

DRAFT
Minutes - Acton 2020 Committee Meeting
May 25, 2011
7 pm – 9:30 pm
Faulkner Room - Town Hall

Attendees:

- Members: Sahana Purohit, Paulina Knibbe, Jim Snyder-Grant, Sandeep Verma, Margaret Busse, Celia Kent, Charles Mercier
- Staff: Roland Bartl, Kristin Alexander
- Consultants: Daphne Politis, Jim Purdy
- Observers: Dave Clough (BoS), John Sonner(BoS), Clint Seward (FinCom)

Chair Margaret Busse called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Agenda item I. Motion to approve the minutes (as amended) for 5-11. Motion approved.

Agenda Item II . Update on Blog

Jim S-G. More activity on the blog recently. Also more comments coming in on the inventory documents. (Deadline for inventory comments: May 31st).

TO DO: Jim S-G to write an article for the Acton Forum promoting the June 23rd event and encouraging traffic to the blogs.

TO DO: Jim S-G to write a blog about Acton's carbon footprint.

TO DO: Clint to write a blog about ideas for public safety improvements.

Sahana is interested in current vacancies for office and retail. Possibly find out the vacancy rate and blog to encourage businesses to locate here ? (EDC is also interested in this but waiting for 2020 committee to take the lead).

Agenda Item IV. June 23rd Meeting

Daphne explained that at the last committee meeting, the committee decided that the 40B discussion could not be held to the end of the June 23rd meeting. Instead, a brief introduction to the issue will be included in the presentation but the public discussion of this issue must be somewhat limited or it will sidetrack the other objectives of the public meeting. Suggestions: encourage the public to write their comments about 40B down and turn them in.

Long discussion about 40B, impacts and options.

General conclusion: Focus on future needs for housing and matching Acton's supply with those needs. Focus on getting informed opinions from the public by providing education opportunities (both in advance of the meeting and at the meeting).

Daphne described the proposed meeting format.

Jim described the meeting materials. Paulina handed out a draft synopsis document intended to provide a higher level of abstraction for the 3 alternatives.

Charlie – What have we learned from our experiences with past Master Plans ? What were they trying to accomplish, what worked and what can we do better ?

Roland - The previous master plan is available on the town website (with links on the Acton 2020 web site). In general, the Master Plan was trying to encourage development in the villages. Some successes but it wasn't as effective as the town had hoped for. Possibly the incentives weren't strong enough to encourage development in the villages and discourage development in outlying areas.

Discussion of 'Evaluation of Alternatives' chart. Perhaps add a column with 'current state' for each of the Key numbers.

Sandeep – why does alternative 3 show so many more units built than alternative 2 ?

Jim P – In order to encourage development in the villages, it is necessary to allow the development to be more dense. Generally increasing density by 30% is necessary to effectively drive development to the villages.

Jim S-G – why does alternative 3 show more acres developed than alternative 2 when the goal of alternative 3 is to concentrate development in the villages ?

Jim P. Some development will still occur in the outlying areas as well in option 3.

Roland – The model as currently described assumes 700 units in the villages at .3 acres per unit. This is not very dense for a village environment. If the model used .1 acres per unit in the villages, the amount of open space used would drop.

Paulina – one of the goals of creating more density in the villages is also to create housing for smaller families or people whose children have grown. This supports the expected future population in the town but is not reflected in the school population numbers for option 3.

Concern was expressed by several people that the amount of information would be very difficult for the public to grasp at the forum on June 23rd.

Options: put materials (including the powerpoint presentation) on the web BEFORE the session so that people can educate themselves somewhat before showing up.

To do: Jim S-G to create a way for people to enter comments / questions on the background materials (AFTER the session). The goal: enable people who cannot come to the session to still provide input without encouraging people to not come to the session.

Margaret – should we concentrate on 2 villages areas instead of 4 in option 3 ? This would make it easier to actually make progress on those areas. It may also make the overall growth numbers smaller if we focus growth into fewer village areas.

Roland – we could do a phased implementation if option 3 is selected.

Roland – one of the key aspects of Option3 that is not reflected well in the material is that the objective to move from limiting residential growth overall to encouraging mixed use (residential and commercial) in the villages. Is there a way to capture that difference in the charts ? The numbers for population in general and school population in particular should be lower for option 3.

Paulina – making that clearer was one of the objectives in my draft high level conceptual comparison.

Jim P – we could possible include that chart in the one page summary of each option.

Roland – we are trying to present too much information to the public on June 23rd. Information overload.

Margaret – perhaps we can take the maps out of the packets. Have them available on boards and/or on the screen. Also – don't have the goals as part of the packets. They could be available on boards and/or the screens. Talk about the goals (briefly) as part of the presentation).

Sahana – more visual presentations to help people distinguish between the three choices.

Agenda Item III. Publicity

Promotion video.

Leigh Davis Honn and Christo Tsiaras will produce this. A script is being created ('It's a Wonderful Life' – like). Filming will be this Saturday.

To Do. Everyone – send names and contact info for people to be in the video to Margaret.

To Do. Need committee members to help with video project. From 9:30 to 10:00 on Saturday – as many committee members as possible. (Kristin will post as a meeting). Also – members needed throughout the day to provide

logistical support for video project (contact Margaret with availability and she will let you know where you need to be).

Celia, Charlie, Jim S-G and Sandeep will be available on Saturday at various times. Please send availability to Margaret for coordination.

Film Premiere.

When video is finished, it will be launched at a special event. Tickets and invitations to everyone who was involved in the filming. Public welcome, too, of course. Goal: to generate excitement for June 23rd.

Location for premiere. Discussion of doing it at the BoS meeting (not ideal because that will be the meeting where a new member of school committee is appointed and because it is harder to do the refreshments / other 'premiere' type stuff at a BoS meeting.

Discussion of doing it at Theatre III – Margaret will follow up.

Publicity for June 23rd

- Banner. We will patch the banner we used before. It will be up in W. Acton for 10 days before the event.
- Blinky Board. 10 days before.
- Sandwich Boards. 10 days before ???
- Movie Posters ??? Logistics still being worked.
- 2020 Banners need to go up again.
- Train station signs ???
- Info at solarium in Library ?
TO DO: Charlie to ask about putting info there

Outreach

- Postcard. English version is done.
TO DO: Jim S-G to try online translation to get rough cut of version in Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish.
TO DO: ??? ask Xuan Kong about translating postcard into Chinese and handing out at ACLS graduation ceremony.
TO DO: Sandeep to approach Indian Grocery Store about posting info about June 23rd event.
- PTSO.
TO DO: Sahana to go to ABRHS PTSO meeting on June 7th to encourage attendance.
- School Backpacks. John Petersen has expressed support. Some push back on labor in getting info to the schools. Perhaps if we were to supply labor this would be possible ?? Any interest in doing this ?

- Council on Aging. This has been publicized in the COA Newsletter and flyers will be posted. Can we provide postcards for distribution at the senior center ?
- TO DO: Kim is working with the MinuteVan to make transportation available on May 23rd if people want that.

Next Meeting: June 8th

Objectives for next meeting:

- Finalize Presentation
- Finalize Materials
- Finalize logistics of meeting

Minutes humbly submitted by Paulina Knibbe