

Master Plan Implementation Committee Minutes of July 13, 2010 Meeting

Meeting called to order by Chairman/Planning Board member, Ed Forsberg, at 6:39 pm, in the Council on Aging Meeting Room, Town Hall.

Committee Members Present:

Ed Forsberg, Roger Turner, Dick Power, Dick Nottebart, Michael Gallahue

Staff Present:

Josh Cole, Don Johnson, Stephanie Mercandetti

Visitors Present:

Maggie Walker, Town Engineer; Gary Riggott, Trails Committee; Ken Fettig, Bay Circuit Trail Alliance

Approval of Minutes:

Ed moved to approve the minutes of 6/8/2010, Michael G. seconded, voted 4-0-1 (Dick N. abstained).

Ongoing Business, and Implementation Activities:

- **Downtown revitalization activities / Downtown Municipal Campus concept plans, with Town Engineer and Norfolk County Agricultural High School representative (group discussion):**
Maggie Walker, Town Engineer, Gary Riggott of the Trails Committee, and Ken Fettig, on behalf of the Bay Circuit Trail Alliance, were present to assist the MPIC with the planning for the Downtown Municipal Campus concept. (John Lee of the Aggie School was not able to attend, but he will be invited to the next MPIC meeting, to work with the MPIC on plans for vegetative cover in the area of Spring Brook.)

Discussion on the planning process ensued. A list of activities by timeframe and priorities was developed, and tasks were assigned as follows:

1. Development of site plan: Maggie noted that a survey is needed. The level of detail of the information available from the town's GIS is not at a level that will allow engineered plans to be taken directly from GIS, but her department can supply base information for planning purposes. Dick P. will work with contacts he has at the Engineering Department at Northeastern University to develop this plan as a student project over this fall and into the spring of 2011. Dick N. noted that the park-like atmosphere to be created by this project will serve to attract people to the downtown, and that buy-in by the Board of Selectmen to this project is an important step.

2. Identifying and providing for appropriate vegetative cover along Spring Brook: Ed will follow up on this with John Lee at the Aggie, as a potential project that he will coordinate with his students over the fall. As the appropriate vegetative cover is established the DPW and the Conservation Commission will coordinate maintenance activities along the edge of the brook.
3. Walkway and bridge:
 - a. Walkway: location and materials to be determined. Maggie will investigate appropriate types of groundcover and pavers for the trail, including ADA accessible products.
 - b. Bridge: location, shape and construction materials to be determined. Maggie noted that the precast concrete bridge system that the town used recently in the Washington Street sidewalk project may not work here because of soil types: that bridge was set on piles that went down to refusal, but the soil types here may not be as stable as those at the Washington Street project site and piles may be too deep. Dick P. suggested a wooden bridge such as those commonly found on hiking trails in the White Mountain National Forest, for example; he will investigate the coordination of bridge materials and construction with his Northeastern contacts, and will provide samples of such bridges along hiking trails. Roger suggested that an arched bridge be considered so that debris that collects in Spring Brook would not be caught at the base of the bridge. Ken suggested that a swinging bridge might be an alternative to an arched bridge if debris is a problem.
4. Relocate Bay Circuit Trail: Plans will include the relocation of the Bay Circuit Trail to East Street and onto the town property along Spring Brook with a pedestrian bridge over the brook. Gary and Ken indicated that the Bay Circuit Trail Alliance would be favorable to this relocation, especially because it gets a portion of the trail off-road from what it is now.
5. Grants: Stephanie indicated that the most likely source of funding for the project is the Commonwealth's Recreational Trails Grant program, which had been discussed at previous meetings, and that the timeframe for an application can be met, but an article for the 2010 Fall Town Meeting must be submitted to the Board of Selectmen in August before the closing of the Warrant. Ed asked Gary if the Bay Circuit Trail Alliance has experience with and/or access to grant programs (including such sources as foundations), and Gary indicated that he thought they did and that they had tapped into various funding sources in the development of the trail, and he would find out and get back to the MPIC with this information and with further contacts.

6. Other Issues:

- a. Cannon relocation: Dick N. motioned, seconded by Dick P., to send a letter to the Board of Selectmen recommending that the cannon that must be moved to make way for the construction of the Walpole Public Library be moved to and set at the Town property that is between Memorial Bridge and the main entrance driveway to Town Hall off School Street. Specifically, the MPIC recommends that this location should be approximately 30 feet from the bank of Spring Brook and approximately 100 feet back from the edge of the pavement (or sidewalk) of School Street. The placement to the cannon at this location would serve to enhance the entrance to the park-like atmosphere for this area and trail along Spring Brook that the MPIC envisions to be constructed in this area, while still not encroaching within the 25-foot no-disturbance zone along Spring Brook. Voted 5-0-0.
- b. Lighting: Dick P. suggested that a similar process could be employed through the Chamber of Commerce such as that done to obtain lighting for the Town Common. Roger suggested that the lights match those on Memorial Bridge. The MPIC will take this under advisement and put this on hold for now.
- c. Benches and tables: Dick N. will further investigate this. Don had been in touch with Tri-County Vocational School, and there was a preliminary indication from them that they would be interested in the construction of benches and tables as a student project in the spring of 2011. They could supply labor at no cost, but they could not pay for materials.
- d. Signage: The DPW will continue to work on this.
- e. Storage buildings: Bob Conrad and Bob Auditorie of Walpole Youth Football & Cheerleading are working on this along with the restoration of Stone Field.
- f. Restoration of Memorial Pond: Roger suggested this should be done as a mid-range timeline project that will tie into the overall downtown revitalization efforts. Various means to accomplish this restoration were briefly discussed.

The MPIC determined that they would meet on July 27, 2010 to coordinate this project as discussed and establish the project timeline. Don will work on this in the interim.

- **Walkable Community Workshop held on June 29, 2010 – brief summary:**
Stephanie described how the Central Transportation Planning Staff of the Boston Region MPO and the Town had teamed up to provide a Walkable Communities Workshop, which was held on June 29th. Stephanie, Don, Dick N., and Dick P. were in attendance. The workshop goal was to make the downtown a more inviting and walkable area for pedestrians. The workshop included a brief presentation, then a walk through the downtown, followed by a brainstorming session with participants. Several suggestions for minor improvements to driveways, walkways and crosswalks were suggested. A follow-up session will be held in partnership with the Council on Aging sometime in the fall.

- **Status of potential funding sources of various economic development and planning activities:**
 - **CDBG Economic Development Planning Grant Application:** The grant has been awarded to the Town. It is an Economic Development Grant in the amount of \$50,000, to create an economic development plan for the Route 1A Industrial Park (Industrial Road and Production Road) and the junkyards on Route 1A. The forms are being processed by Administration, and the project will begin soon
 - **DLTA Program Application:** This program will not be available to Walpole this fiscal year. Consequently, this item will be removed from future agendas until further notice.
 - **Trails / Open Space grants:** see above

- **Housing Production Plan & Housing Partnership – brief update:**
The WHP will be meeting with representatives of the MHP on Tuesday, June 22, 2010, at 6:30 pm at the Library to further discuss the grant application that the WHP had submitted to MHP to study the feasibility of using the present Library building for affordable housing upon its vacancy when the Library’s move to its new building is complete and for MHP to gain input for them to make an assessment on whether to fund the project. The MHP representatives noted that the housing units created under this program could not be age-restricted, i.e., not strictly “senior housing”, but this is not to say that seniors could not live in the housing units so created, either. The MHP representatives had requested that the Town supply them with a copy of the original building plans for the (present) library, which MHP can supply to architects. [Based on MHP’s interest in the project and this request for the building plans, it seems likely that the Town will be receiving this grant.]

- **Zoning Bylaw Rewrite Phase 2 – Brief update:**
No action. As there is no action expected on this item for the 2010 Fall Town Meeting, it will be removed from future agendas until further notice.

- **Historical Commission – Future Master Plan activities:**

No action. However, Michael G. said the Historical Commission members plan to brainstorm at their next few meetings on plans to create historical districts, including input from the Historical Properties Survey and Inventory, Historical Commission records and members' personal knowledge, and the Walpole Historical Society's members and records.

- **Open Space & Recreation Plan Update – brief update:**

Don had attended the meeting on June 9, and he noted that discussion had been on the updating of goals and objectives that were put forth in the 1996 Plan. He noted that there would also be a meeting of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee the following evening, July 14, at 6:30 pm. He will be in attendance, as will Al and Roger.

- **Appointment of School Committee and Walpole Housing Partnership representatives to the MPIC:**

No action. However, the MPIC had sent a letter to the Board of Selectmen requesting that they appoint a member of the School Committee to the MPIC, and the Board of Selectmen had discussed this at a recent meeting of the Board but had not yet made the appointment. The WHP had not yet met to appoint a member to the MPIC.

Summer 2010 Meeting Schedule:

- A meeting was set for July 27, 2010, primarily to further coordinate the Downtown Campus project with the various entities and funding programs that will be involved in the implementation of the project. No meeting was set for August at that time.

Any Other Business Before the Committee:

- Josh noted that Blackburn Hall had been listed by the Boston Globe as one of the 1,000 Greatest Places to Visit in Massachusetts. Dick P. suggested that there should be a follow-up article in this in the Walpole Times.

Adjournment:

- Dick P. motioned, seconded by Dick N., to adjourn the meeting. Voted 5-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,