



DRB Memorandum

Project: Acton 20/20 Implementation Committee Budget Review for ATM 2013

Date of DRB Meeting: 02/06/2013, Celia Kent of Acton 20/20 Presenting

The DRB met with Celia Kent and she reviewed the Acton 20/20 Implementation Committee's intent for a \$277K capital request from the Town for "Zoning and Design Framework (\$60K) and Preparation of 25% Engineering plans (\$192K)" for utility, infrastructure, and sidewalk improvements to Kelley's Corner at the upcoming Town Meeting. Their intent is to ultimately apply for and hopefully obtain a Mass Works Grant for \$2.9M for construction of designed improvements.

While the DRB strongly supports the goals of the 20/20 committee and to move forward with positive progress towards making Kelley's Corner (KC) a vibrant and walk-able town center, the DRB Members in attendance believe that requesting these town funds for preliminary engineering plans is premature. The DRB, which is comprised of design professionals who all have experience in development and design processes related to municipal planning and construction projects, believes there are other steps that need to happen first to ensure a successful redevelopment of the area before any engineering/design/construction commences.

The DRB makes the following observations:

The Acton 20/20 Implementation Committee should request funds from the Town to begin the implementation of the project with the initial goal of creating a revised zoning code for KC generally using the steps outlined below:

- As this is a complicated site with multiple uses, local and corporate land owners, State and local highways, and complex infrastructure, we suggest an independent consultant be hired to manage all the moving parts of the project. We feel that this project is too complicated to be managed by volunteers and that the present town planning staff would be over-burdened by this effort. At a minimum, this part-time consultant should have extensive project management experience in this type of redevelopment work and should be able to participate effectively and authoritatively as a liaison between Town officials, the Town Planner, other Boards, the public, land owners and regulatory agencies. Further, this consultant should be able to manage data gathering, understand the goals of all affected parties and be able to effectively prepare a Request for Proposal to hire a design team to develop a master plan and zoning regulations for KC as well as to aid in identification and acquisition of grant monies in excess of the Mass Works Grant. We would characterize this consultant as a town representative, effectively acting as the KC Project Manager throughout conception, planning, design, and construction.
- Next, visual concept plan(s) outlining compelling and galvanizing ideas must be developed, presented to, and approved by the Town as a basis for ultimate zoning changes and the engineering of the infrastructure in KC. The plan should create excitement and willing participation from all parties involved. This design effort would require hiring a qualified, full service, multi-disciplinary consulting team capable of producing a physical product (i.e. drawings, renderings, models, etc.) based on hard data (survey, site analysis, traffic and pedestrian analysis, environmental concerns, real estate assessment, etc) that will reflect a viable, buildable solution that encompasses the vision of Acton 20/20. As a low cost option, the Town might also be able to enlist the services of university planning departments such as Harvard or MIT and request them to use KC as a design studio for their students. This could be a very exciting and viable first step design option with a very low financial output by the Town.

- Once the KC Conceptual Master Plan has been approved at Town Meeting, develop new zoning regulations to support that plan.
- Revise the request for the Town funding for the KC Project Manager and the Concept Design Consultant. We believe that the \$277K could be re-appropriated to fund these two entities.
- Once new zoning regulations are in place, request additional monies to prepare the 25% Engineering Plans and apply for the Mass Works Grant.

Respectfully Submitted,

Design Review Board
Feb. 11, 2013

Members in attendance: Holly Ben-Joseph, PLA
David Honn, RA
Peter Darlow, RA
Conor Nagle, PE
Kim Montella, PE