

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

Attending: Janet Askenburg (vice-chair), Eileen DeChaves, Jack Handley, Brian Milisci, Michael Rigney (chair), Nancy Araway

Not Present:

Others Present: Evan Belansky (Community Development Director), 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 6:00PM by the chair.

1. Existing Projects Updates

M. Rigney reported that he informed the Planning Board that the CVMPC supported the proposed zoning article reducing the by-right parking reduction in the VCOD from 50% to 20%.

M. Rigney also reported he spoke with the chair of the Conservation Committee and forwarded a letter received by the Conservation Committee from the DEP related to the 1 Billerica Rd/44 Central Square project to the rest of the committee. M. Rigney is scheduled to speak with the DEP circuit rider next week and will update the CVMPC on the results of that discussion at the next meeting.

M. Rigney indicated he felt the Center Village Master Plan needs to be updated, but not before the Town's Master Plan is done. E. Belansky said most Master Plan draft chapters are updated and did not think there was much overlap between two plans. He suggested that both Master Plans could be worked on in parallel, perhaps with the CVMPC initially just addressing the brookwalk concept. J. Askenburg also thought a focus could be on updating the brookwalk concept. M. Rigney thought bike path was also a significant component of the Center Village area. E. Belansky suggested focusing on the upper portion instead of the lower portion of the brookwalk because it is town owned. There would be an opportunity to use CPC funds for feasibility or engineering studies.

E. Belansky had no major project updates, reporting the situation was mostly status quo. He thought it likely that Americal will want to circle back with PB sooner rather than later, perhaps after the upcoming town elections with a focus on Oddfellows as phase 1. He reported that the Planing Board still has zoning articles in open hearing. He also said that the 9 Acton Rd property continues inquiries on townhouse development. Finally he reported that he had emailed Steve Jahnle (town engineer) and the Town Manager about last month's Disabilites request for info on parking.

L. Marrone reported she has a list of small business opening, with a full update to be provided at next Monday night's Select Board meeting. Briefly, 11 new openings are happening online. In addition, she hopes to have a Facebook page live by the end of month. She is preparing a Workforce guide for all agencies, working with Greater Lowell institutions.

She also reported that benches on the Worthen St pocket park have been fully sponsored and perennial gardens are on deck.

In other news, she said the plastic bag ban is currently in effect, and enforcement will ramp up as Covid recedes and that community maps are being prepared.

L. Marrone reported that the Main St parking issue has moved forward to the traffic committee. One possible issue to be addressed might be the need to address different types of issues, e.g. no signs as well as the parking. E. DeChaves said she was looking for better enforcement of current signage. E. Belansky asked if she meant more signage or enforcement, E. DeChaves replied some of both, for example, push Fishbones customers to use the lot behind Santander. Having spots blocked off now due to the undergrounding work is making it worse and there could be more pressure as weather gets better. E. Belansky suggested he was looking for a parking utilization study, but that would take some time. Simple enforcement of signs could be faster. On a longer term, bigger signs for better visibility might be an option too. E. Belansky reported that Steve Jahnle said there was an itemized list of signs in the town document on traffic rules and regulations approved by Select Board. He is considering a complete overhaul, but getting better signage should be faster. It was concluded that E. Belansky and L. Marrone would request a report from Traffic Advisory Committee and report back to the CVMPC. E. Dechaves would also submit a request for signage to TAC.

E. Belansky reported that the town is willing and interested in discussion about purchasing parking in the Center, but does not think Americal is at that point yet, that they are primarily focused on Oddfellows. He also mentioned that the Planning Board wants to hear from local committees, and recommended that as an opportunity to have input..

2. Public Input

No one came forth at this time.

3. New Business

There was a question about better communication from the Town to properties affected by ongoing road work - there is currently not a central mailing list for Town work. The town engineer and secretary has the assessors property list and MassDOT requires traffic mitigation and communication with property owners, but the undergrounding work is being performed by private contractors who are not subject to the same reporting requirements which makes it difficult to provide timely notice.

To-do:

M. Rigney to update committee on his discussion with the DEP circuit rider

Minutes Approval - none

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2021 at 6:00PM.

Adjournment

Motion: by J. Askenburg to adjourn the meeting at 7:05PM. Seconded by E. DeChaves. Motion carries, unanimous.