

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee

Notes from Public Forum – 15 May 2018

On 15 May 2018, the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee hosted a public forum to present the 25% plan that was submitted to MassDOT earlier this year. After the presentation, the committee and the GPI engineers recorded people's concerns and answered questions.

These informal notes attempt to summarize the discussion and to capture the concerns raised by people about parts of the 25% plan that was submitted to MassDOT

Partial List of Attendees

There were approximately twenty five people at the public forum. Some speakers will be identified by name later in these notes. No attempt was made to name every person who attended the public forum.

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee (KCSC)

Andy Brockway, Bob Van Meter , Christi Andersen, Derrick Chin, Erin Bettez, Larry Kenah, Peter Darlow

Board of Selectmen

Joan Gardner, Jon Benson (KCSC), Peter Berry (KCSC)

Town of Acton

Matthew "Selby" Selby

Greenman-Pedersen, Inc (GPI)

- Lindsey Barbee, GPI Project Manager
- John Diaz

Meeting Summary

Andy called the meeting to order a few minutes after seven o'clock and turned it over to Lindsey Barbee from GPI who presented a summary of the 25% plan submitted to MassDOT.

Presentation by GPI

An overview of the 25% plan was presented by Lindsey from GPI. She was supported by John Diaz, also from GPI. Lindsey dealt with most of the technical and engineering issues. John addressed interactions with MassDOT.

The slides that were presented are located in Docushare at

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-9992>.

Date for MassDOT Public Hearing

During the course of the evening, we learned that this public hearing will likely take place on the Fall of 2018. This timeframe is later than earlier projections and it is still only a rough and imprecise estimate.

Three Plans

A set of slides in the middle of the presentation looks at the impact of two proposed changes to the plan. These two changes were made in response to early feedback about specific aspects of the plan.

- **Plan 1** – This is the 25% plan as submitted to Mass DOT. There are two key points in this plan that are modified in later steps.
 - There are two left-hand turn lanes from Mass Ave eastbound to Route 27 northbound.
 - Route 27 northbound at Mass Ave has three lanes: left turn only, through traffic only, and through/right-hand turn.
- **Plan 2** – This plan retains the two left-hand turn lanes from Mass Ave to Route 27 but reduces Route 27 northbound to two lanes: left turn only and through/right-hand turn.
- **Plan 3** – This plan includes the change from Plan 2 and also eliminates a second left-turn lane from Mass Ave to Route 27.

Projected Growth

The models that are used to predict traffic growth assume a growth of a half percent per year (0.5%). This projected annual growth translates to about 10.5% growth in traffic volume over twenty years.

Comments from Individuals and Groups

Some people spoke several times during the meeting. These notes do not present remarks in chronological order but instead group remarks by speaker. Speakers are listed in the approximate order of their first appearance at the microphone.

Danny Factor

Danny Factor indicated that one of his goals was to “get cars off the road”. He was opposed to any efforts to reduce traffic congestion in Kelley’s Corner because it would be “easier to do harm”.

Danny Factor, liaison from Green Acton, mentioned that Green Acton would be sending a letter to the committee with a list of requests for changes to the project. This letter can be found at

http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/Get/Document-65948/2018-05-17%20Public%20Statement%20About%20Kelley_s%20Corner%20Infrastructure%20Project.pdf

Chris Starr

Several of Chris Starr’s remarks addressed his point that a project like this is more or less complete in its design when it reaches the 25% milestone.

- His initial remarks talked about how the 25% designation is misleading especially in points like road alignment.
- Acton loses control.
- Local businesses are not being protected.

- He told the story about Jason Brady, owner of Bueno y Sano. He used the word “decimated” in his remarks.
- What about the trees?
- He quoted Mike Gowing’s remarks about “not a Complete Streets plan” from town meeting.
- He talked about pedestrian safety.
- A date in the Fall of 2018 for the public hearing for the 25% plan is better than June or July.
- He came back to the immutability of the 25% plan. “It’s the game.”
- He concluded by arguing for “a plan that everyone can agree on”.

Chris talked later in the meeting and made at least one comment that others in town might disagree with.

- Slowing down traffic improved economic development.
- Let us “make it right” before we move the project out of the 25% phase.

Jim Snyder-Grant

- Some of the slides showed queue lengths with different design choices. Jim requested that the slides should also include queue lengths under current conditions.
- Improving Kelley’s Corner will increase traffic!
- Kelley’s Corner will become a more attractive option.
- If we increase flow through Kelley’s Corner, what happens downstream?

Conversation about Trees

- What is the difference in tree count in plans 1, 2, and 3?
- We should try to save historic trees.
- He introduced the idea that not all trees are the same. He asked how many tree inches (measured by diameter or caliper) are being removed compared with the tree-inch count of new trees that will be planted.
- Somewhere in the conversation about trees, we heard that 121 trees would be removed and 157 trees added.

Before we left this conversation about trees, Andy Brockway talked about trees throughout Kelley’s Corner. While Mass Ave west of Route 27 has several trees that people would like to preserve, Andy pointed out other parts of Kelley’s Corner with no trees at all. He cited the stretch of Route 27 south of Mass Ave and pointed out that newly planted trees throughout Kelley’s Corner would create a “sense of place” that does not exist today.

Franny Osman

- KCSC did a lot of work on this project.
- I want to see a change there.

Debra Simes

Debra spoke mostly in favor of the project with a caution as her final remark.

- Thank you (to KCSC?) for your work.

- Let us go forward with this project.
- We should not let the project be governed by a single commercial property.
- Can we see the proposed trees that will be added?
- Native plants are much better.
- Not every old tree deserves to be saved.
- It is so easy to make traffic the highest priority in a project like this.

Terra Friedrich

- It is cheapest to stop this project now.
- Slim it back to what I thought we were getting.
- What about a phased approach?

Susan Dick

Susan echoed the sentiments of Franny Osman and Debra Symes.

- Go forward
- Work together

Danny Factor (again)

Danny brought the comments and questions section of the meeting to an end. He thanked the committee and the folks from GPI for setting up the public forum.

Conclusion

The meeting ended at 9:10 pm.

These notes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah.