

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes – 5 March 2018

These are the meeting minutes from the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 5 March 2018 in Room 9 at the Acton Town Hall.

Present: Andy Brockway, Derrick Chin, Erin Bettez, Jon Benson, Larry Kenah, Peter Darlow

Not Present: Bob Van Meter

Board of
Selectmen: Peter Berry

Town of Acton: Roland Bartl

Eric Solomon, a former member of KCSC, joined us for this meeting. David Manalan, a resident in one of the Kelley's Corner neighborhoods, also attended the meeting.

Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 am by Andy Brockway. The purpose of this meeting was to talk about proposed zoning changes for Kelley's Corner under consideration at a town meeting in the fall. We also spent a few minutes talking about outreach efforts for spring town meeting and Article 9.

Proposed Zoning Changes

Before the meeting, Roland Bartl sent the latest version of proposed zoning changes to the committee. This was essentially the same plan that was presented at Spring 2016 Town Meeting. Roland made a small number of “tweaks”. For example, he slightly reduced the amount of required parking.

- 1.2 spaces per unit
- Let further requirements be decided by the market rather than a zoning constraint

The conversation was essentially members' answers to the question “So what do we think?”

- Peter Berry felt that there was too much parking in Adam's proposal.
- Peter Darlow focused on the ratio of commercial to residential space and pointed out that ground level parking below the buildings made the actual residential fraction even larger than the number generated from floor-space arithmetic.
- Peter Berry again reminded everyone that any zoning change requires a 2/3 vote at town meeting and that the people have indicated that they want less residential.
- Larry Kenah told the committee that the Economic Development Committee is questioning why one of the prime commercial parcels in Kelley's Corner is being converted to a residential development.

Andy Brockway presented his informal survey of nearby mixed-use projects. They include

- West Concord
- Littleton
- Hudson
- Wayland

He also pointed to the project in Chelmsford that Adam has told us about. He concluded that there is no model in any of these projects that is similar to the plan that Adam and his colleagues have proposed for the Kmart parcel.

We continued talking about the right mix between commercial and residential. What number should we put into the zoning regulation? Roland reminded us that during the pro-forma presentations in the early stages of this most recent exercise, we saw that mixed-use projects were economically viable. The numbers were in the range of 75 to 25 for the residential/commercial ratio. If we strayed too far from this ratio (such as 65 to 35), there was no data to support whether such a project would make business sense.

We talked again about how including the Verizon parking lot in the overall proposal would create a much more attractive development that could wrap around the southwest corner of the intersection. Perhaps a meeting with Adam, Verizon, and others (KCSC, BoS, etc) might make this happen. We recognize that the Verizon building and its associated infrastructure (cables, fiber, etc) cannot move but the parking lot on the corner has no such constraints.

Outreach and Spring Town Meeting

We spent a few minutes talking about outreach efforts for Spring Town Meeting. In addition to the steps described in previous meetings, someone suggested contacting Acton TV about the 21 March public forum.

Next Meetings

The committee has two meetings scheduled.

- 13 March at 7:00 am with Adam Winstanley et al
- 21 March public forum about infrastructure project in Room 204
 - Discuss upcoming articles for Spring Town Meeting and to provide update on Kelley's Corner infrastructure project.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The committee approved minutes from several recent meetings.

- 14 December 2017
- 13 February 2018
- 22 February 2018

In Closing

This meeting adjourned at 8:24 am.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah.