

Minutes

Downtown Plan Implementation Committee

August 4, 2016

Town Hall Room 201 9:00 AM

Note: These are “action minutes” of the meeting as previously agreed to by the DPIC. The entire meeting was recorded and can be viewed on the Town’s website.

DPIC Attendance: Melissa Kane (Co-chairperson), Jessica Newshel, Foti Koskinas, Steve Desloge, Steve Smith, Steve Edwards, Jen Fava, Gary Conrad, Alicia Mozian, Ken Bernhard, Steve Palmer, Matthew Mandell, Lois Schine, Pippa Bell Ader.

DPIC Unavailable: Peter Ratkiewich, Dewey Loselle(Co-chairperson),Craig Schiavone, Tony Riggio, Randy Herbetson.

P5 - David Waldman gave a quick Elm Street update. He will go before P&Z on Sept 15th. David thinks that he has a good amount of support for his proposal.

Last month’s minutes approved.

Library Director Bill Harmer gave a presentation on the library transformation project. When Bill assumed director’s position, he took another look over the renovation plans and cost estimate. In speaking with many residents, he was able to identify the library’s current challenges. The proposed new design would make the building more flexible to serve the community’s needs, have the ability to host larger events, support collaborative activities, take advantage of the river location, and advance the “maker” opportunities. Under the new design, renovation would be within the existing shell. This would have less disruption and cost less than half the amount of the original plan. Unlike the previous plan, the renovation will be staged so that the library will be usable throughout the construction. Schematics should be done at the end of August. Construction slated to begin August 2017 and it expected to take two years. Estimated date of completion is late summer/early fall 2019. The library administrators have met with P&Z and architecture review board among others and have received a lot of support. They are planning to meet with the Board of Finance in September. The library has raised \$8 million so far for the project which is expected to cost less than \$20 million. They are planning to relaunch the capital campaign to raise additional funds. The town has earmarked \$5 million for the project.

Melissa suggested that we start to discuss those projects in the master plan that are adjacent to the library (Library Lane, playground, Jesup Green, etc).

Vote to have DPIC fully support the library renovation project in any way we can and to go to the Board of Selectmen to express our support. All members voted yes, except for Alicia, Steve Palmer and Matt who abstained due to their positions, but express their support.

Melissa will speak with Jim Marpe and figure out the correct timing to go before the Board of Selectman.

M1/M2 - Post Road Crossing Improvements. Met on July 26th with ConnDot. No state plans for any improvements right now - probably by 2020. We will need to do a corridor study from Compo to Route 33 to address the whole area when ConnDot eventually gets to the project. Westport can change the pedestrian crossings without their involvement.

P2- Complete Sidewalk Network. Steve Edwards got approval for application and design for Riverside Ave road reconstruction and sidewalk; Main Street from Coffee an' to Daybreak sidewalk construction (next spring); and for a new sidewalk on Compo Road South from Post Rd to Bridge Street.

P4 - Toquet Hall. Fundraising has been slow in the summer. Hoping it will pick up in the Fall. P&Z has been supportive about the new signage. Kevin will go before HDC for approval on the new sign.

P8 - Full support of Westport Advisory Committee for a grant for the wandernet. Westport 2020 Corporation would apply for the grant, as it must be a 501(c)3. Still deciding if it makes sense to apply for this as it requires a lot of work. Application is due in September if we decide to go ahead. Motion to support an application to the National Endowment of the Arts Our Town Grant funding line for the Westport Wandernet project. Vote was unanimous in favor of support of this initiative.

M5/M6 - Wayfinding system RFP. Jen said that she had received some responses to the draft and made some edits. If everyone is ok with it, we should finalize and send it out. Motion to go ahead with the RFP and the committee then voted unanimously to approve.

M9 - Both Melissa and Foti are working separately on getting funding for bicycle racks. Hope to be able to announce something soon.

An RFP for stream improvement projects was put out. The proposals are due back in mid-August.

The next meeting will be tentatively held on Thursday, September 1, 2016 at 9am.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.

Recorded by Jessica Newshel
Downtown Planning Implementation Committee