



**Town of Concord
Economic Vitality Committee Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2023**

- Present:** Jen Schunemann, Chair, Mike Lawson, Cato Anderson, Steve Verrill, Jan Turnquist, Mark Martines and Dawn Rennert.
- Staff:** Beth Williams, Tourism Manager and Marcia Rasmussen, Director Planning and Land Management and Erin Stevens, Transportation and Mobility Planner
- Others:** Karlan Reed, Jennifer Clarke and John Cooley

The meeting was called to order at 4:19 P.M.

Ms. Schunemann took the attendance:

Mr. Lawson - Aye
Mr. Anderson - Aye
Mr. Verrill - Aye
Ms. Turnquist - Aye
Mr. Martines - Aye
Ms. Rennert - Aye
Ms. Schunemann - Aye
Ms. Williams - Aye
Ms. Rasmussen - Aye

MINUTES & MEETING SCHEDULE
September 21, 2022

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Verrill and seconded by Ms. Rennert it was **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting of September 21, 2022.

November 16, 2022

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Verrill and seconded by Ms. Rennert it was **VOTED** to **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting of November 16, 2022.

Ms. Schunemann has distributed a meeting schedule to the committee that covers the year of 2023. The committee acknowledged that they received the list and it looks good to post for 2023. Ms. Schunemann will post the following meeting dates, for 2023, with the Town Clerk's Office:

February 15, 2023 - 8:30 A.M.
March 15, 2023 - 4:30 P.M.
April 19, 2023 - 8:30 A.M.
May 17, 2023 - 4:30 P.M.
June 14, 2023 - 8:30 A.M.
July 19, 2023 - 4:30 P.M.

August 16, 2023 - 8:30 A.M.
September 20, 2023 - 4:30 P.M.
October 18, 2023 - 8:30 A.M.
November 15, 2023 - 4:30 P.M.

TOWN UPDATES

Ms. Williams stated that the EVC Committee report, for the Annual Town Report, was due last Friday. She will update the report to cover 2022 and will forward her version to the Town Manager's Office.

The Special Town Meeting, to vote on 4 warrant articles, including increased funding for the Concord Middle School building project, will take place on January 19, 2023.

Ms. Williams stated that tourism continues to be busy even during the winter months. A new Literary Writers Tour Operator will be visiting Concord next week to explore and decide where his tour may be able to take visitors in Concord. He will subsequently visit 5 more times to complete his research and develop a Literary Tour of Concord.

Ms. Williams also stated that she sends a monthly newsletter to the Business Community to alert them when bus tours will be stopping in Concord. This helps businesses with staffing levels and so they can be prepared for large groups of people at one time. She stated that most visitors choose to stay at the Colonial Inn because of its walkability to most locations. They are less likely to choose the two hotels that are further away from the center of town.

Ms. Rasmussen stated that Concord has received \$15,000 in grants that will be used to improve tourism in both Concord and West Concord. In West Concord, photos will be taken of businesses to add to the Visit Concord Webpage to promote West Concord businesses. In Concord, the money will be used to update the Visitor Center Map and provide the ability to interpret the map in many different languages.

Mr. Martines asked Ms. Rasmussen when she will be retiring and will she be sharing her knowledge of Concord upon her departure. Ms. Rasmussen stated that she will be retiring at the end of May, 2023 and will share her insights with the Town Manager prior to her departure.

Ms. Rasmussen stated that the search for the Economic Vitality Officer has begun and is being coordinated by the Town Manager's Office.

Ms. Turnquist stated that the Concord Players will be performing Little Women in the Spring 2023.

ERIN STEVENS

Ms. Stevens made a Power Point Presentation to outline what is being proposed to improve safety, in Concord Center, for vehicles and pedestrians. The town has been awarded a \$200,000 grant through Mass DOT's Shared Streets and Grant Program. It is

being proposed to install four bump outs on Main Street with two being placed in front of the building that houses Footstock and two being placed in front of the building that houses Graem Chocolate. In front of Footstock they will also take out two parking spaces to create a Pocket Park with two trees planted and possibly a bench to sit upon. The trees will provide a shaded area during the summer months and the bench will provide a place for people to sit and enjoy the view.

She outlined several factors that was considered when developing this plan:

1. New guiding lines will be drawn to alert vehicles where to drive on Main St.
2. With the Pocket Park, drainage will be an issue. To alleviate this, stormwater grates will be installed in the new crosswalks to alleviate runoff from storms.
3. Bump Outs will allow pedestrians to be visible before crossing the street to allow for better sites lines for vehicles to see them.

She stated that new crosswalks will be installed to allow for greater visibility. She has considered several options for the crosswalks including Polymer Cement and Stamped Concrete. With Polymer Cement the crosswalks would look like brick without all of the maintenance and cost associated with maintaining real brick. They would also be long lasting and low maintenance. A sand texture would be put on top to alleviate slipping and they would all be ADA Compliant. If a crack occurs they are able to be patched easily. In the middle the crosswalks there would be a cobblestone look.

Mr. Anderson asked whether the crosswalk near Vanderhoof's Hardware would be upgraded also. Ms. Stevens stated that the funding will be focused on the area in the center of Walden and Main St. and future funding might be considered to upgrade other crosswalks in town.

Mr. Lawson asked what the timetable is for completing the project. Ms. Stevens stated that the money needs to be used by the end of December 2023. Construction will begin in the spring and will take a couple of weeks to complete. If it is not possible to begin in the spring then it would begin in the fall. Ms. Schunemann asked Ms. Stevens to contact the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Community to discuss timing of the project.

Mr. Martines asked whether the right turn onto Walden St., from Main St., will be affected by the changes. Ms. Stevens stated that the right turn will not be changed except to tighten the radius slightly. All the turns have been tested and trucks and larger vehicles are able to make the turns. She also stated that there are no plans to install bollards at this time but larger curbs will help with the problem of visibility from the side of the street. Mr. Martines asked whether there will be a bench or a bike rack installed at the Pocket Park. Ms. Stevens stated that they are exploring all the options but no decisions have been made.

Mr. Cooley asked the difference in cost between Polymer Cement and actual bricks. Ms. Stevens stated that actual bricks are very costly and break and wear over time. They also can be dislodged by a snowplow or the changes in the weather and would not be safe for

strollers and wheelchairs. Polymer Cement is ADA compliant as it is flat and wears better than actual bricks.

The committee thanked Ms. Stevens for all the work she has done on this project and thanked her for her presentation.

REV250

Ms. Schunemann stated that we are 26 months away from the 250th anniversary of April 19, 1775. She asked the committee what they can do to support tourism and commerce. There is an estimate that 1.1 Million visitors will come to Concord throughout the year.

Ms. Williams stated that she has not heard as to whether the Town will be granted a FLAP grant. The recruiting of workers will be important for businesses during REV250.

Mr. Martines stated that infrastructure is crucial to this being a success including installing a new cellular tower in or around Concord Center. Ms. Clarke agreed that a new cellular tower is important to businesses being able to use their equipment for sales and marketing. The EVC could consider asking the town about putting up a cellular tower because without it there is a disruption to business throughout town.

Ms. Williams stated that Chris Carmody is working on preparing impact statements to outline how crucial this is to the town. Ms. Williams is preparing an impact statement and suggested this committee should prepare one also. Mr. Martines suggested we ask the Select Board to prioritize this problem, with cellular service, in Concord Center. It was suggested that business owners also prepare impact statements to outline how this has affected their business.

Mr. Anderson stated that the letter should come from this committee and not having proper cellular service could be in violation of the Telecommunications Act.

Mr. Lawson stated that the letters should come from business owners and the committee and sent to the Select Board. He also stated that the town should set aside money for REV250 to accommodate the increased cost of hosting a large group of people. The town needs to address this issue quickly.

Ms. Schunemann agreed that the committee should send an impact letter to the Select Board as soon as possible. She will draft a letter with the thoughts of this committee and send a draft to the committee members. If the committee members have comments they should send them to Ms. Schunemann only so they will not be in violation of the Open Meeting Law. Once all the comments are reviewed she will draft a final statement to send to the Select Board. Ms. Reed asked that Ms. Schunemann make the impact letter public once it is sent to the Select Board. Ms. Clarke suggested that Ms. Schunemann speak with Mr. Carmody about this issue, before she sends the impact letter, and identify herself as a partner. She will ask Mr. Carmody if this is the correct process to pursue concerning this issue.

ADJOURNMENT

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Martines and seconded by Mr. Lawson it was **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** to **ADJOURN** the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn H. Dee

Sr. Administrative Assistant