

**Junction Village Open Space
Task Force
Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2022
Online Zoom Video Session**

Pursuant to a notice and agenda filed with the Town Clerk, the Junction Village Open Space Task Force met at 5:00 p.m. on April 13, 2022, and held a virtual online public meeting via <https://zoom.us>.

Members present: Christa Collins, Sue Felshin (clerk), Carlene Hempel (chair), Steve Irza.

Also present: William Murray, PLACES Associates; Elizabeth Rust, Director, Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO); Peter Lowitt, liaison from the Concord Housing Development Corporation (CHDC); Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management for the Town of Concord; Linda Escobedo, Select Board liaison; and two members of the public.

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Hempel at 5:01 p.m.

Presentation:

The Chair introduced Mr. Murray, who presented the new concept plan. He noted changes from the version presented in the public forum of Oct. 14, 2021: More screening has been added between the meadow portion and MCI Concord. Man-made elements have been reduced in the river portion. Some minor changes will be made to the concept plan based on feedback from the site walk with the Natural Resources Commission and the Finance Committee. The project budget has reduced considerably due to the reduced scope of the project. Since the plan is still at the concept level, the plan could still change in response to concerns.

The Chair noted further specifics: The river overlooks have been much reduced in size and the path has pulled back from river, not so far as to prevent enjoyment of the vistas to the river; it is far enough from the river that it doesn't infringe on the Wild and Scenic nature of the river. The river area will be enhanced by removing debris and invasives. More shade trees have been added to the triangle—leafy trees that can provide both shade and habitat for small animals. Mr. Murray pointed out plantings for pollinators and the recessed seating area with seat wall. It was noted that all art plinths have been pulled away from the river, and are now all in southern kiosk and triangle areas.

Public comment:

Jean Easterday of 48 Maple St. said that she learned about the public forum from a flyer. She said she feels bad for residents of Winthrop St. who will have to endure construction traffic for the assisted living project. She asked if there will be any parking for this open space and whether there would be outdoor lighting. The Chair noted that construction traffic for the assisted living project will be routed via the prison access road next to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and by Elm

Street on the other side of the prison. There will be no designated parking for the open space. Nearby public parking will include parking for the BFRT off Commonwealth Ave. by MCI Concord. People will be able to walk to the open space from there or the village center. There will be bicycle parking at both the southeast and northwest corners of the site. There will be no outdoor lighting, although spillover can be expected from the prison property. Ms. Rasmussen added that additional BFRT parking is designated at the northern end of the commuter rail parking lot, and there will also be nearby parking at new Gerow Park.

Ms. Easterday asked if there will be fencing. She was answered that there won't be, except for split rail fencing along the path to the north of the assisted facility (with a break in the fence for emergency vehicle access); however, the facility could choose to add its own fencing.

Ms. Easterday asked how maintenance will be covered. She was answered that the land and conservation restriction will be held by the Concord Housing and Development Corporation. If the Town were to pay to maintain such a property, that would be a new model for the Town. Natural Resources Director Delia Kaye has said she is willing to discuss using Town resources or connecting with the Trails Committee. The Green Thumbs have stated that they are not interested in taking on responsibility to maintain this land. The Task Force is seeking answers to the question of maintenance. The plan will call for very low maintenance after the three years of maintenance as part of invasives removal. It will probably be a carry-in-carry-out park without trash receptacles.

Ms. Easterday suggested asking the assisted living facility if it would be willing to help with maintenance given that they will gain a very nice park adjacent to their facility. She thanked the Task Force for its work.

Pam Rockwell of 1810 Main St. and a member of OARS commented that she came to the forum to show support. OARS pleased with the plan for invasives removal and minimalist treatment by river and the Task Force's responsiveness to input from the Natural Resources Commission. She asked what OARS can do to support the project.

Ms. Rust added that there will also be a small amount of fencing at the northeast corner of the project to block off access to the prison from an old cart path. She noted that the Grantham Group has not indicated an interested in contributing to maintenance, but perhaps if a clear maintenance plan was created, they would be interested in partnering in the future. Given rising construction costs, it would have after occupancy of their facility, perhaps considerably after occupancy.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion made by Ms. Collins and seconded by Ms. Hempel, the Task Force adjourned at 5:30 pm with all voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Felshin (clerk)