

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes – 15 July 2015

These are the meeting minutes from the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 15 July 2015 in the Land Use Conference Room at the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 am by Andy Brockway.

Present: Andrew Brockway, J D Head, Kat Hudson, Larry Kenah, Margaret Busse, Peter Darlow

Not Present: Eric Solomon, Rob Bukowski

Board of Selectmen: Peter Berry

Planning Department: Kristen Guichard, Roland Bartl

Other Attendees

Jeff Clymer, Planning Board chair, also attended the meeting.

Meeting Summary

Once more, the committee met in the early morning with just members, no consultants.

Logistics for Kelley's Corner Draft Plan Release (1)

Key Messages

Kat Hudson and Margaret Busse presented an excellent draft of key messages that the committee will emphasize in the plan as well as at the public meeting in September and at Fall Town Meeting.

The overall message was first expressed at the previous KCSC meeting.

Empowering our Community to Create a Sense of Place

The following messages reflect the sense of the committee after discussion at this meeting.

The Kelley's Corner plan:

- Promotes development that will create an attractive and coherent town center
 - Gives town ability to work with developers to create desirable development
 - Defines and applies excellence in design guidelines
 - Enables mixed-use development opportunities
- Improves traffic flow
 - Upgrades to smarter traffic signals

- Adds turn lanes
- Reduces and coordinates traffic access points
- Provides safe and social connections for bikers and walkers
 - Builds comprehensive sidewalk system
 - Creates bike lanes
 - Formalizes pathways from schools to Kelley's Corner
- Beautifies public spaces
 - Enhances streetscape by adding street islands, attractive crosswalk markings, and clear signage
 - Creates inviting destination for pedestrians by incorporating lighting, trees, shrubs, grass, seating, and small pocket parks for respite and play

Task Assignment and Message Delivery

Andy Brockway indicated that he, as KCSC chair, should attend most of the meetings especially with key stakeholders. Several questions were raised during this part of the discussion.

- When should we meet with the stakeholders?
- Kat Hudson talked about creating a short video (about one minute long with a spoken narrative accompanied by pictures) to emphasize key messages.
- We should again meet with the Kelley's Corner neighbors (Eric Solomon's neighbors) but in the neighborhood rather than at an external venue. (The meeting in the winter that took place at Exchange Hall in South Acton was poorly attended.)
- Can the EDC get involved with meetings with business owners?
- Can we distribute messages at the various back-to-school nights?

Stakeholders

While many town boards and committees are interested in the final plan, the committee will focus its active outreach efforts on the following shorter list.

- Board of Selectmen (BoS)
- Finance Committee (FinCom)
- Planning Board
- Design Review Board
- Economic Development Committee

DRB Comments on Design Guidelines (2)

The committee postponed a discussion of the DREB comments on the design guidelines document to the next meeting (22 July 2015).

Review of Proposed Zoning Dimensions (3)

Andy Brockway initiated this discussion and acknowledged that it is a "bit late in the process" for raising some of these questions. The questions related to maximum allowed building height and the possibility of four stories.

- Four stories might be an issue.
- Might we restrict building height on the street front?

Subsequent discussions reminded us that zoning regulations include height restrictions rather than number of stories. Zoning requirements are also absolute maximums rather than some restrictions here and other restrictions there.

Andy would like to limit the use of four stories. Kristen Guichard said that four stories would be part of the negotiations associated with any master plan. Peter Darlow supported Andy's position and cautioned about unintended consequences. Roland reminded us that the lessons from the pro forma hypothetical developments might indicate that three stories might not be economically viable.

We recognized that there is a tension between economics and design and wondered whether we can partly restrict larger height limits. For example, can we impose one height limit along the street front and a slightly higher height limit away from the street?

Meeting Minutes (4)

Minutes from the 17 June 2015 KCSC meeting were approved.

Administrative Updates (5)

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Wednesday, 22 July 2015. Consultants may or may not be included in the meeting.

Kristen Guichard will poll committee members for their availability for additional meetings in early August.

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 am.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah.