

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes – 28 January 2015

These are the meeting minutes from the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 28 January 2015 in Room 204 at the Acton Town Hall.

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

Present: Andrew Brockway, Eric Solomon , Larry Kenah, Margaret Busse, Peter Darlow

Not Present: Bonny Nothern, J D Head , Rob Bukowski

Board of
Selectmen: Peter Berry

Planning
Department: Kristen Guichard, Roland Bartl

Other Attendees

The Cecil Group team was represented by:

- Ken Buckland – The Cecil Group – Project Manager

Two other people attended the meeting.

Meeting Summary

This meeting addressed these two subjects.

- Pro Forma Discussion
- Draft Zoning Recommendations

Some of the documents that support these two discussions can be found at

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6680>

Meeting Minutes (1)

Minutes from the 10 December 2014 meeting were approved with slight modifications related to zoning.

Updates

Ken Buckland reported that the right-of-way survey has been completed. The results are being examined before they are released.

Pro Forma Discussion (2)

In a nutshell, the pro forma discussion examined whether various development scenarios make sense from an economic perspective.

The set of slides and accompanying financial analysis looked at three types of development (retail, mixed-use retail and residential, and commercial office space) on five different parcels in Kelley's Corner to determine what approaches would be attractive to potential developers. Five approaches were examined. Only one approach, mixed-use retail and residential, produced a net positive result.

One conclusion was that the inclusion of residential properties in the mix made this approach economically feasible. This led to a recommendation for a zoning change. Today, residential properties are not allowed within the Kelley's Corner district. This restriction should be lifted to allow mixed-use residential and retail.

Draft Zoning Recommendations (3)

Two documents were used to discuss zoning recommendations.

- The first document included "a set of recommendations for amending the Kelley's Corner Commercial district zoning designations and regulations to accommodate and encourage the changes in land use and construction suggested by the input received to date and the determination of the preferred alternatives generated through the tasks preceding this product".
- The second document described a DRAFT Master Plan Development Overlay Zoning District.

Neither of these documents is currently posted on the town Web site.

Here are some key points that emerged from the zoning conversation.

- Floor area ratio (FAR) should be increased from 0.2 (or 0.4 with certain qualifications) to 0.65 (better for mixed use).
- Zoning should be changed to allow mixed-use residential and retail.
- The Kelley's Corner District should include a Master Plan Development Overlay Zoning District.

A Master Plan process will provide a prospective developer with more flexibility to achieve its goals while still being subject to the zoning requirements. It will also give the Town a greater and earlier say in the development process.

Memo RE Pro Forma and Development Concepts

In a separate memo from Ken Buckland to Roland Bartl (distributed to the committee but not posted), the following general conditions were included.

- Redevelopment is best when it adds substantial rentable space and does not require the substantial loss (demolition) of existing rentable space.
- Structured parking is not a probable option but significant parking is needed for suburban retail space – 5 to 6 spaces / 1,000 sf.
- Projects closer to an FAR of 1.0, without structured parking, with minimal aggregation of parcels are financially strongest.

- Office space does not benefit the bottom line and residential needs to be substantial enough (say 40 units) to make financial sense.

The memo concludes with the following observation.

“In addition, Byrne McKinney noted that the public realm must be attractive within each project to pull people into the commercial area.”

Calendar (4)

The next KCSC meeting will be moved to the fourth Thursday of February, 25 February 2015.

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:20 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah.