditions and heritage of Williamstown.

FACT: Williamstown has five (5) destination resort hotels in its history, including one at the Five Corers – The Idlewild: In 1900 the Idlewild had become a year-round resort with its own golf course and tennis courts; and was popular for banquets given by college and townspeople. According to *Williamstown The First Two Hundred Years*, "...golf, tennis, and cards were the order of the day at the Idlewild Hotel in South Williamstown."