

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes – 13 January 2016

These are the meeting minutes from the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 13 January 2016 in the Land Use Conference Room (Room 9) at the Acton Town Hall.

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

Not Present: Eric Solomon, J D Head, Jeff Clymer

Board of Selectmen: Peter Berry

Planning Department: Kristen Guichard, Robert Hummel, Roland Bartl

Matthew Selby, Acton's new Director of Land Use and Economic Development, also attended the meeting.

Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 pm by Andy Brockway.

Minutes (1)

No minutes were approved at this meeting. The approval of the 22 December 2015 minutes was postponed to the next KCSC meeting.

Meetings

There were several contacts with boards or committees since the committee last met.

- Roland Bartl presented the proposed infrastructure changes at the Budget Saturday meeting.
- Andy Brockway and Roland Bartl met with the Peter Berry Committee.
- Andy Brockway met with the Finance Committee (FinCom).
- Andy also talked with the chair of the School Committee. We will visit their regularly scheduled March meeting. They were especially interested in the safety impact on students from the proposed infrastructure improvements.

In one of these meetings, Ann Chang raised two concerns that we will need to address at the public forum and at Spring Town Meeting: building height and the impact of additional residential units.

FinCom Feedback

Andy reported to the FinCom about both the proposed zoning changes and the infrastructure improvements. Some questions focused on the relationship between these two efforts.

- Are they separated from each other or connected?
- What would happen if only one of the two was approved by Town Meeting?
- Is there an implied order to the two efforts?

The committee agreed that we need to develop answers to these questions by Spring Town Meeting if not sooner.

Public Outreach (2)

Important Dates

- 4 February 2016 – Public forum
- 24 February 2016 – Planning Board public hearing and vote
- 4 April 2016 – First night of Spring Town Meeting

Video

Margaret Busse gave a brief update on the promotional video.

She is looking for a better image for the “safe and social connections for bikers and walkers”. The rest of the conversation related to release of the video.

- Andy Brockway will send the video to committee members.
- Andy will also contact Acton TV.
- Margaret will send the video to the various schools.

Constant Contact

Can we resurrect Kat Hudson's contacts with the various PTOs? Margaret will check on this.

We will send two notifications to this list.

- Save the date (4 February 2016) this week
- Link to video next week

Other

The banners that announce the public forum are flying in various locations around town.

Review of Draft Plan (3)

The plan document is generally under control. Roland observed that the plan is much better than the earlier draft plan that we received from The Cecil Group. He and Planning Department staff members have been working very hard for many weeks to complete changes to the text. They have been working closely with Lynn Horsky on final document production.

The Acton 2020 Web site is being updated. A link to the completed plan and to other materials will be added to the updated Web site.

On a related note, Andy will meet with Jason DeGray in preparation for the 4 February 2016 public forum.

Zoning Updates (4)

Roland Bartl walked the committee through the latest changes to the proposed zoning changes. A process flow chart has been added to the document.

The first five pages deal with the underlying zoning (by right). The remaining pages deal with the more discretionary overlay district. We proposed some changes to details.

- The minimum building height was changed from 25 feet to 20 feet (but would be different for longer buildings).
- The maximum allowed FAR was reduced from 1.0 to 0.8. Committee members felt that no realistic development scenario would reach a FAR of 1.0 and so the larger number was a distraction.
- Roland pointed out that roof dormers were encouraged by excluding their contribution to the calculation of roof mean height.

Andy Brockway walked us through two diagrams intended to illustrate the definition of key building parameters (maximum height, roof mean height, spring point, etc). This exercise illustrated the challenge of dealing with people's attempts to reduce the proposed zoning changes to a single number. Here are some of the contrasts illustrated by the two diagrams.

- Existing zoning vs master plan development
- Flat roof vs pitched roof
- Commercial only compared with combined residential and commercial
- Buildings on street vs buildings set far back from the street

There was an unresolved question related to whether we reduced the maximum roof height from 55 feet to 50 feet at an earlier meeting.

Scheduling (4)

Planning Board

The date for the Planning Board public meeting is 24 February. The Planning Department (Roland et al.) will brief the Planning Board before that meeting.

Administrative Updates (5)

Presentation

In addition to the presentation itself, we realize the importance of anticipating questions and preparing answers. We briefly discussed one important question, how much would the land acquisition cost. We realized that there were too many unknowns to allow us to provide even a rough estimate of the answer to this question.

Future KCSC Meetings

The next KCSC meeting will take place on Wednesday, 27 January 2016, at 7:30 pm.

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah.