

PHASE II DOWNTOWN FOCUS GROUP  
MINUTES  
March 31, 2021

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This meeting of the Phase II Downtown Focus Group was held on Wednesday, March 31, 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), 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 and the March 2<sup>nd</sup> Focus Group meeting. These updates were discussed during the presentation to the Board of Selectmen on March 23, 2021. Mr. Moonan explained that the radius of the bumpout in front of the fire station was adjusted in response to a previous comment from Keith Caruso. He explained that additional updates will be made to take into account site visits with the Veterans Commission and the Council on Aging held on March 11, 2021. Of particular note was the need to modify the sidewalk connection to the Senior Center as the proposed connection was viewed by the Council on Aging as unreasonably steep.

Mr. Moonan and Kyle Alfred presented the proposed design for the pedestrian connection between the municipal parking lot and the Upper Common and the cost estimate for that portion of the project. Discussion ensued about the cost estimate for the walkway, which was significantly higher than the planning staff expected. The group discussed narrowing the width of the concrete walkway to 6' instead of the current width of 7'. Mike Kennedy, Marylou Mulhane, and Rich Hamilton expressed support for narrowing the width. Conor McCormack expressed concern that narrowing the width may be frowned upon by the funder. He said he would look into the grant requirements and report back. Ultimately it was discovered that there was a typo in BL Companies' cost estimate for the walkway. Mike Moonan said that the cost estimate will be corrected and forwarded to the Focus Group for their review.

Laurie Connors expressed concern about the overall construction costs estimate and asked if there were any areas where modifications could be made that wouldn't compromise the design. One suggestion included narrowing the width of the stamped concrete crosswalk within the municipal parking lot. Mike Moonan agreed to make that change.

Mike Kennedy reiterated that he is absolutely opposed to the use of bricks on walkways and crosswalks. He said that their use as decorative edging is acceptable.

Mike Moonan suggested cold plane and overlay on driveways to the municipal parking lot as another potential cost savings.

A final suggestion for reducing construction costs included eliminating catch basins within the municipal parking lot where they abut rain gardens. Mike Moonan explained that the purpose of the catch basins is to handle overflow, particularly when rain gardens are filled with snow. He said that these structures could be eliminated from the design, at considerable cost savings, if the DPW could commit to shoveling out the rain gardens after snow events.

Keith Caruso responded that he could only commit to shoveling out rain gardens if he is able to secure seasonal workers in the wintertime.

In response to Laurie Connors' question, Mike Moonan confirmed that they are proposing to install deep sump catch basins.

Ms. Connors gave her impressions of how the presentation before the Board of Selectmen on March 23<sup>rd</sup> went. She reiterated that the Focus Group's support for the \$550,000 allocation for the Phase II project at Town Meeting would be very helpful. She explained that the municipal appropriation is essential to qualify for grant programs as most grants have a mandatory minimum match requirement.

Ms. Connors alerted the group that she plans to apply to the following grant programs for Phase II construction if the municipal appropriation is approved:

- Complete Streets Construction Grant – Application due May 1, 2021
- MVP Grant – Application due May 8, 2021
- MassWorks Grant – Application due June 1, 2021
- Section 319 Non-point Source Pollution Grant – Application due June 2021

She explained that she will contact many of the members of the Focus Group for support letters within the next couple of weeks.

The next meeting of the Focus Group will take place via ZOOM at 3:30 pm on Wednesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.