

Meeting with Evan Lehrer, Town Planner and Anne Malone

May 28, 2021

1. Perspectives beyond town hall:

--Mashpee Commons is an attractive outdoor shopping mall and commercial center with Cape Cod-style architecture and pleasing human scale. It is not the town center; it is not a "main street" substitute. It offers amenities for the town that are appreciated by the residents, but *a shopping mall is a commercial, not a civic, enterprise.*

--Mashpee is unique on Cape Cod because throughout its history, until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it was defined not by the built environment, but by the values and practices of the Wampanoag community, and today its most cherished asset is open space and waterways.

--MC proposes a massive expansion (largely amplification of what is already there) over some period of years (7 and 25 are numbers that have been mentioned) that will change the character and quality of communal life, for good or ill.

--The project should go forward if there are clear advantages, and successfully mitigated disadvantages, for the community. Among the challenges to the success of the plan are significantly diminished open space and proximity to already fragile waterways; significant added burdens to an inadequate road system that links multiple communities on the Upper and Mid-Cape; and construction on a scale that is unprecedented in such a small footprint.

--A reason to respond favorably to such a plan is that it will address community needs, in this case housing for middle income residents in

## Lehrer/Malone meeting continued

a housing market skewed toward high income buyers. That problem has been decades in the making, and has been sharply exacerbated in the last year.

--Can Mashpee Commons succeed in this regard where others have not? High density housing responds to many environmental and social issues, and incorporates sensible and attractive design principles that have been successful in many urban areas. Density makes sense from a cost/benefit and efficiency perspective for the builder, but we will need to see evidence that density in Mashpee, unlike urban and other vacation areas *where all housing is expensive*, will create and sustain a housing market for middle income residents.

--Where is the demand for 1,000,000 sf of commercial space? Are there market studies that support construction of that much space?

### 2. Moving forward:

--We need a logical, rational process/plan that incorporates, integrates, and prioritizes:

- a. An updated Mashpee Local Comprehensive Plan, produced independent of the interest and influence of any applicants, *that precedes any consideration of a large-scale undertaking;*
- b. Cape Cod Commission and Mass DOT rotary retrofit plan, and how it will accommodate MC expansion;
- c. A detailed plan from MC; and
- d. The rezoning proposal they are submitting, with the benefit of much more information about their plans.

*Mashpee Commons is clear about what it wants to accomplish. Are we?*