Attending:  George Zaharoolis, Donald Van Dyne, Bill Murphy, Kenneth Lefebvre, Joseph Ready, Nancy Araway

Not Present:  Scott Rummel

Others Present:  Evan Belansky, Community Development Director

Please note that all documents referenced in these minutes are on file at the Town Manager’s Office, 50 Billerica Rd., Chelmsford, Mass. This meeting was hand recorded by the Recording Secretary.

This meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Chairman Zaharoolis.

7:00-7:15 Open Session
No one came forward at this time.

Vision statement - discussion
No further discussion at this time

BPAC (7:15-7:45)
Chairman James Kelsey was present for discussion. He was asked what he saw as future issues in the next ten years. Their Master Plan which was completed in 2011 will be revised in the next few months. He described what the Committee has accomplished over the past 6 years, and noted that bicycling is dangerous on the public roads and many people use the rail trail. The bike sharing programs are becoming popular. Maintenance on the Rail Trail, much work will be done in the next 2-3 years, as there are a lot of roots coming through the pavement. Special rapid rectangular flashing lights are being installed near trail exits and schools.

Acton has a huge recreation department, Chelmsford and Westford do not have a recreation department.

Much of the Committees discussions involve how to make conditions safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. They have a trail maintenance program and related events staffed by their volunteers.

A new trend is electric bicycles. These could allow handicapped and older people to be able to cycle. They can go up to 20MPH, which the committee feels is too fast for the Rail Trail.
Over the next 5 years, there will be a need for major rail trail service. The Town Engineer is researching how to obtain State Aid to help with this work. The Rail Trail is getting more popular every year. Sidewalk creation and other forms of connectivity are being reviewed. There was discussion about creating another outlet from the Rail Trail to Rt. 27 near the Sleigh Rd. area. Parking pressures have gotten better, but more parking is always welcome.

Once their plan is complete, they will forward a copy to the Committee via Mr. Belansky.

The Carol Cleven Memorial Park on Cushing Place is being developed near the Grist Mill Condominiums. It will include a porta potty, a couple of displays, a kiosk, bench, and landscaping.

There are no dedicated bicycle routes at this time. This could be developed over time in areas where the shoulders are wide enough. This will require funding. There is road space for a bike lane between drum Hill and Vinal Square, but the opportunity to create them hasn’t come up yet. Mr. Lefebvre suggested connectivity for bicyclists in the Rt. 129 area, along Rt. 110, and from the Center to Drum Hill. David McLachlan of the Conservation Commission advised that connectivity between their reservations has been a discussion point for the Commission.

Concerns about snow plowing on sidewalks was mentioned.

**Conservation Commission (7:45 – 8:15)**

David McLachlan referred to the Open Space and Recreation Plan that was completed in 2017. The mission statement of the Commission was read into the record. They handle regulatory matters and land management for their reservations and other properties under their control. The Land Conservation Trust is a private organization that holds about 98 acres of open land. The Commission manages about 1000 acres of open space.

Not all the objectives in their plan will be achieved. The Tree replacement policy in Town is not always followed. Over time, Mr. McLachlan believes there will be less trees in town. There will also be environmental concerns. Flood prone areas will be aggravated over time, especially because of development. Acquiring more land for conservation purposes is important. More recreational facilities may be needed. The Chelmsford Water Districts have done a good job in protecting water resources in Town.

The Cranberry Bog is no longer being harvested. The future of this site is being discussed, however, there are financial considerations. Natural overgrowth is starting to develop at this site. Preservation of the upper pond may be a priority to residents and the public. The Commission is in the process of deciding what to do about the dam at the bog. Costs could range up to $45,000.00. The Town of Carlisle is trying to protect their water rights at this site. The Chelmsford Water District is considering installing two more wells near the Cranberry Bog, which could impact the water shed.

The Center Village Brook Walk is a good objective for Open Space. Katrina Rd and the Glenview Landfill improvements, as well as the Merrimack River bank restoration at Williamsburg condos are good
accomplishments. Purchasing the Forum is a recreational facility, Oak Hill has been made into a reservation. Water conservation will be an important consideration. Mr. Murray described problems the Bay area in California experienced, as well as a pollinator garden near his home.

Recognition of wildlife habitat needs to be kept in mind. There a lot of deer and other animals being seen.

The Commission will continue to look for opportunities to acquire open space parcels. There may be a need to create an Open Space and Recreation Committee. There is a need to improve awareness of recreational amenities in Town.

Forestry Management has not been pursued. The current processes are more reactionary rather than pro-active. Mr. Belansky stated there are funds available to help with this, and he suggested collaboration with the Tree Committee. Invasive plant management has not really been discussed. Many of these plants are very difficult to eradicate. A leaf composting program is needed in Town and should be looked at. Mr. McLachlan suggested there is space at the former DPW location on Richardson Rd.

Mr. Belansky suggested someone from the Commission work with other Town officials to implement some of the goals in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Mr. McLachlan acknowledged COSS provides a lot of valuable service to the Commission.

Getting maps updated has been very difficult, close to impossible to accomplish. The Town website does not address this.

**Historical Commission ((8:15- 8:45)**

Linda Prescott will provide updated material to be included in the Master Plan document. They are constantly expanding their Inventories and doing outreach. She listed several historic accomplishments done by Chelmsford residents.

Preservation of older homes has been problematic. These homes are special.

Their sign program has been very effective.

There are several properties on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Middlesex Canal.

Deb Taverna described outreach efforts done through the School systems, through field trips to properties managed by the Commission. Students enjoy the programs.

Mrs. Prescott advised the history is important. They are developing additional educational programs for adults and children.

They would like to more historic surveys and create more Historic Districts. They would like more neighborhoods interested in the historic assets.
They are concerned about the village areas in town, there are under 20 homes left from the 1600’s. The homes from the 1700’s are also endangered. The home at 50 Hunt Rd. is from this era, and has been modified. The Garrison House, Red Wing, 47 Boston Rd. are several other examples. Historic streetscapes are also important, such as Boston Rd., and Main St.

A list of other historic homes that were destroyed by developers were listed.

They are working with the Planning Board on zoning bylaws to try to protect what is left.

Ms. Araway asked if the Historic and Cultural Master Plan needs to be updated. She noted that this plan should be communicated to the public. Mr. Belansky thought this might be worthwhile if many of the participants would be willing to partner in a process to implement some of the goals in the plan.

Mr. Ready noted that there are a lot of homes that would fall under review of the demolition delay bylaw. The Commission feels they have the capacity to address these conditions. Many communities are extending the time period to two years so that the proper research can be done.

Mrs. Prescott noted difficulties with zoning bylaws and historic preservation. Mr. Belansky agreed there is a need and a challenge in finding a balance between the two. Some historic homes are being greatly modified, and they lose their character and unique architectural characteristics. Ms. Araway acknowledged there is a fear about creating multi-family housing in a historic home. Mrs. Prescott felt the proposed Historic Preservation Article being heard at Fall Town Meeting would allow a historic home to ease into 21st century living. Mr. Zaharoolis did not support the Article the way it is written, and felt the subdivision allowances make resulting lots too small. Mrs. Prescott felt this is a way to save the homes from being demolished by developers who are creating multi-family housing anyway. Mr. Ready felt the district requirements are too cumbersome, and need to be looked at.

**Public input sessions – discussion**

Tabled

**Agenda items for next meeting**

The next meeting will be November 7, 2019 with NMCOG.

November 21, 2019 will hear from the Economic Development Committee.

**Approval of Minutes**

**September 26, 2019**

**Motion:** by Mr. Lefebvre to approve the Meeting Minutes of September 26, 2019, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Van Dyne. Ms. Araway abstained, all others in favor **Motion carries, 6-0.**

**Adjourn**
Motion: by Mr. Lefebvre to adjourn the meeting at 9:07PM. Seconded by Mr. Ready. Motion carries, unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,
Vivian W. Merrill,
Recording Secretary

Supporting Documents:
-Draft Minutes