

PHASE II DOWNTOWN FOCUS GROUP
MINUTES
March 2, 2021

This meeting of the Phase II Downtown Focus Group was held on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. via remote participation via ZOOM video conferencing pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.c. 30A, section 18, and the Governor's March 23, 2020 Order, as amended, imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place.

Present: Michael Moonan (BL Companies), Kyle Alfred (BL Companies), Ann Dallair, Keith Caruso, Laurie Connors, Rich Hamilton, Kristen Livoti, Hillary King (MVP Program Regional Coordinator), Conor McCormack, Mike Kennedy, Mary Lou Mulhane, Laura Wellington

Absent: Dave Delaney, Vinod Kalikiri and Bob Roy

Mike Moonan of BL Companies shared his screen showing the Focus Group updates to the preliminary site plan that were made in response to comments received at the Community Forum. He highlighted changes to the River Street intersection alignment, which has been widened from the previous design to accommodate truck traffic. The rain garden is now located between the existing retaining wall and the proposed sidewalk. They also replaced parking spaces on the south side of Elm Street to accommodate a rain garden that will help transition as Elm Street narrows and adjusted the turning radius and bumpout configuration in front of the proposed fire station.

Laurie Connors asked BL Companies to update the Fire Department's design team on the proposed changes to the bumpout configuration in front of the proposed fire station.

Mike Moonan explained the new ramp configuration in front of the Matt's at the Buzzer barber shop. In response to questions from Mike Kennedy, Mr. Moonan explained that the ramp will be ADA-compliant. Ms. Connors explained that it is unclear how the new ramp will be funded since it is located on private property. It is possible that a grant will cover the cost of this work, that Town Meeting could authorize public funds to pay for this work, or that the property owner will pay for the ramp.

Mike Kennedy also expressed concern that a few of the ADA-ramps appear to be cock-eyed, especially at the River Street intersection. Mr. Moonan responded that he will verify that all ramps are perpendicular. However, he said that ADA allows exceptions where the road right-of-way is narrow.

Kristen Livoti explained that the wall and fence in front of the Asa Waters Mansion is included within the property's historic designation and is therefore protected. She explained that an architect needs to be involved to ensure that no damage will be done to the wall and fence during sidewalk demolition/replacement. Mr. Moonan responded that they will provide an engineer's statement to that effect.

Mr. Moonan explained that they would like to install additional trees between the parking lot and sidewalk on the property of Hometown Bank. He also explained that they would like to expand the width of the sidewalk in this location as it is exceedingly narrow. Ms. Connors expressed concern about whether the hedge would be impacted by sidewalk widening. Mr. Moonan responded that he will look into it.

Mr. Moonan explained that, on the opposite side of the street, the radius of the bumpout in front of 9Round Fitness Center was adjusted to better enable box truck access to Harris Place. A walkway now bisects the landscaped area within the parking lot and a striped walkway will be added to the driveway to facilitate pedestrian movement to/from to Grove Street. Mr. Moonan stated that trees will be saved wherever possible.

Ms. Connors asked BL Companies to add trees between the municipal parking lot and the Baptist Church' parking lot.

In response to a question from Ms. Connors, Mike Moonan confirmed that they have yet to confirm the number of existing versus proposed parking spaces.

Keith Caruso expressed concern about the ability of the 11' plow to access the three proposed on-street parking spaces in front of the proposed Fire Station west of the Elm Street entrance. Mr. Moonan responded that they will adjust the radius of the bumpout to facilitate plow access.

Keith Caruso explained that the catch basins along Elm Street and within the municipal parking lot have been cleaned per BL Companies request. He also expressed appreciation for the simplified landscape plan along the municipal parking lot.

In response to Marylou Mulhane's question about rain garden maintenance, Mr. Moonan explained that rain gardens will have to be periodically cleaned of silt and trash. They will also need to be weeded and mulched.

Rich Hamilton expressed concern about the Veteran's Memorial area. Is there sufficient room to expand? Mr. Moonan explained that they will continue to look into it and will meet on-site with the Veteran's Committee to discuss further.

Laura Wellington expressed concern about the height of the gateway sign on Harris Place. Mike Moonan stated that it will be 14' in height, but they double check to ensure that it will be adequate to facilitate box truck access.

Laurie Connors alerted the group that she and BL Companies will update the Board of Selectmen on the project, including design and estimated costs, at their meeting on March 23rd at 6:20 pm. She encouraged all to attend.

Conor McCormack alerted the group that the Town was awarded the MassDOT Shared Winter Streets and Spaces Grant in the amount of \$70,418 for the following activities:

- Replace & upgrade walkway from municipal parking lot to Upper Common
- Install wayfinding sign between walkway and municipal parking lot
- Install 7 textured resin crosswalks around Town Commons

- Purchase of 5 metal picnic tables (2 will be ADA) to be placed throughout Commons/downtown
- Purchase of 4 trash receptacles to be placed throughout Commons/downtown
- Purchase of 5 planters to be placed throughout Commons/downtown
- Purchase of string lights to be placed in bushes/trees to enhance Commons

Ms. Connors alerted the group that she is exploring the following funding sources for Phase II construction:

- Town of Millbury – At least \$550,000
- Complete Streets Construction Grant – Application due May 1, 2021
- MassWorks Grant – Application due June 2021
- MVP Grant – Application due June 2021
- Section 319 Non-point Source Pollution Grant – Application due June 2021

She explained that it may be more difficult to get grant funding from the Complete Streets, MVP and Section 319 Non-point Source Pollution Grant Programs this time since these programs funded the Phase I project. If these grant applications are unsuccessful, then it may be prudent to split the project in half. She suggested doing the work to the Elm Street streetscape first, and hold off on the municipal parking lot work until the future when funding becomes available. A couple of members concurred that this approach was appropriate.

The next meeting of the Focus Group will take place via ZOOM at 3:30 pm on Wednesday, March 31st.

The meeting adjourned at 4:28 pm.