

Town of Chelmsford
Center Village Master Plan Implementation Committee
50 Billerica Rd., Chelmsford, MA 01824
Zoom Meeting
MINUTES
February 11, 2021

Attending: Nancy Araway (left at 6:59), Janet Askenburg (vice-chair), Eileen DeChaves, Jack Handley, Brian Milisci, Mike Rigney (chair)

Not Present:

Others Present: Evan Belansky (Community Development Director, left at 6:59), Lisa Marrone (Director of Business Development)

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 chair.

This meeting was called to order at 6:03PM by the chair.

1. Accessibility in the Center

Joanne Stanway (6 Lantern Ln) addressed the Committee about parking in the Center. There is some handicapped parking available in private lots, as well as a few behind the CCA. There are two near the rail trail by Grist Mill but she would prefer more.

J. Askenburg asked if on-street would be preferred, J. Stanway said even one one street public spot would be an improvement. M. Rigney asked if a curb-cut adjacent spot would be better, J. Stanway indicated it would.

E. Belansky indicated Steve Jahnle or Christina Papdapoulous would be the best person to talk with the ADA community. He also pointed out that private property lots are required to provide designated spots, but not all have. Town-owned spots can have additional challenges, based on width and accessibility depending on how the user exits.

J. Stanway asked that the issue be investigated and understood better.

B. Milisci indicated providing spots with parallel parking is more difficult than angled due to variances in users and traffic patterns - this will take some study.

M. Rigney asked about spaces at library, J. Stanway thought they were thought of as reserved for library patrons and would like something not associated with a particular business.

J. Stanway invited someone to come to Commission on Disabilities meeting for further discussion.

2. Existing Projects Updates

E. Belansky and L. Marrone provided updates to the Committee on several ongoing projects in the town:

a. E. Belansky reported that Grist Mill 2 was voted down by the Planning Board. The dust is still settling, future steps are unclear. Current proponent will probably not reappear but the owner still wants to maximize the value of their property.

b. E. Belansky reported there has been some tire kicking at 9 Acton rd in terms of redevelopment, possibly as an adult daycare, also still continued interest in townhouse development.

c. L. Marrone reported she had spoken with Rudy Jr. about the Mobil parcel - there have been multiple conversations over last 12 months looking for guidance or direction from town on possible redevelopment; they could take the existing building down, but also interested in additional residential. Open to selling for right project but seems like the owners are not interested in redeveloping on their own. Covid is making it a tough time to redevelop but they are still open to working with realtor or developer with new ideas.

d. L. Marrone reported that the owner of Summer St is bringing in a grocer to replace the existing Asian market space, hopes to be open by July.

e. E. Belansky pointed out that there are three remaining parcels in center, all in play. He thinks the right scope and scale would get a positive regulatory experience. Central Square and 9 Acton road both proposed 32 units, it seems like Central Sq might get approval for that size, less likely for 9 Acton Rd. The Mobil parcel is significantly smaller. He asked the committee for thoughts on what can the Town give as guidance? He thought it would be helpful to bring interested investors to this committee but the committee must get behind acceptable projects. Otherwise it's just another presentation.

J. Askenburg said she appreciated the comments but didn't want to be a filter - this committee should not be accepting or approving businesses. We want to support everyone in the Center, not pick who should go in. That has been the general attitude of the Committee to date.

M. Rigney suggested the Center Village Master Plan needed to be updated and might be a framework for having additional discussions.

E. Belansky suggested it would not be helpful for all three sites competing for regulatory attention and would like to utilize the committee. One possibility would be to get consultants.

f. The Planning Board is looking for commentary from the CVMPC on a zoning article which proposes reducing the 50% by-right reduction of required parking spaces for development in the VCOD to a 20% by-right reduction with additional reduction still available by a special permit.

B. Milisci and M. Rigney both indicated they supported the proposed change.

J. Askenburg asked if the Planning Board was seeking comments or written support, E. Belansky said either verbal or written support would be helpful.

Motion: by J. Askenburg that the CVMPC support the proposed zoning article, B. Milisci seconded. **Motion passed 5-0.**

3. Public Input

No one came forth at this time.

4. New Business

J. Handley asked about the status of the Brook walk after the denial of the Central Sq. proposal. M. Rigney thought the Conservation Commission would be a good resource.

J. Askenburg would like to hear more about on-street parking enforcement and signage. E. DeChaves agreed. There was a general consensus that wayfinding could also be part of that conversation.

To-do:

- E. Belansky will reach out to the Commission on Disabilities to facilitate further discussion with appropriate town employees about parking in the Center.
- M. Rigney will reach out to the Conservation Committee to discuss prospects for the Brook walk.
- L. Marrone will investigate parking control and signage responsibilities.

Minutes Approval

June 13, 2019

Motion: by J. Askenburg to approve the Meeting Minutes of Jun 13, 2019 as presented.

Seconded by B. Milisci. J. Handley abstained, all others in favor. **Motion carries.**

January 14, 2021

Motion: by J. Askenburg to approve the Meeting Minutes of Jan 14, 2021 as presented.

Seconded by B. Milisci. J. Handley abstained, all others in favor. **Motion carries.**

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2021 at 6:00PM.

Adjournment

Motion: by J. Askenburg to adjourn the meeting at 7:12PM. Seconded by Mr. Milisci. **Motion carries, unanimous.**