

Minutes of the RTM Long Range Planning Committee
Date: February 19, 2013
Town Hall Room 102 (moved to 307/309), 8:00 pm

Present: Jonathan Cunitz (Chair), Allen Bomes, Dewey Loselle, Lois Schine
Absent: Jack Klinge, Carla Rea, Velma Heller, Matthew Mandel, Wendy Batteau

Also in attendance: First Selectman Gordon Joseloff, Arthur Ashman, Michael Guthman, representatives of the Westport Arts Center, architect Henry Myerberg and members of the public.

Minutes Reporter: Jonathan Cunitz

Agenda: Status report of Downtown 2020 Committee, plans for a new building for the Westport Arts Center

Ken Bernard, speaking for the Downtown 2020 Committee, discussed the need to hire a professional planning consultant to prepare a Master Plan of Development and Implementation for a more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly downtown. He referred to an op-ed article in the February 15th Westport News that discussed the work of the Committee (attached). An RFP for consulting bids is scheduled for issuance on March 1 with responses due by March 31. The projected cost of the study is between \$195,000 and \$225,000. Public contributions of \$60,000 have been pledged and the Committee will be seeking the remaining funds from the Town.

Lance Lundberg, Chairman of the Board of the Westport Arts Center, discussed the need for a larger and more centrally located building for the WAC on the east side of Jessup Green. Henry Myerberg, who is the architect for the Library expansion as well as the WAC, explained the rationale for its proposed location and the development of green open space to supplant much of the present Jessup Green area as well as the adjoining parking lot. Parking beneath the WAC building would replace the present parking spaces adjacent to Jessup Green. At the present time, the WAC does not have any alternative site that has been identified for a new structure.

A lively discussion ensued about the importance of coordinating the many other projects currently underway for the downtown, including the Library, the Levitt Pavillion, the development that is replacing the Y and the movie theater.

It was recommended by the LRP Committee that the WAC prepare a "concept" proposal to enhance further discussions and for use by the consultant selected by the Downtown 2020 Committee. The LRP members present at the meeting supported both efforts and the LRP Committee will continue to serve as a facilitator for these planning efforts.

Dewey Loselle updated Committee members on the project for dredging the Saugatuck River. He mentioned that the First Selectman recently sent a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to attempt to move the project forward (attached).

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan Cunitz, reporter

Attachments