

Master Plan Implementation Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 24, 2014

Members present: Chris Davies, Ann Chiampa, Mary Wing Soares, Mike Speltz, Tim Seikmann, Kevin Smith

Members absent: Barbara Mee, Deb Paul, Tammy Seikmann, Mary Tetrault, Ted Combes

Also present: John Vogl, Kirby Wade

I. Call to Order

C. Davies called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

II. Review Minutes from 8/27/14

Members reviewed the minutes from 8/24. M. Soares noted an incorrect date. J. Vogl said he would correct. M. Wing Soares noted typos; changed word “not” to “noted”. A. Chiampa asked that the theme of accessible trails should be added to the common theme section. M. Wing Soares made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes; seconded by M. Speltz. Vote: 2-0-2 (M. Speltz and M. Wing Soares recused). Motion passes.

III. Update on Pettengill Road economic development projects

K. Smith presented an update on the Pettengill Road projects. He said that UPS and FedEx buildings are under construction. A. Chiampa asked about the discontinuance requests currently before the Council. K. Smith answered that this is for only a portion of the road and that the ROW is being re-located to a new alignment, consistent with the Town’s engineered plans and current construction efforts. K. Smith said all projects (Prologis, FedEx and road construction) are proceeding on schedule. The Town is responsible for sewer infrastructure and traffic signals; sewer funding is coming from the sewer access fee accounts; traffic light money from the TIF account. K. Smith said the western extent of Pettengill Road will likely be completed in spring, 2015, commensurate with the opening of the Prologis facility. He said despite the new construction projects, there still remains a significant amount of industrial land still available for development

IV. Presentation re: Outdoor Recreation Guide planning efforts

J. Vogl offered a demonstration of the new web-based Outdoor Recreation Guide. He said that this is one of two projects being submitted to the Conservation Commission; the other project is a report describing opportunities for enhancing conservation properties. J. Vogl demonstrated the guide and illustrated how users can navigate an interactive map, access a permitted use table or toggle through a series of property detail pages. He said the site was developed to answer the question of “what can I do and where?” Members discussed the site’s functionality and contents. C. Davies suggested adding

“playgrounds” to the permitted uses list. M. Speltz reminded the group that the Town had designed the open space rec guide pages to be easily updated. J. Vogl agreed and stated that the updates would all be handled internally. J. Vogl then introduced a new “living in Londonderry” site that had also been assembled for the Town. He said this site was developed to improve the content already on-line, which was admittedly unattractive and uninspiring. C. Davies asked if the web pages had been reviewed and were scoring high in search engines. J. Vogl said that the Town had not formally looked into this. He said we have attempted to utilize and include key words on the economic development pages so that they would be appropriately indexed. J. Vogl also presented the newly released MapGeo tool for viewing/querying geographic information. Members discussed ways to improve user’s experience finding the GIS pages and tools. J. Vogl said that these new sites started to complete some items that were included in the Master Plan Implementation chart. M. Speltz reminded the group that members need to fill out status values in the implementation chart so as to better track activities. Members discussed meeting frequency. There was consensus to review meeting frequency and possibly membership in the coming months.

V. Continue discussion re: Town Center/Town Forest

C. Davies introduced landscape architect Bill Flynn. He said the Planning Board had permitted the use of \$3,500 of funds remaining from the 2013 Master Plan account for the purpose of hiring professional support to draft a report on enhancing uses of Town Center/Town Forest. B. Flynn started his presentation by noting the informational sources he had consulted, including reviewing YouTube videos, library research, reviewing meeting minutes and meeting with Town Staff and Chris Davies and then walking the site with staff and Kent Allen. He noted the area had historic and environmental value as well as being the town center. He said that the Common was lacking clear definition despite being widely recognized as the Town Center. B. Flynn described his review of parking conditions; He said that based on a traditional 5-minute walk metric, that there were over 940 parking spaces available, both on public and private lots. Outside of that 5-minute walk, there are well over 1,000 spaces. He concluded that there was not a parking issue in the center but rather a pedestrian circulation issue. As such, he stated that there is no need for major on-site parking. Instead, the Town should look at pedestrian crossing improvements and possible edge treatments to define the Common and elevate its importance. M. Wing Soares questioned the viability of crossing improvements on state roads. J. Vogl said that there were opportunities available through the State’s Context Sensitive Design (CSD) program to make pedestrian/aesthetic improvements when conditions warrant it. B. Flynn said there are numerous alternatives, such as pedestrian calming techniques or signals (speed indicators, flashing pedestrian lights) to encourage cars to slow down. B. Flynn said that improvements should not only be added to the Mammoth/Pillsbury intersection, but also at mid-point crossings. Members discussed the historic and cultural features near the Common that contribute to the sense of place, including the old churches, Morrison House museum, cemetery and orchard. B. Flynn described the invasives present in the Town Forest. He said that removal would take a combination of chemical and mechanical (pulling) techniques over multiple seasons. The result would be an aggressive clearing of the forest, akin to an environment known as a forest park. B. Flynn then described the pond. He said it had potential to be enlarged through dredging, and if so, could be a natural skating pond. He described a network of trails that

could be made suitable for seniors or strollers. Returning to the Common, B. Flynn suggested turning the existing monuments for improved visibility and line of sight from Mammoth Road. He also suggested ringing the Common with sidewalks, street trees (including Elms) and period lighting. B. Flynn said he did not agree with the Master Plan vision for structures constructed on the Common. He instead suggested adding a gravel roadway at the back, permitting vehicle access to the Common during events. M. Wing Soares related her experiences with mid-block crossings in Derry that she considers to be dangerous. She said that such crossings need additional signage or warnings to promote pedestrian safety. T. Seikmann expressed his concurrence and said it all needed to be considered in context. B. Flynn clarified his plan included a curbed edge, 8-foot green area for plantings and then a sidewalk. He also proposed decorative fencing for safety of children who might be playing in the Common. Further, he said the hardest part of implementing projects such as this is often introducing overcoming inertia regarding change. Members discussed parking and expressed approval for the suggested gravel access path. M. Wing Soares asked if the stone walls were changed. B. Flynn said no; no changes were proposed. A. Chiampa asked if most trees would remain. B. Flynn said most trees were pretty nice and could remain but at this conceptual level, it was hard to determine which specific ones. B. Flynn described a conceptual parking area placed in the “landing” area off of Pillsbury Road that could be utilized for the historic society, orchard trails or use at the common. In winter, it might be a good parking spot for the skating pond. In summer, it could be a good picnic spot. In conclusion he stated that the concept plan was generally consistent with the Committee’s discussions to this point.

K. Smith asked for clarification on crosswalks. All described experiences with electronic pedestrian signals, such as those in Hanover or Durham. B. Flynn said there are lots of options, such as electronic signals, varying pavement types or bump outs to slow down traffic and make a safer environment. Members discussed ideas for signage to promote/notice the crosswalks. B. Flynn expressed that mid-block crossings also have the effect of slowing down traffic and making for safer intersections overall. Members discussed crossing locations and suggested a crossing at Mack’s Apples as well as near the Morrison House should also be considered. B. Flynn suggested a managed forest would look similar to the forested part of Glenwood Cemetery. He suggested an initial cut might include small brush but that this was a decision to be discussed in further detail later on, as policies are developed. C. Davies asked about costs. B. Flynn said costs and an action plan are forthcoming. Members discussed maintenance strategies at the Cemetery. Kent Allen expressed that bi-annual cuts are generally enough; the key is keeping up with them. M. Speltz expressed concern over cutting down young or new growth in the forest. B. Flynn said that over time, strategies could be developed for what level of maintenance should occur. Members expressed support for the lighting suggestions and for the idea of adding benches to the Common and throughout the Forest. Members discussed ideas for materials used to create paths throughout the Common and Forest. T. Seikmann said these ideas follow what he has heard regarding difficulty walking to/around the Common. He expressed that there is also difficulty walking along Pillsbury Road too. A remedy might be improving transparency through the forest to encourage people to walk along a visible woods trail just inside the forest. Members returned to cost. B. Flynn said he would suggest some cost estimates.

VI. Other Business

No other business.

VII. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 8:45 by C Davies. Seconded by M. Speltz. Vote 5-0-0. Motion passes. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Minutes recorded by John Vogl

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