

WASHINGTON PLANNING BOARD
Town Center Vision Subcommittee – Working meeting Minutes

June 6, 2018

Members present: Lolly Gilbert, Roxy Otterson, Ron Jager, Bert Bodnar, Jon Gibson, Andrew Hatch, Kevin Provencher, Jim Crandall and Nan Schwartz.

Visitors: None

1.0 **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Lolly Gilbert at 8:00 AM, in the Town Hall.

2.0 **Minutes** – Gilbert asked for any corrections, there being none, Gibson made a motion to approve as written, Bodnar seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

3.0 **Old Business** – Gibson said he spoke with Kevin Belanger (DOT) for an informal opinion about the crosswalk in front of the Library. He said that it is because of site distances on the curve of the road don't meet state regulations at the posted speeds. Gibson's idea is to lower the speed limit because traffic moves too quickly coming into and through town. Otterson suggested a stop sign near Cilley's at the corner of Lempster Mountain Road. Crandall said there are "Pedestrian crossing" at the Library now but there is no painted crosswalk. Jager suggested a "Slow" sign at the top of the hill coming into/through town. Gibson said there is a problem corner at Lempster Mountain Road, if the speed limit was dropped to 20mph before this corner and at the other south end near Granite State's building it would be much safer. Gibson said he would inquire more about dropping the speed limit through town.

4.0 **New Business** –

4.1 **Collection of member's problem cards** – Jager wanted to comment that we have a large number of "problems" but he doesn't want to focus on that. He thinks that when the town did the "Wayside Park" they solved a problem but didn't go far enough and seize the opportunity to enhance the center of town. He thinks that we shouldn't focus on problems completely, take the TH rear parking lot for example, it could look a lot nicer with some planning. We should look for opportunities for their own sake. Crandall said that enhancing the Town Center is a challenge with problems to solve and opportunities will present themselves to be taken up by the group. Gilbert asked us to go through the cards and Otterson listed them and categorized them on the large sheets of paper. While there were many "problems" identified several were mentioned multiple times.

The following is the list the group came up with:

Properties with multiple vehicles, some unregistered, often parked on lawns or yards

Parking areas need to be designated so people don't park along Rte. 31

Sidewalk/ bicycle path on one side of road through town center

Abandoned Red House needs something done

Pedestrian safety needs improvement between park and Town Hall

Parking and traffic flow needs study to preserve the view of Town Hall

Junky yards and homes detract from town center and hurt property value

Sign clutter needs addressing/seasonal event signs

Old Schoolhouse needs major repair

Town Pound and historic landmarks need attention

Meetinghouse needs access to 2nd floor

Old Schoolhouse needs complete renovation

Intersection of Faxon Hill Road and Rte 31 needs reconfiguration for safety

Parking in town and at store needs major improvement

Junky yards should be eliminated

Town Pound need full restoration

Road/drainage improvement
 Sidewalk with curb (Library side to Church)
 Signage improvements
 Historic style lighting
 Bury electricity (Library to green)
 Parking
 Trash along roads
 Vacant properties
 Lack of community, responsibility, comradery, aging population unable to keep up what they once did
 Traffic flow around Town Hall, parking, ease of handicap access
 Parking at Town Hall and elsewhere in center, change access driveway
 Old Schoolhouse, repair refurbish, change usage
 Need to create a "Pride of Place" for Town center and beyond, encourage clean up of yards in both approaches to town
 Crosswalk needed at Library
 Road repairs/improvements
 Crosswalk at Library
 Historic/streamlined signage
 Parking
 Address overflow parking at Store
 Preserve the rural charm
 Walkways
 Visitor Center
 Signage for visitors
 Visitor info/guide
 Parking
 Access to town center from church parking lot
 Sidewalk from Library parking lot past the store
 Old Red House needs renovation (could be done with volunteers)
 Enforce speed limit in Town Center and consider lowering it from 30 to 20mph
 Bandstand creates a visual hazard for cars from the south
 Town pound – now a rocky hole in ground, has historic value
 Parking for Meetinghouse patrons is confusing and disorganized
 Driveway to rear TH parking is awkward and ugly
 No sidewalk between Library and store, hazardous surface for walking
 Library foot traffic is unsafe, no crosswalk
 Parking at store inadequate
 Inside first floor of TH is still cluttered, unattractive, noisy and lacking a clear plan
 In winter and in rain the driveway in front of Church is sometimes potholed, muddy and inhospitable
 Junky visual pollution near Cross Road
 Signage and way finding in town center is confusing
 Maintenance of Town Common, monuments
 Safety for pedestrians crossing to Library and walking in center of town
 Traffic calming needed
 Sidewalks
 Parking and vehicle idling
 Bury utilities
 Create a gallery space

We combined and categorized the items and came up with a prioritized list. The top vote getters were parking/traffic flow/access, walkways/crosswalk, junky yards, signage and improvements to historic town properties. Gilbert thought these were a good place to start but the other issues mentioned are still worthy of our attention. We will keep the entire list for later consideration.

She asked how we should proceed. Provencher thought this is a good jumping off point. Gilbert thought that in terms of road issues we should talk to Ed Thayer. Jager felt that speaking with an expert on parking and traffic would be good, have them walk around and come up with a design for better parking. Schwartz said the PB had hoped to get some money at Town Meeting to do a charrette and get some expertise in to work with us. That didn't happen but we could go for a Moose Plate grant for some funds.

Crandall said that the Library parking is municipal parking and it needs signage that makes this clear. If we had a walkway from the parking to the store it might encourage overflow parking to use this lot. Otterson asked if you could make that lot bigger to accommodate more cars. Gibson suggested that the town should own the little red house and property and make it a gallery space. Parking for the store was brought up and Crandall mentioned that there is supposed to be additional parking behind the store. Hatch said that Ryan plans to do more improvements beyond what he has already done, as money is available. Crandall said the PB can work with him on signage and utilizing the extra parking. We all felt he has made great improvements to the store, inside and out.

5.0 **Problems to discuss** at next meeting – It was decided we will concentrate on parking and traffic in general. We will invite Ed Thayer and Ryan to the next meeting to discuss these issues.

6.0 **Change meeting days** – Crandall thought we should move the meetings for July to the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays to avoid holding the first meeting the day after a PB meeting. The next meeting will be June 20th, Wednesday at 8am in the Town Hall. The July meetings will be the 11th and 25th.

Note: Our next meeting will be June 20th, Wednesday at 8AM.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nan Schwartz
Planning Board Secretary