

PHASE II DOWNTOWN FOCUS GROUP
MINUTES
December 16, 2020

This meeting of the Phase II Downtown Focus Group was held on Wednesday, December 16, 2020 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), Laurie Connors, Rich Hamilton, Hillary King (MVP Program Regional Coordinator), Conor McCormack, Mary Lou Mulhane, Laura Wellington

Absent: Keith Caruso, Ann Dallair, Dave Delaney, Vinod Kalikiri, Mike Kennedy, Kristen Livoti

Mike Moonan of BL Companies shared his screen showing the Focus Group the survey that has been compiled to date and the preliminary site plan. He highlighted certain design features, including the new parking space alignment of the municipal parking lot, a potential new crosswalk/bumpout combination in front of the Fire Station/Asa Waters Mansion, and realignment of the Elm Street/Water Street and Elm Street/River Street intersections. By narrowing these intersections, a small pedestrian plaza can be added to the corner of the library property and a large rain garden can be accommodated on the McGrath School side of the River Street intersection. Also, pedestrian crossings will be safer due to narrowed road widths, especially at the River Street crossing where River Street is exceedingly large. Improvements are also proposed at the Veterans Memorials on the Municipal Office Building property.

Overall, those in attendance expressed support for the design as presented. Notable feedback regarding the design was as follows:

Rich Hamilton expressed concern about the bumpout in front of the current fire station. He explained that the bumpout cannot be constructed until the fire station is relocated because it will interfere with fire truck movements. He confirmed that the bumpout on the other side of Elm Street, in front of the Asa Waters Mansion, can be constructed now as it will not interfere with truck movements. Mr. Moonan said that he will design a standard ramp/crosswalk configuration for in front of the current fire station and that the bumpout can be constructed at a future date.

In response to questions, Rich Hamilton confirmed that the proposed realignment of the Water Street and River Street intersections should not be a problem for fire truck egress.

Laura Wellington questioned the angled parking behind CD Whitney Insurance and expressed concern about the elimination of one parking space within their lot. Mr. Moonan explained that they angled the parking to make it easier and safer for people to enter/exit the parking spaces given the one-way configuration of the driveway. He also explained that this

configuration would allow an area for outdoor seating, including picnic tables, on the CD Whitney parcel.

Laurie Connors suggested designating one parking space within the municipal parking lot that is closest to CD Whitney for CD Whitney use only to offset the lost space. Ms. Wellington expressed her support for the angled parking if the designated space could be provided.

Ms. Wellington expressed concern about inadequate lighting within the municipal parking lot, especially near the Baptist Church parking lot, and the need for some physical separation between the municipal parking lot and Baptist Church parking lot.

Mr. Moonan confirmed that lighting will be added as part of the plan and that they could install a fence or vegetation between the lots to enhance the physical separation.

Ms. Connors explained that she approached the Church about connecting the lots with a driveway, but that the gentleman she spoke to from the Church was uninterested. Discussion ensued about the possibility of approaching the church again about the driveway connection and that Paul Stringham could provide the name/contact info for somebody at the Church.

Ms. Connors expressed her preference for using vegetation to provide the physical separation between the two parking lots instead of a fence, which would require more maintenance.

Mr. Moonan asked the Group if they support adding additional freestanding lights along Elm Street as he feels that the area is too dark in places. Attendees expressed support for that as long as it was targeted.

In response to questions about the pedestrian connection between the municipal parking lot and the Common, Mr. Moonan suggested installing gateway arches at both ends of the pedestrian area directing people to Millbury Center at the parking lot entrance and to the municipal parking lot at the Farnsworth Court entrance. He also recommended new wayfinding signage at all municipal parking lot access points and interpretive signage at key locations, such as at the pedestrian plaza at the library and the large rain garden at the River Street intersection.

Marylou Mulhane questioned pedestrian access to the Senior Center. Mr. Moonan confirmed that they will design a sidewalk connection to the Senior Center.

Mr. Moonan suggested that the group email him any follow-up questions or feedback.

The Group discussed the Community Forum, which they agreed to schedule for Thursday, January 7, 2021 via ZOOM. The format will be as follows:

- Project overview via PowerPoint, including focus area description, purpose of the project, key green infrastructure design features and their purposes, project benefits, anticipated costs, and project schedule.
- Presentation of the design
- Community feedback, including question/answer period
- Next steps

Outreach will consist of distributing fliers (mail to all downtown property owners & renters, hand deliver to businesses, distribute in board/department mailboxes, upload onto Millbury website, cable access channels & Facebook pages, post in community rooms of Housing Authority, Brierly Pond Village, Cordis Mills, Cobblestone Village), press release in Millbury Sutton Chronicle, and post on electronic message center on Lower Common. Ms. Mulhane agreed to help with flier distribution and Chief Hamilton agreed to post the flier on the various Millbury Facebook pages.

The next meeting of the Focus Group will take place via ZOOM at 3:30 pm on Wednesday, January 20th.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.