



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

Approved 4/13/2021

MEETING MINUTES

March 9, 2021

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

Members Present: Joe Tierney, Janet Murphy, Dan Rokas, Brian Creamer

Others Present: Evan Belansky, Community Development Director
Paul Cohen, Town Manager
Steve Jahnle, Asst. Director, DPW
Steve Callaghan, Parks and Playgrounds Coordinator
Lisa Marrone, Director, Business Development
Beverly Woods, Carlin Andrus, NMCOG

Mr. Tierney called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Wayfinding Signs

Mr. Jahnle of DPW provided input as to possible placement of wayfinding signs in the North Village. He noted that for the wayfinding sign placement in Center Village, some desirable locations proved to be impractical due to the sign size and proximity to driveways. He felt a smaller design for the gateway "Welcome To" signs would make them easier to place. It was decided that a walk Mr. Jahnle and members Mr. Tierney and Mr. Rokas would be useful in determining sign placement locations.

Mr. Belansky stated that funding for the project is not in place at this time. He stated that finalizing sign face and design will determine the cost. He estimated a cost of \$20,000, which can be requested at the Fall 2031 Town Meeting once all decisions have been made as to placement and design.

NMCOG Presentation

Beverly Woods and Carlin Andrus of NMCOG discussed their proposal for a Vinal Square study. They recommend a public meeting to introduce the survey initiative and as public outreach. This might have to be done via Zoom. They noted that any improvements must be with the agreement of DOT, who will want to see public support for the project in the community.

The process would include identifying issues of importance; voting on the priorities as identified; using the results to develop a basic concept plan; and a phase 2 public meeting. A detailed survey will need to be developed, with internet access, although it was noted that some will want a paper survey. It was felt that senior citizens might prefer this method and ways were discussed, such as a direct mailing, or via the Senior Center monthly newsletter to accomplish this. The assumption is that an in person public meeting may not be doable this year.

Specifics to be determined include what improvements residents want to see made in the square, for example landscaping, sidewalks and parking. The area of the study will also need to be determined. This discussion will continue at the next meeting.

Mr. Tierney thanked Ms. Woods and Mr. Andrus for the presentation.

Tree Committee Report

Mr. Creamer reported that he, Mr. Belansky and Mr. Walsh met recently with the Tree Committee to discuss large shrubs in planters, and issues such as life span of the shrubs. It was felt by the Tree Committee that some will not survive the winters. They support planting shrubs in the ground instead, if the preference is for shrubs, not trees. An amount of \$10,000 was suggested, reserving some funds to replace the shrubs as needed. Their suggested locations are in front of the municipal parking lot and in front of the parking lot next to Village Grooming. This lot is privately owned. Mr. Belansky said he will discuss with Mr. Jahnle regarding the municipal lot, and reach out to the owner of the private lot for permission. He added that the Vinal Square Beautification account currently has about \$2,000 from donations, which could possibly be used for labor. We would need to decide who will do this. We may also need a storage facility. Mahoney's was suggested, noting their ongoing assistance and partnership through the planter program. There may also be the need to contact Dig Safe.

Business Development Update

Ms. Marrone reported that in recent months several new small businesses have opened in Town. This is exciting news. She has not heard of anything new coming to Vinal Square, however. She plans to contact Louise Tremblay, owner of the hardware store, for an update.

Varney Playground

Steve Callaghan reported that there are three designs for a new playground. He would like to receive feedback from the community regarding these design concepts.

Planning Board Warrant Articles for Spring Town Meeting

Mr. Belansky provided further information on the articles that the Planning Board is putting forth for Town Meeting consideration.

- Fulfillment centers. The proposed zoning article would prohibit them in the Center Village, and in the CD zoning district in North Village, as well. Thus, such an operation would not be allowed in Vinal Square. He stated that should such an inquiry come to the Town about opening a fulfillment center in the Square, the answer would have to be that it is not allowed. This was felt to be a highly restrictive measure. Mr. Belansky

wanted to be certain that all members understand the limitations to future business development in the North Village should fulfillment centers be prohibited.

- Marijuana retail establishments are still not allowed.

Mr. Cohen stated that Town Meeting will not take place in April this year, due to pandemic related safety concerns. He estimated a May or June time frame.

Mr. Tierney informed the committee that he may not be able to continue as Chair after June of this year. In this case, we would need to find a new chair, or consider co-chairs. He will remain a member of the committee.

Mr. Creamer made a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes for January 12, 2021 as submitted, seconded by Mr. Rokas. Unanimous.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 13 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

There being no further business, Ms. Murphy moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Creamer. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Murphy