

# Kelley's Corner Steering Committee

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## *Meeting Minutes – 12 March 2014*

These are the meeting minutes from the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 12 March 2014 at the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm by Andy Brockway.

Present: Andrew Brockway, Eric Solomon, J D Head, John Sonner, Larry Kenah, Peter Darlow, Rob Bukowski

Not Present: Bonny Nothern, Margaret Busse

Planning Department: Kristen Domurad-Guichard, Roland Bartl

This was the first meeting of the steering committee. These minutes contain some information that will not appear in the minutes from subsequent meetings.

### **Purpose of Committee**

This list was approved by the Board of Selectmen on 6 January 2014.

- To provide project oversight and direction on behalf of the Town on procedures and other matters affecting policies, politics, perception, and etiquette
- To help maintain consistency with Acton 2020/Comprehensive Community Plan
- To help with events planning, preparations, and hosting
- To review, critique, and approve consultant prepared materials before public release
- To carry out any other tasks and assignments in furtherance of the project

### **Members of the Steering Committee**

The following people are members of the steering committee

- Andrew Brockway - Acton 2020
- Bonny Nothern - Acton 2020
- Eric Solomon - Acton 2020
- J D Head - Associate Member
- John Sonner - Board of Selectmen
- Larry Kenah - EDC
- Margaret Busse - Finance Committee
- Peter Darlow - Design Review Board
- Rob Bukowski - Planning Board

The following members of the Planning Department will be attending most steering committee meetings.

- Kristen Domurad-Guichard - Planning Department
- Roland Bartl - Planning Director

## Meeting Minutes

### Attendees

All members of the committee except Bonny Nothern and Margaret Busse attended the meeting.

The Cecil Group was represented by:

- Steve Cecil – The Cecil Group – Project Director
- Ken Buckland – The Cecil Group – Project Manager
- Jason DeGray – Greenman-Pederson, Inc – Traffic Engineering
- Margaret Collins – Cambridge Economic Research – Economic Development

Vincent Cuttone, an owner of some of the Kelley's Corner property, also attended the meeting.

### Logistics, Discussions, etc

As this was the first meeting, there was a brief round of introductions.

The committee will meet on the second Wednesday of each month using one of the two Acton 2020 meeting slots. The schedule currently runs through 14 January 2015. Ken Buckland (Cecil Group) proposed a topic of discussion for each of these meetings to track progress through their overall project plan.

Andy Brockway asked if any committee member was interested in chairing the committee. In the absence of a volunteer, he agreed to chair the committee. Larry Kenah (your humble scribe) signed up to be the recorder of minutes for the committee.

### Role of the Steering Committee

There was a brief discussion of the role that the committee would play. Andy started with his summary of the five points listed at the beginning of this note. He pointed out that there is also a management committee that meets more frequently with Ken Buckland and Steve Cecil to go over day-to-day activities that do not require the full committee.

Roland Bartl added his thoughts on the role of the committee.

- The committee owns publicity, ensuring that both stakeholders and citizens in general are aware of what is going on, especially when their input or feedback is needed.
- The committee is also the "steward" of the public process.

## Discussions

On 10 February, the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel presented its findings to a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Several members of this committee attended that presentation. That meeting was reported in the 13 February 2014 issue of *The Beacon*. A couple of points are mentioned here.

- Kelley's Corner is already in pretty good shape.
- High school students represent an existing pedestrian community that frequents some of the Kelley's Corner retailers.
- The adjacent school campuses, while not included within the boundaries of Kelley's Corner, are land owned by the town and might provide opportunities for a gathering center, for example.
  - Note added on 9 April 2014: Following Town Meeting on 8 April 2014, some of the land will be owned by the Acton Boxborough Regional School District.

Here were some reactions to the ULI presentation.

- Although Kelley's Corner might be healthy from a business perspective, it is partly broken from other perspectives.
- In the view of the town, Kelley's Corner is "really" broken (traffic congestion, poor walkability, etc).
- The ULI perspective was perhaps short-sighted. We as a town should strive for more.
- The high school students are active members of the Kelley's Corner who have been overlooked in earlier studies. The upcoming work should include their impact on economic activity.

The discussion moved from the ULI presentation to other Kelley's Corner topics.

- What happens in Kelley's Corner will affect West Acton and other parts of the town.

## Presentation by Cecil Group et al.

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6142>

Ken Buckland started the presentation by describing the Cecil Group Team. He described the overall process and tasks and mapped the project onto a roughly year-long calendar. He focused on future meetings with stakeholders and the general public and looked to the steering committee to publicize these events. A key slide listed the initial challenges.

- Travel and Congestion
- Basis for Reinvestment
- Pedestrian Safety and Comfort
- Quality of Site Design and Architecture

With a series of views of Kelley's Corner, he illustrated

- Current land use
- Parking (lots of parking places)
- Walkability (few places to walk)
- Planned redevelopment

- Redevelopment potential

Jason DeGray then took over to talk about traffic and congestion, both the current situation and potential for improvement. Here are some of the points that he made during his presentation.

- Kelley's Corner is a regional traffic hub.
  - There is significant north-south traffic along Route 27.
  - There is significant traffic to and from the west along Route 111.
- There are two interchanges with Route 2 inside the Kelley's Corner boundaries.
- The traffic that goes through the intersection of Route 27 and Route 111 consists of both destination traffic and "through" traffic.
- Traffic volumes have been relatively flat from the 1990s. There might even be a slight decrease in recent years.
- There are now and will continue to be tradeoffs between reducing congestion and everything else (pedestrians, buildings, etc).
- As part of this effort, we must address the traffic to and through Kelley's Corner including but not restricted to access to Route 2.

Steve Cecil summarized the overall discussion by reminding everyone that we need to address both a long-term vision for Kelley's Corner and shorter term deliverables.

## **In Closing**

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah.