

Oct 13, 2022, 7:00 p.m. EDC Meeting Minutes - Virtual

- Attendees:
 - Jodi Harris, Tina Lane, Martha Mazzarino, Margaret Eklind, Desiree Comb, Ryan Madrigal, Shelly Bradbury, Town Administrator Brendhan Zubricki, Town Planner Dana Menon, Cape Ann Chamber rep Olivia Perez-O'Dess
- Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm by Chairman Harris.
- Public Comment: None
- Minutes from the 8/11/22 & 9/15/22 meetings were approved
- Centennial Grove Pavilion Planning
 - Dan Mayer crew cleared trees in the parking lot and rotted trees cleared around ballfield playing area & pavilion site. Clearing created additional parking and a path to pavilion.
 - Brendhan met with Dan and discussed grade for accessibility & concrete floor. They will meet again on 11/21. By spring, work will be in full swing and the pavilion will ready for summer.
 - Jodi reminded that it is a volunteer effort and a huge gift to the town. Dan will organize a group to raise the pavilion. At their last meeting Dan, Donna & Jodi saw a huge potential for renting and Donna is working on numbers.
 - Brendhan mentioned that beyond the pavilion, improvements are necessary for renting such as restrooms, tight tanks, electricity etc. Funding can be sought at the Annual Town meeting. Around the 1st of the year the committee should make a list of needs to present to ATM. He advised that the Town Meeting will want to see progress of work at the grove before approving additional funds and that Dan's work will help our presentation.
 - Jodi said we are looking for rental potential in 2024 and encouraged committee members to see the incredible progress at the grove
 - Margaret asked if there will be a community event for the pavilion, like a ribbon cutting and to thank Dan. Jodi shared that Dan wants 1) to put together something for the Ales for ALS fundraiser and 2) wants the raising of the pavilion to be a community event akin to the Eagles Nest construction where the community can participate in some way such as providing snacks and meals for workers, construction, moving lumber, etc.
- Guide to Doing Business – Margaret reports it is in progress. Jodi says it is important work that will take time
- Public Spaces and Fall Town Meeting Article
 - Brendhan reported we are waiting for a 25K grant award determination by 11/14. The funds will start the organization of the beautification effort. If awarded, we can choose to indefinitely postpone the Town Meeting article requesting funds or if not, that article is set up to request funds to beautify/maintain spaces including design. The motion for the article can be flexible. If we request money we will need specifics of project and amount of funding to present to ATM.
 - Jodi mentioned having a fund to accept contributions. Brendhan said the creation of the fund is in a different article, the amount to open will be determined by the FinCom.
 - Discussion of options for both the causeway and the greenspace at the new pumper shed with a goal to create a cohesive design to establish a sense of place for the downtown. Considered were low maintenance plantings, sculptures/graphics by local artists and gathering space featuring seating, bocce court, chess table and shade trees.
 - Dana said a planner will be assigned to the project per the terms of the grant and provided a link to show her work (below). Brendhan suggested perhaps that person could recommend a landscape architect who will advise on costs for town meeting article. Ryan offered to help find a landscape architect.
 - Tina asked was there a theme to the benches installation. Brendhan said that DOT provided pads for the benches and plantings during the causeway work.
 - Brendhan emphasized that past efforts to have businesses and volunteers maintain spaces have not been successful. Jodi wants to direct funds so that the spaces are maintained consistently by outside company if necessary.
 - Shelly suggested the use of grasses to reflect marsh.

- Brendhan requested presenters for the 4 TM articles
 - Ryan Sale of parcels on Gregory Island
 - Jodi Establishment of new fund
 - Shelly Fund request for short term needs
 - Martha Fund request of 100K for Phase 2 of street lighting
 - Jodi shared that the 160K Lighting Grant has been received and we have a notice to proceed. Dana will draft a press release.
- 30 Apple St
 - A 11.5 acre parcel under 61A is for sale and with potential change of use by an interested developer wishing to build 9 high end houses. The seller accepted a 1.15M offer per purchase and sale agreement. The town can exercise their right of first refusal to purchase property at the accepted price. The property abuts the Transfer Station/DPW yard to offer an alt travel path should the landing road bridge fail and can also allow such things as a community garden, playing fields, affordable housing, etc. Selectman can bring the purchase before town meeting or waive right of first refusal, and they not made a decision but have been discussing in executive session. The EDC can voice their opinion to the BOS. Brendhan shared that the property across from town hall sold for 1M and that the 1.15M cost is low for 11.5 acres near downtown abutting town land. It will appreciate even if we sat on it. Funds would come from Sale of RE fund
 - Discussion:
 - Affordable housing: Ryan had created a sketch of affordable housing complex scenario. The density could be supported, making sure sufficient site conditions for septic as it is not on the sewer. Soil testing was done and developer was satisfied that site conditions were acceptable.
 - Shelly shared concerns about preserving the open space. Brendhan said that the Rivers Act requires some restriction being located near Alewife brook and that the town can't keep as 61A because that is a tax incentive, but could opt to keep it's pastoral setting. Its use can be determined later if Town Meeting invests in it now.
 - Jodi highlighted that the property is good buildable land which is scarce in Essex, not wet or rocky in addition to offering access to the DPW. She is an advocate for over 55 housing for seniors wishing to downsize and reduce RE tax burden. A win-win would be over 55 along with affordable housing. If the committee agrees, we should send a strong message to BOS to purchase
 - Margaret made a motion to vote to support outright purchase of property at 30 Apple St., Ryan seconded. Motion was unanimously approved
- Apple St Culvert Replacement Project Virtual Public Forum
 - Brendhan mentioned the time and places of community information sessions and site visit. It is public information that citizens (over 10 Essex residents) are threatening get an injunction against the town for imminent threat to the environment because the project goes thru a wetland area, naming a statute that presupposes there will be construction. What the town is doing with the grant money is design and going through permitting to come up with a proposal so at this time Brendhan does not think the town can be sued for that. The reason for the improvement is that when the causeway floods, Apple Street may also flood along the 800ft section, making travel it necessary to reroute travel from one side of Essex to the other via to Rt128. Earlier discussions with the DOT to elevate the causeway found that they are not willing to so at this time because it will hurt businesses. This project could be eligible for 90% federal funding for 4.5M construction cost with the state picking up the balance.
- Next EDC meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, 12/8/22 at 7:00.
- Meeting Adjourned 8:09

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Lane

<https://www.burlington.org/DocumentCenter/View/4017/Town-Center-Placemaking-Playbook---hyperlinks>