

**TOWN OF CHELMSFORD
VINAL SQUARE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN
COMMITTEE**

Approved 2/10/22

MEETING MINUTES

January 6, 2022

7:00 P.M. CALL TO ORDER VIA ZOOM

Members Present: Joe Tierney, Laura Lee, Bjll Gilet, Brian Creamer, Janet Murphy
Mike Walsh

Others Present: Paul Cohen, Town Manager
Margaret Marshall, Chair, Library Board of Trustees
David Braslau, Library Trustee
Lisa Marrone, Director of Business Development
Beverly Woods, Colin Andrus, Justin Howard, NMCOG

NMCOG

Mr. Tierney thanked the NMCOG representatives for coming to this meeting and for their work in compiling survey results and developing a comprehensive proposal for improvements to the North Village.

Mr. Andrus set forth the next steps.

1. Seek Town support through the Select Board.
2. Present the proposal to District 4 of the Mass. Dept. of Transportation. It would then go to their Project Review Committee, to determine if it is eligible for Federal funding. The Town would be responsible for all permitting on the work.
3. Time line: 2 – 4 years, depending on the scope of the project.
4. How to present: Mr. Cohen said design costs would be the Town's expense. We may need to hire a consultant and issue a Request for a Proposal. It may be difficult to project a cost, due to permitting fees and right of way issues.
5. Next step: Create a concept plan.

Mr. Cohen stated he would do what he could to expedite this process. Mr Tierney requested a motion to move forward with a concept plan for Town review.

Ms. Lee made a motion that this Committee move forward with the preparation of a concept plan to present to the Select Board, seconded by Mr. Walsh. Unanimous.

MackKay Library

Margaret Marshall and David Brauslau of the Library Trustees discussed the status of the MackKay Branch Library. The building is a 120-year old, approximately 3,000 sq. ft. structure. It is in need of major HVAC updates in order to re-open to the public after being closed during the Covid pandemic. An expenditure of \$150,000 was approved by the Trustees at their January 3, 2022 meeting. A full air handling system will cost \$125,000, and \$25,000 will be used to secure the second floor so it is not accessible to the public by way of the front door. This is a security issue. When complete, the building can be open for 10 to 12 people only in adherence to the standards of the new air handling system. The Library hopes to be able to use the North Town Hall for various children's events where 50 people may be in attendance. It was noted that the curbside Pop Up Library comes to the MackKay two times a week for patrons to utilize. Ms. Lee stated that she would be happy to work with the Library on any event scheduling that is needed, and would be in touch with the Library Director for this. Ms. Marshall and Mr. Brauslau both emphasized that it has always been the Trustees' intention to reopen the MackKay branch.

Mr. Cohjen added that the Select Board also wants to see the branch reopened. Funding sources will be explored, with Community Preservation being one. The work will be put out for bid and the hope is for the MackKay to open in the Fall.

Ms. Marshall and Mr. Brauslau thanked the committee for the opportunity to bring it up to date on the Trustees' plans.

Sub Committees

Mr. Tierney stated that he would like to find individuals to serve on sub committees, such as:

- Varney Playground
- Holiday Decorating
- Business Relations
- Wayfinding/Signs
- Vinal Square Concept Plan

He would like to hear from interested members of the community with an interest in serving.

Other

Business Updates

Ms. Marrone reported on a new fitness campaign which is gaining popularity. It involves a dedicated 38 ft. by 38 ft. outdoor space containing exercise equipment where people can do a seven-minute workout. There are five or six of these in Massachusetts. She has been investigating to identify suitable municipal owned land to locate such a facility, but has been set back by Covid issues. Blue Cross Blue Shield Insurance has awarded the Town \$50,000 towards the effort. There is no charge to use the facility, and there is even a smart phone app for it. The best choice would be at the corner of Chelmsford Street and Wilson Street. There is parking at the Housing Authority.

Ms. Marrone also reported that she has sent a business survey out to local businesses. Unfortunately, some have not been able to survive over the past two years. Another massage parlor will be opening in the Square.

Mr. Gilet reported that he had spoken with Louise Tremblay, the owner of the North Chelmsford Hardware building. She has purchased new siding for the building.

Miscellaneous

The Veterans Monument on the Common has been repaired, and the Fire Station renovations are complete.

Mr. Walsh reported that there will be a special town meeting on Thursday, February 24 to rezone the UMass West Campus property in preparation of a large multi family housing complex on the property.

Temporary speed bumps have been installed on Ledge Road, and speed recording signs were installed on Dunstable Road.

Mr. Cohen reported that Rep. Golden is still working with the State on a proposal for sidewalks from the Square to Wellman Avenue

The UMass Campus housing project is moving forward with a public hearing on December 8, 2021, with a Special Town Meeting possibly taking place in January 2022.

Meeting Minutes Approval

Mr. Gilet moved to approve the draft minutes for October 14, 2021, seconded by Mr. Creamer. Unanimous.

There being no further business, Mr. Creamer made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Gilet seconded. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Murphy