



# **Walsh Park Benevolent Corporation**

**Presentation to the Community**

**Concerning the potential purchase of the Fishers Island  
School Property**

October 2022

# Agenda

- **Walsh Park**
- **Why This Property?**
- **Timeline**
- **Key Issues Raised**
- **Preliminary Site Plan and Design Concepts**
- **Summary of Community Feedback**
- **Case Study: Ferry Building Apartments**
- **Conclusion**
- **Appendix – WPBC FAQs , ICB Endorsement Letter, WPBC’s Letter to the ICB – Re: Property Maintenance**

# Walsh Park

- Not-for-profit corporation founded in 1987 to address the declining year-round population on Fishers Island.
- Mission is to create a supply of housing specifically for year-round residents.
- Manages 12 owner-occupied houses, 23 rental/leased units and 2 commercial properties.
- Properties are leased at discounts to the HUD Fair Market Index for affordable housing units (Norwich/New London). All other revenue comes from private donations from the Island community.

## Who Lives Here?



Houses approximately 25% of the year-round residents



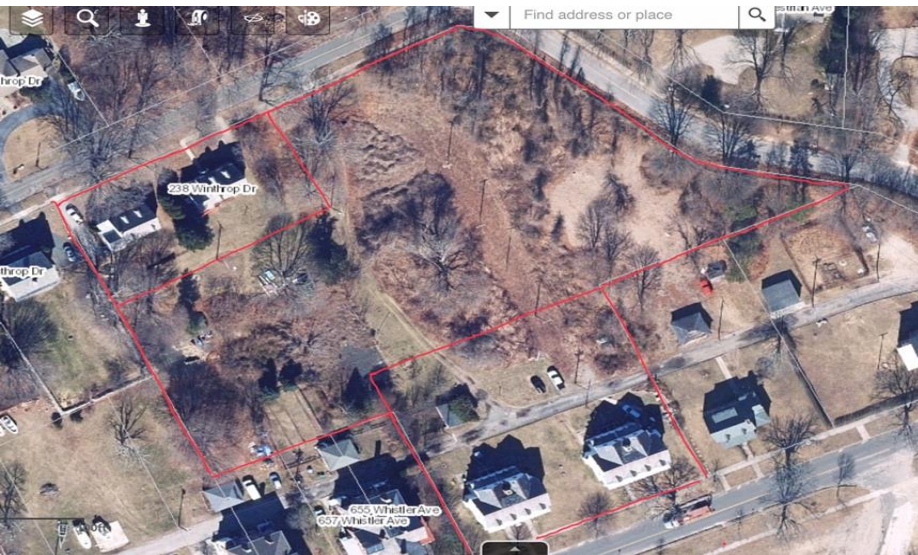
Approx. 33% of the Fishers Island children in the F.I. school



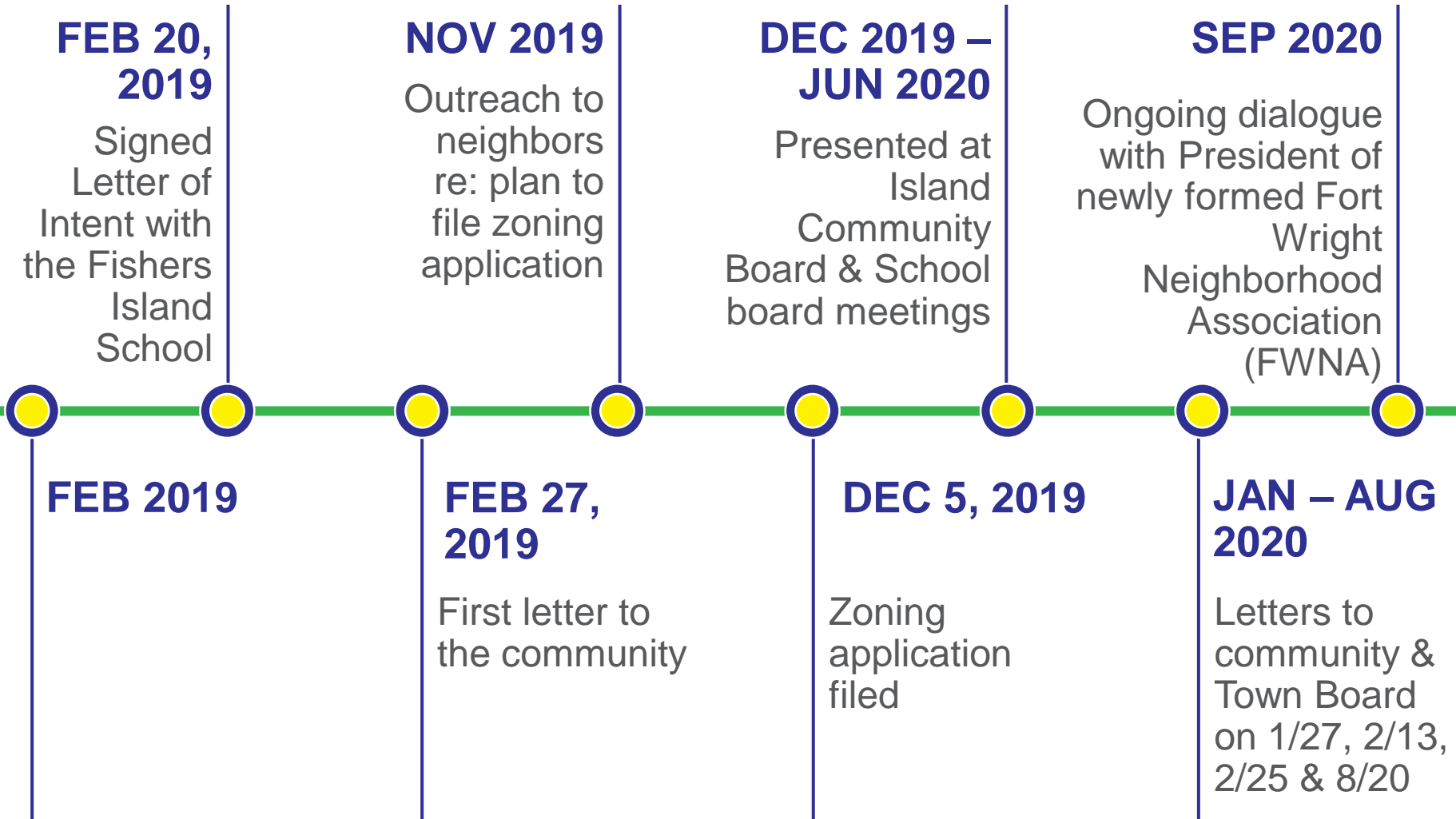
Approx. 58% of the volunteer Fishers Island Fire Department

# Why This Property?

- Need to increase the supply of housing for year round residents affirmed by the Town of Southold's Comprehensive Plan, the Yale Study and other studies.
- Property is available for sale and proceeds will help Fishers Island School (FIS) defray other expenses.
- Identified as a possible building site by 2013-2015 Land Use Working Group on Fishers Island.
- Other development opportunities over the last 10 years not viable or have fallen through.
- Great location in vibrant west end area. Ability to build with similar density, scale and aesthetics to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Sale of the property will be authorized by the registered voters on Fishers Island.



# Timeline



# Timeline (continued)



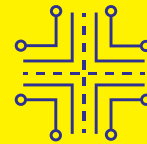
# Key Concerns Raised



**Design**



**Traffic**

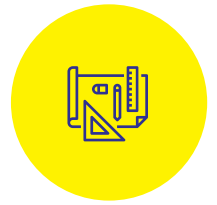


**Infrastructure**



**Density**

# Design



## Concern:

The project will alter the character of the Fort Wright neighborhood.

## Response:

Walsh Park is partnering with highly regarded architects, Tod Williams & Billie Tsien, who own a historic building in the neighborhood and who have previously renovated two important historic buildings on Fishers Island including the Ferry Freight building.

- The intent of the design process is to follow all regulatory requirements while designing attractive family housing units that will fit into the character of the existing neighborhood both in terms of scale and design.
- We are sharing our current perspective on the site plan and structure design.
  - We want and plan to take into consideration feedback from neighbors and the community before committing to a final structure design and site plan layout
  - The final design will also be influenced by the regulatory approval process, expense and ongoing design considerations



# Traffic



## Concern:

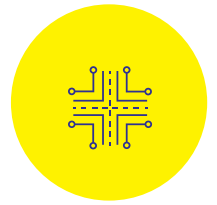
The project will result in traffic congestion and unsafe conditions.

## Response:

Although it would not typically be required for a development of this size, WPBC originally committed to engaging CHA Consulting Inc. to complete a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) covering winter and summer months.

- CHA Consulting upon initial review indicated that a TIA would not be an appropriate use of funds to conduct given the low levels of population and housing in the area and the number of units to be built.
- The Planning Board recommendation cited a likely minimal increase in traffic volume given the small number (4) of maximum units.
- WPBC has committed to providing adequate off-street parking to ensure the existing streets are not utilized for parking as well as support potential updates to the intersection of Whistler and Equestrian.

# Infrastructure



## Concern:

New development will tax existing infrastructure.

## Response:

WPBC will continue to work with the Fishers Island Utility Company and the Town to identify potential infrastructure challenges in the Fort Wright area.

- WPBC is prepared to invest in partnership with the Fishers Island Utility Company and / or the Town to make needed upgrades, as it did with the Ferry building.

# Density



## Concern:

Too many additional units will change the character of the neighborhood and create traffic and other issues that will negatively impact the community.

## Response:

WPBC amended its zone change application to reduce the maximum number of allowable dwellings down to 4. Hamlet Density zoning would normally have permitted ~9/10 units given the size of the property.

- Housing will be available only to year-round residents.
- Adequate off street parking will be created.
- WPBC has committed to investing in or maintaining existing landscaping to create natural buffers as may be desirable and / or required by the Planning Board.

# **Preliminary Site Plan and Design Concepts**

**Please see TWBT site plan and design presentation**

# Summary of Community Feedback

## Maintenance – WP has not taken adequate care of its existing properties

- Valid feedback
- Steps taken / in process
  - Over the last 5 years approximately \$1.4mm has been invested in capital improvements and maintenance projects
  - WP now has a building committee that has completed an initial review of all properties and created a phased plan of investment – critical down to aesthetic
  - WP has allocated and will continue to allocate approximately \$150k a year in its annual budget for capital projects
  - WP plans to include in its capital campaign for this project a target \$ amount specifically allocated to capital improvements in the existing portfolio of properties

## Parking – not enough off street parking in initial design plan

- Valid feedback
- Future iterations of the site plan will include additional off street parking

## Infrastructure – existing sewers & utilities should not be impacted

- Valid feedback
- WP recognizes the concerns about placing an undue burden on the existing infrastructure. We intend to comply with all requirements of the various regulatory agencies that oversee infrastructure matters, and to invest as needed any potential issues. These concerns will be addressed during the permitting and construction phase of the project.

# Summary of Community Feedback

## Design

- Received a great deal of positive feedback on the design
- Some have also expressed a strong desire to have the buildings conform more specifically to the existing aesthetics of the neighborhood
- As can be expected, there are multiple viewpoints about specific design elements like windows, roofing, siding, doorways etc. WP and our architects are aware of and will remain sensitive to these issues as the preliminary designs are finalized.
- It is critical to note that these designs are preliminary and will evolve based on among other factors feedback, initial cost, anticipated maintenance expense and the ongoing iterative nature of the design process.

## Access

- Previously have shared the process and analysis behind the decision to pursue a Winthrop Ave. access point.
- Some have pushed for a reconsideration of a Whistler Ave. access point
- We continue to feel strongly based on feedback from our expert advisors and consultants that the Winthrop Ave. access point remains the best option
  - Minimizes impact in the form of additional road surfaces to the surrounding neighbors
  - Allows for maximum utilization of the odd sized lot and the best potential layout of the units while trying to maintain green space
  - Affords necessary regulatory considerations/compliance – required setbacks, emergency vehicle access, deference to existing utility right of ways etc.

# Summary of Community Feedback

Site Layout – have received some feedback on the layout of the units within the property

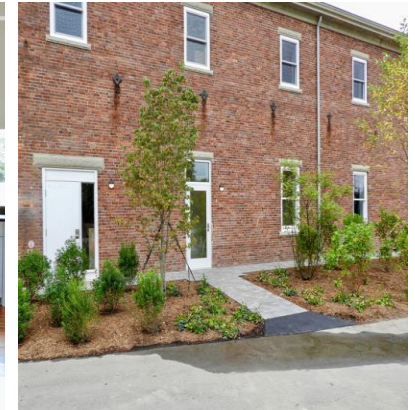
- Having agreed to limit the scope of the project to only 4 units, WP also took into consideration prior feedback from the community on the desire for low profile less visible structures. Given that feedback, four single story detached units have been scoped and placed as efficiently as possible within the lot.
- The units are laid out as they are due to the size and shape of the lot and required setbacks, emergency vehicle access requirements, existing utility right of ways etc.

Landscaping – thoughtful investment in landscape design and installation will be helpful in assuring the new development fits into the surrounding neighborhood

- Valid feedback
- WP agrees that a thoughtful landscape design plan will be needed and is committed to investing in one as part of the ongoing design and final installation process

# Case Study: Ferry Building Apartments

- 6 apartments added to WPBC properties.
- Completed on time and on budget.
- Funded by private donations in partnership with the Town, the Ferry District, FIDCO and the FI Utility Company.
- Included over \$800,000 in investments to the Ferry Building, the exterior and the water infrastructure at no cost to the Town, the District or the community – new roof, new windows, new water main, landscaping etc.
- Walsh Park has demonstrated its ability to undertake a project of this magnitude and deliver a finished product that is in the best interests of the entire community.







# Conclusion

## We appreciate your support of this much needed project

- As confirmed by multiple studies and the Comprehensive Plan additional year-round housing is essential to the prosperity and long-term viability of Fishers Island.
- WPBC has from the onset of its exploration of this partnership with the School communicated with and solicited feedback from the community. WPBC remains committed to continuing to engage with and listen to the views of the community and will proceed in a thoughtful manner, sensitive to all interests.
- This project will take several more years to complete and will be dependent on successful capital raising and other factors.
- This project has been endorsed by both the Fishers Island School Board and the elected representatives of the Island Community Board (ICB).

**Please Vote for the approval of this project**



# Appendix

## WPBC Frequently Asked Questions

### ■ How big is Walsh Park?

- Walsh Park currently owns or operates 37 properties:
  - 12 owner-occupied homes on Peters Way
  - 23 homes or apartments (rentals)
  - 2 commercial properties (rentals)

We estimate that approximately 25% of the year-round Island population reside in Walsh Park housing, including 33% of the island children attending the Fishers Island School and 58% of the Fishers Island Fire Department/EMT and Sea Stretcher volunteers.

Walsh Park has been very successful in providing housing to Island residents for over 30 years. At present our properties are 100% occupied and there is a waiting list for openings.

### ■ How is Walsh Park governed?

- Walsh Park is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. A volunteer Board of Directors consisting of full-time Island residents as well as seasonal residents, governs the organization. The board meets regularly during the course of the year. The organization has two co-presidents, Ned Carlson and Andrew Burr, and one full-time employee, Matt Edwards, Walsh Park's Program Manager.

### ■ How does Walsh Park establish its rents?

- The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development annually publishes its Index for Maximum Rents for Affordable Housing Units in Norwich/New London CT. Based upon the age and condition of our properties, Walsh Park applies a 10% to 30% discount to the HUD recommended rates.
- The rents that we charge do not fully cover the taxes, insurance and routine maintenance that we pay on our properties. We depend on annual fund donations to cover the remainder of our annual cash needs, including costs of property renovations and major repairs.





# Appendix (continued)

## WPBC Frequently Asked Questions

- How do I apply for Walsh Park housing?
  - Anyone interested in Walsh Park housing is encouraged to submit a formal application to Matt Edwards at PO Box 684, Fishers Island, NY 06390.
  - A copy of the standard application can be found on our web site here: [http://walshpark.org/home/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/WPBC\\_2018\\_Application.pdf](http://walshpark.org/home/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/WPBC_2018_Application.pdf)
- I am a Walsh Park tenant. How do I get Walsh Park to address a repair/maintenance issue on my rental unit?
  - Matt Edwards, our full-time program manager, resides on the Island and can be reached at (631) 788-7927. Among his many duties, Matt is available to address tenant concerns about repair and maintenance issues. Repair and maintenance work is generally undertaken by various Island contractors. We try to address tenant issues promptly and thoroughly as they are brought to our attention.
- What criteria does Walsh Park use when selecting tenants?
  - Anyone who expresses an interest in Walsh Park housing is first interviewed by members of the Board of Directors. Formal applications are then reviewed by the entire board. We seek tenants who have strong letters of recommendation and are prepared and willing to become active members of the community by volunteering their services to any of the many civic organizations that operate on Fishers Island, including among others, the Fishers Island Fire Department, Island Health Services, Fishers Island School, Fishers Island Conservancy, etc.





# Appendix (continued)

## WPBC Frequently Asked Questions

- What does Walsh Park do to promote home ownership?
  - Approximately 1/3 of our properties are owner occupied and 2/3 are rental properties. This balance has evolved over time, partly because our younger tenants seem to prefer rentals and partly because the cost of home ownership is high.
  - We believe that more home ownership is a worthy objective and are constantly exploring ways in which we can encourage people to buy their homes. Recently, we sold a Walsh Park home to one of our tenants and we are willing to engage in similar transactions as buyers are identified.
- What are Walsh Park's sources of funding?
  - Walsh Park has three primary sources of funding:
    - Rental income – earmarked for insurance, taxes and regular maintenance on our properties. Rental income covers approximately 60% of our annual cash needs.
    - Annual fund donations – earmarked for our program manager's salary, other administrative costs and for property renovations and major repairs. Annual fund donations cover approximately 40% of our annual cash needs.
    - Capital contributions – solicited in separate fundraising campaigns when we undertake major capital projects. For example, in 2019, we raised \$3.6 million from approximately 80 very generous donors to build the Ferry Building apartments.

Frank Burr Endowment Fund - We have a very small endowment at present to which people donate from time to time. Our hope is that eventually the fund's earnings will cover part of our annual cash needs.

Walsh Park is highly dependent on help from the community, both financial and voluntary service, if we are to further our mission. Please feel free to donate here: <http://walshpark.org/support-walsh-park/>





# Appendix (continued)

## WPBC Frequently Asked Questions

- What is the status of the school property purchase?
  - Walsh Park has a letter of intent to buy a parcel of undeveloped land from the Fishers Island School once various approvals can be secured from the Town of Southold. Approval of the sale will be subject to a referendum of registered voters on Fishers Island scheduled for November 8, 2022.
  - Once Walsh Park purchases the property, we will then turn our attention to detailed architectural drawings, site planning, fund raising, and construction, all in coordination with the neighbors in the Fort Wright area. This is expected to be a long-term project.
- How are the Peter's Way properties structured to promote home ownership?
  - The original Peters Way properties were built on a 24-acre parcel that was acquired by Walsh Park from Mary Walsh in 1987. Individual homes were constructed and sold to year-round Island residents. Ownership of the land was retained by Walsh Park. Homeowners are able to sell their homes with certain restrictions, at formula prices that take into account capital improvements made by the owners. This structure enables the owners to participate in the appreciation in value of the houses and to build equity in their homes. The project has been a great success insofar as most of the original owners still reside in their houses and are active members of the community.



# Appendix (continued)

## Island Community Board Endorsement Letter

Fishers Island Community Board Elected Representatives

Re: Walsh Park Benevolent Corporation's effort to provide additional year-round housing

Members of the Fishers Island Community:

Walsh Park Benevolent Corporation (WPBC) has worked for the last several years to acquire a zoning change and subdivision approval on the property at Equestrian Avenue and Winthrop Drive owned by the Fishers Island School. It has worked with the neighbors to reduce the number of housing units on the land to a level that is acceptable. The next step is for the Fishers Island School to hold a referendum of all registered voters on Fishers Island, to approve the sale of the land to WPBC.

The Fishers Island Community Board (ICB) has been involved in the discussions and watched the progress. The ICB endorses the sale of the property to Walsh Park and urges the registered voters to vote for its approval when it is placed on the referendum ballot.

The ICB looks forward to continuing to work with WPBC and the Fort Wright Neighborhood Association on this project to create much needed additional housing for our year-round population.

Thank you,

Willard B. Soper

President,

on behalf of the Elected Representatives of the Island Community Board

Fishers Island, NY



# Appendix (continued)

## WPBC's Letter to the ICB Re: Property Maintenance



WALSH PARK

October 2, 2022

Island Community Board (ICB)  
Attn: Elected Members of the Board

**Re: Walsh Park Property Maintenance**

Dear Members of the Board:

In follow-up to our previous discussions, the Walsh Park Board of Directors would like to respond to recent concerns voiced by members of the community. We are aware of the perspective that Walsh Park has not historically invested enough time and or resources to sufficiently maintain our rental properties.

We acknowledge that there is some validity to this concern. Throughout its history, Walsh Park has had neither the focus or resources necessary to properly address the capital and maintenance requirements of all of our rental properties. We realized several years ago, that despite the challenge of raising funds to support this type of work and our belief that there remains an equal or greater need for Walsh Park to also invest in the acquisition and development of additional year-round housing inventory, property maintenance was an issue Walsh Park needed to work to address.

To that end Walsh Park has taken the following steps:

- Over the last 5 years Walsh Park has invested \$1.4mm in capital improvements and maintenance projects at its rental properties.
- Walsh Park now has a building specific sub-committee of its Board that has completed an initial review of all properties and created a phased plan of investment. Items have been categorized in various levels from critical/safety down to aesthetics.
- Walsh Park has also allocated and will continue to allocate approximately \$150,000 a year from its annual budget for capital and maintenance projects.
- Walsh Park plans to include in its capital campaign for the School land project, if the sale is approved by eligible voters, a significant target dollar amount specifically allocated to capital improvements in its existing rental properties.

We continue to appreciate the ICB's support of Walsh Park and its mission. As well as the ICB's specific support of our proposed purchase of the School property. We hope this letter helps address some of the concerns that have been shared. We also look forward to continuing to work with the community, our program participants, the ICB and the Town of Southold to positively impact the year-round housing needs of Fishers Island.

Sincerely yours,

Walsh Park Benevolent Corporation

By:

  
Name: Ned Carlson  
Title: Co-President

