



Kelley's Corner Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

28 August 2019

7:00 pm

Room 204, Acton Town Hall, 427 Main Street

Present	Andy Brockway (chair), Bob Van Meter, Christi Andersen (FinCom), David Manalan, Derrick Chin (PB), Erin Bettez, Larry Kenah (clerk, EDC), Pat Clifford, Peter Darlow (DRB)
Not Present	Dean Charter, Jon Benson (BoS),
Town of Acton	Kristen Guichard (Planning Department)
GPI	See below
Mass DOT	See below

Greenman-Pedersen Inc (GPI) is the engineering firm responsible for developing the detailed plans and interacting with MassDOT. There were three members from GPI at this meeting. They guided the discussion.

- Ron Headrick – Landscape Architect
- Robert White – Landscape Architect
- Chris Howard – Project Engineer

Ann Sullivan from Mass DOT also attended the design workshop.

- Ann Sullivan
 - Asst. Project Development Engineer
 - Mass DOT Highway Division District 3

Opening

Andy Brockway opened the meeting at 7:01 pm.

1. Meeting Minutes

Minutes were approved for two recent KCSC meetings.

- 11 July 2019
- 15 August 2019 (public forum)

Landscape Design Presentation



The public forum held on 15 August 2019 presented most of the issues related to landscape design. The primary purpose of this meeting was for GPI to present feedback from the public forum and for KCSC members to provide their opinions on remaining issues. Ron Headrick and Robert White led the discussion using a subset of the slides presented at the public forum.

GPI also handed out a single page of notes to guide the discussions. The five discussion topics in the GPI notes are the same topics that appear in these notes except that the order is different. These notes present the topics in the order that they were discussed during the meeting. The GPI notes (attached to the end of these minutes) should be considered an extension of these meeting minutes.

Dates

- GPI folks met with the Design Review Board on 7 August 2019.
- The 75% plan will be submitted to MassDOT on 1 October 2019.

Trees

Trees were the initial topic for discussion.

- Over time, trees have an impact on sidewalks.
- The height of trees is important.
 - Taller trees have an impact on power lines.
 - Trees also have an impact on pedestrians.
- The overall design will include both small and large trees.
 - Large trees might be used at each entry way into Kelley's Corner with smaller trees being planted closer to the intersection.
 - Larger trees might also be used on the side of the street opposite power lines.

A final (sad) note on trees addressed the large tree by the old high school. GPI is trying to save this tree but will not likely succeed.

Sidewalk Surface

Ron and Robert showed several examples of sidewalk surfaces (see slides). They reported that the DRB was “not very excited” about concrete stamped pavement. Andy Brockway argued for “subtle”, specifically not red.

Whether sidewalk materials are impervious is important, especially for the health of trees. If areas surrounding trees are covered with concrete, trees will not get adequate water.

Someone asked about materials used for curb cuts. They will be mostly the same as sidewalks.

Someone else pointed out that sidewalks are cleared of snow and ice using a small tractor snow blower. Sidewalk material needs to be selected that will not be torn up or otherwise damaged by the snow clearing efforts.



Walls

Walls are needed in those locations where the surrounding land sits higher than the road surface. The most obvious location is the north side of Mass Ave between the law offices and Charter Road. (This wall might be as high as nine feet at some places along its length.)

- Small walls require four-feet deep footing.
- Walls using large granite blocks do not require footing.

Choices include size and material (large granite blocks, smaller stones, etc). Responses from the public forum favored stone walls using local stone.

The DRB showed a preference for large granite blocks such as those leftover from bridge abutments. This choice offers an opportunity to add some unique character to the Kelley's Corner district that stands apart from the other villages. It exhibits a scale that works well with the larger retaining walls when compared with rocks seen in the farmer walls throughout town.

Andy Brockway asked about how many different wall types would be used throughout the project area.

GPI reminded us that walls higher than 30 inches need fences at the top.

Christi Andersen suggested that walls need to be designed with winter snow clearing in mind.

Lighting

The design calls for pedestrian lighting on both sides of Mass Ave, Main Street, and Community Lane (but lights are not necessary everywhere). The remaining choice is between a historic design and a contemporary design. (Responses from the public forum leaned slightly toward the contemporary design.)

Modern light fixtures use LED technology. This eliminates glass housing and large lightbulbs for each light fixture. Possible light fixtures might be 10, 12, or 14 feet high. They will be spaced approximately 60 feet apart.

The cost for pedestrian lighting will not be supported by MassDOT. The town must bear these costs.

Corner Park

The plan includes a small gathering place (“corner park”) at the southwest intersection of Mass Ave and Main Street (the Verizon parking lot). The DRB looked at several proposals for this area and their general guidance was to simplify the design.

Next Steps

Appraisal Process

Kristen briefly described the appraisal process. The town is already authorized to begin discussions about Community Lane. Now that the 75% plan has been submitted to MassDOT,



other discussions can take place. The plan is for all appraisals to be completed in time for Spring 2020 Town Meeting.

Town Expenses

While MassDOT is paying for nearly all construction costs, there are two costs (other than land acquisition) that must be paid for by the town.

- Ornamental lighting fixtures
- Additional (potential) landscape costs for corner park

These costs will likely be brought to town meeting in Spring 2021.

Spring 2020 Town Meeting

There will be two articles related to the Kelley's Corner Improvement Initiative presented at Spring 2020 Town Meeting.

- The town will authorize the BoS to acquire the land required to complete the project.
- The town will set aside the funds for land acquisition.

The details about the type of vote (majority or 2/3) are not finalized.

Next Meetings and Adjournment

There is no next meeting scheduled for KCSC but the committee would like to meet again in mid to late October.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Documents and Exhibits Used during This Meeting

The slides presented by GPI and other documents can be found at

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-11364>

The single page of notes handed out by GPI are attached to the end of these minutes.

GPI outline

8/28/2019 Discussion Topics with the Steering Committee Kelley's Corner Infrastructure Project

1. Brief summary of discussions with Design Review Board (DRB).
2. Brief summary of the presentation made to the public on August 15. The presentation it is available online at:
<http://actontv.org/on-demand/post-video/kelleys-corner-infrastructure-project-8-15-19>
3. Critical Streetscape Design Discussions
 - a. Surface Treatments
 - i. The DRB was not very excited about concrete stamped pavement, we suggested and developed some options that were presented in the workshop last week including colored or textured concrete. We have not yet deployed this through the project but are seeking confirmation on the design.
 - ii. Covering the entire sidewalk buffer area where we are also planting trees with concrete - will not allow the trees to get adequate water.
 - iii. The 4 foot space between sidewalk and curb does not provide enough soil volume for the growth of anything more than a small ornamental tree.
 - b. Retaining Walls
 - i. Low walls up to about 4 feet in height can be reclaimed granite block from regional sources. Please remember that walls over 30 inches need fences on top.
 - ii. The tall walls will be stone veneer applied to a reinforced concrete wall. The design review board wanted a more rectangular Ashlar pattern to the stone veneer, we presented a concept for how that might be managed for the stonework craftsmanship.
 - c. Lighting
 - i. We have presented two types of lighting one the historical derivative - the other a more neutral " contemporary" fixture. Although not decisive by a huge margin there is a preference for the contemporary based on discussions and feedback.
 - ii. Will need to make a decision about the general preferred fixture style and then GPI will identify two other fixtures of a comparable quality and character that could be included in the MassDOT bidding process. The exact features can be addressed later in the design process (likely the 100% design submission).
 - iii. Currently exploring photometrics of lights to optimize pole height, spacing, and quantity of lights required.
 - d. Landscape
 - i. We will walk the site and look at the big trees with town staff in the near future, we would like to invite the arborist who did the assessment on the tree and MassDOT officials.
 - ii. Preliminary list of trees that we think we can use in large and constrained soil volume areas, this list can be refined as we progress through the upcoming design submissions based on feedback from MassDOT and the Town.
 - e. Corner Park Area
 - i. The design review board selected a terraced concept that fits the grade changes quite nicely.
 - ii. We will go over that concept and the revisions made in response to feedback from the August 15 presentation.
 - iii. There are a few design decisions relative to grading and retaining walls with regards to cost.