

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes – 9 April 2015

These are the meeting minutes from the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 9 April 2015 in Room 204 at the Acton Town Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 8:08 pm by Andy Brockway.

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

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

Board of
Selectmen:

Planning Department: Kristen Guichard, Roland Bartl

Other Attendees

The Cecil Group team was represented by:

- Ken Buckland – The Cecil Group – Project Manager
- Jason DeGray – Greenman-Pederson, Inc – Traffic Engineering

Chris Starr, a resident of Acton and property owner in Kelley's Corner, and his business partner Chris Bailey also attended the meeting.

Meeting Summary

We addressed three topics during this meeting.

- Review of Draft Design Guidelines
- Review of Draft Master Plan Development Overlay Zoning District
- Discussion of Infrastructure Improvements, especially estimated costs and possible funding sources

Documents that support these topics can be found at

<http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-6760>

Draft Design Guidelines (1)

This is a document of twenty something pages that present exactly what the title describes, design guidelines for potential development. Its major sections addressed the following topics.

- Introduction
- Architecture

- Signage
- Site Improvements

In the interest of time, we did not go through the document in detail but rather examined how it might be used. Ken Buckland indicated that the guidelines could be used in several ways, perhaps mostly as a discussion tool between potential developers and the town. Andy Brockway noted the overlap between this document and zoning guidelines.

This led into a discussion between using design guidelines instead of zoning regulations. We noted the flexibility that design guidelines give to both developers and to the town when discussing potential future projects.

The design guidelines document can be found in the document collection listed earlier in these minutes.

Draft Master Plan Development Overlay Zoning District (2)

The Master Plan Development Overlay District (MPDO) may be applied to project proposals meeting the following standards.

- The proposed project is a mixed use project.
 - A mixed use project is a combination of retail, office, service establishments, residential uses, and public facilities.
- The parcel subject to the MPDO is at least 250,000 sq ft in size (slightly less than six acres).
 - This size constraint will likely require assembly an assembly of several existing Kelley's Corner properties.
- The proposed mixed use project is at least 100,000 in floor area.

The use of this master plan provides several benefits to a potential developer. In particular, a potential development can exceed existing dimensional constraints. It looks like the master plan will expose a developer to less risk than an existing project (with no master plan).

- The master plan allows floor area ratio (FAR) between 0.4 and 1.0, values outside existing zoning regulations.

In the discussion that followed, we noted the difference between projects that can take advantage of a master plan and smaller projects.

- Are the thresholds (triggers, etc) set at the right values?

Chris Starr pointed out that it is difficult to create even a 0.4 FAR project in Kelley's Corner due to other constraints such as frontage.

Roland Bartl Summary

Roland Bartl summarized the master plan concept.

Within some basic framework for dimensions and allowed uses (probably the range of allowed uses currently on the books for Kelley's Corner), the proposed master plan special permit would in concept allow a developer to propose zoning rules for a prospective development, which the Planning Board could then approve, modify, or reject. Under the master plan special permit,

specific rules will be set for setbacks, FAR, parking ratios, specific allowed uses, etc. The master plan special permit could also require which future uses will require future special permits, and which future development phases will require site plan approval for the detailed layout, circulation, landscaping, drainage, etc. What a master plan special permit based on concept plans can do for a larger project, is secure financing for the next phase or phases of development.

Ken Buckland agreed with Roland's description. Chris Starr also agreed.

Infrastructure Improvements (3)

Jason DeGray presented a brief summary of the infrastructure improvements project from the perspective of overall costs and possible funding sources. He started with the estimate of \$8M for the construction costs. While he indicated that this is a sizeable infrastructure project, he argued that this is the right set of infrastructure improvements to the Kelley's Corner intersection. He broke the project into three pieces based on ownership.

- The largest piece is Massachusetts Avenue (Route 111), owned by the state. Approximately two thirds of the construction costs are required for proposed changes to Massachusetts Avenue. A State Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) seems most appropriate for funding this piece of the project.
- Main Street approaches (Route 27) and new traffic signals are owned by the Town of Acton. This work consumes an additional 25% of the cost. Perhaps this work will work as a MassWorks project.
- Community Way is privately owned (as part of the Edens Plaza). Local funds seem like the best for funding this part of the project.

MassDOT Updates

Jason presented the preliminary plans to the Department of Transportation (MassDOT). They are supportive of the effort and gave their approval to take the project to the next step. Jason will "regroup" with MassDOT now that they have endorsed the effort. They also indicated that they would like to add one additional feature to the overall project. They are interested in adding a traffic signal to the Route 2 eastbound ramp. (This ramp connects not just to Route 27 but also to the entrance to Acton Medical.)

Next Steps

Jason indicated that the next steps consist of providing MassDOT (and others) with detailed engineering plans whose estimated cost of \$285k. He suggested that MassDOT might constitute part or even all of the cost for the detailed plans.

New Administration

We have had a recent change in administration that might affect MassWorks, TIP, and other aspects of MassDOT.

- What will MassWorks look like in a Baker administration?
- Even TIP might change.

The new Secretary of Transportation is emphasizing the connections between transportation and economic development. Transportation is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Meeting Minutes (4)

- Minutes from the KCSC meeting on 25 February 2015 were approved.
- Minutes from the KCSC meeting on 11 March 2015 were approved with a single edit.
- Minutes from the KCSC meeting on 2 April 2015 were approved with slight changes in wording.

Administrative Updates (5)

The Kelley's Corner Improvement Initiative Public Workshop will be held on Thursday, 7 May 2015, at the Acton Town Hall.

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:30 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah.