

WEST CONCORD TASK FORCE
MINUTES
MAY 12, 2011

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the West Concord Task Force was held at 7:30p.m. at Concord Park.

Present were Phil Adams, Chair; Nancy Carey, Clerk; Bobbie Brennan, Gary Clayton, Sue Felshin, Don Hawley, Gary Kleiman, Chris Sgarzi, and Jimi Two Feathers. Also present were Planning Director Marcia Rasmussen and members of the community Bob Andrews, Meg Gaudet, Ray Hanselman, Berni Jenkins, Leslie Sederlund, and Morwen Two Feathers.

Absent: David Holdorf.

The Meeting was called to order by Phil Adams at 7:30PM.

MINUTES

Chris Sgarzi moved to approve the minutes of 21 March 2011, as amended. Gary Clayton seconded. All **VOTED** in favor.

FUTURE OF TASK FORCE

The Task Force discussed its direction after Town Meeting and whether Task Force members believe that the Task Force has fulfilled its charge. Chair Phil Adams noted that there has been some question about when the Task Force's charge ends. He stated that Ruth Lauer reports that the Task Force's charge ends May 2012, after having been extended when new members were appointed. It was noted that the charge as posted on the Town website states that the WCTF's term ends December 2012. The Chair asked members whether they think that the Task Force has fulfilled the charge, with the exception of drafting a charge for a follow-on West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC) and delivering it to the Board of Selectmen. Discussion included: The Task Force's tasks evolved since the original charge was open-ended; the fulfillment of the Task Force's charge isn't delivery of a draft charge for a WCAC, but rather implementation of a WCAC; there is no compelling reason for the Task Force to put itself out of business until there is a new committee; the Board of Selectmen will make the decision regarding dissolving the Task Force and creating a new committee; if the Task Force thinks it has concluded its work, it can so inform the Board of Selectmen.

The Chair noted that the Task Force needs to draft a report to the Board of Selectmen saying whether the Task Force has completed its charge; Task Force liaison Selectman Greg Howes has told the Chair that the Board of Selectmen will receive the report at one meeting and vote at the following meeting. Discussion included: we can put in our report that we will consider our charge fulfilled when a WCAC is appointed; such a statement signals distrust of the Board of Selectmen; it is not a matter of distrust but rather that finding and appointing committee members may take weeks or months and it is important not to have a gap between committees; if we turn in a report to the Board of Selectmen, this could be the Task Force's last meeting.

DRAFT CHARGE FOR WEST CONCORD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Task Force discussed the draft charge for a West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC) [see List of Attachments]. Discussion included: if the WCAC reports to the Planning Board, quarterly reports should be submitted to the Planning Board; alternatively, the WCAC should report to the Board of Selectmen, not the Planning Board, because there are likely to be issues that require communication with Concord Public Works, the Natural Resources Commission, the MBTA, and other parties that fall outside the purview of the Planning Board; it has often been said that the White Pond Advisory Committee can serve as a model for a West Concord Advisory Committee and the White Pond Advisory Committee is appointed by the Board of Selectmen..

Call to Order

Minutes

Future

WCAC Charge

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Citizen comment: Mr. Ray Hanselman commented that the Task Force reports to the Board of Selectmen and should not dissolve itself now because there are issues that will come up in the next 6 to 12 months that the Task Force should remain in place for.

The Task Force discussed the geographic scope of the WCAC. Discussion included: we should be as clear as possible about the geographic scope of the WCAC; the scope should include, for example, Rideout Playground and Winthrop Street; a committee will be ineffective if its scope is too wide and unfocused; the WCAC could cover the business, village, and industrial districts and public infrastructure costing more than \$X; would the WCAC comment on, for example, replacement of equipment at Rideout?; no, but it would comment on, for example, land acquisition adjacent to Rideout; the Master Plan includes Rideout; the WCAC will provide oversight; the Planning Board already provides oversight; the draft charge should include a draft map indicating the geographic scope, based on the Master Plan; the Master Plan includes Rideout and the rotary. There was consensus on the Master Plan map boundaries as boundaries for a draft map for the WCAC. Discussion included: boundaries could be changed in the future if deemed appropriate; the WCAC could still be consulted about areas outside its geographic scope, for example, Emerson Hospital. Planning Director Marcia Rasmussen will provide a map to attach to the draft charge for the Board of Selectmen.

The Task Force discussed the number of committee members to recommend and membership qualifications. Discussion included: Seven is too many for logistical reasons of assembling a quorum; having a larger number makes a larger quorum but gives a larger pool from which people can come. The WCAC could be modeled like the Natural Resources Commission with associate members as trainees; this is a way to get people involved and can be a lead-on to committees like the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals; the committee should have liaisons from the Planning Board and Board of Finance; since they are already busy, they can't be expected to come to every meeting and shouldn't be voting members; every member should have a connection to West Concord; it's okay to have some members without West Concord connections in order to get members with the recommended skills. Jimi Two Feathers noted that he is interested in serving on the WCAC for its first year.

The Task Force discussed the WCAC's proposed responsibilities. Discussion included: For example, would the Green Thumbs have to review work with the WCAC before planting a window box? shrubs in Mandrioli Park?; there is a difference between review and notification; for private property, it would make sense only to require review for changes requiring a building permit or site plan review; people who wanted to could request review even when it is not required; will the Town Manager and Public Works come to the WCAC?; review should not be required for interior changes; the WCAC should be a forum where future needs and directions should be brought to the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen; the current draft charge is too reactive and the WCAC should be prospective; the Town Manager has stated his preference for a purely reactive committee; the WCAC should be proactive in a strictly advisory way; the WCAC should be proactive about issues such as seeking Community Preservation Act moneys to carry out parts of the Master Plan such as a town common; since the draft charge gives the Master Plan as the scope, it isn't a "fishing expedition".

The Task Force discussed whether there is any reason for the WCAC to cover anything other than private work requiring a building permit, site plan review or a special permit, and Town work. Discussion included: there might be state and federal issues such as the Assabet's status as a Wild and Scenic River or advocating for a wider sidewalk on the Main St. Rte. 62 bridge; the WCAC could cover any other issues if asked to do so; can we require the Board of Selectmen to notify the WCAC about other relevant issues?.

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Task Force members made various specific recommendations for changes to the draft charge which were agreed to by consensus. Sue Felshin was tasked with updating the draft charge with these changes. The draft charge will be delivered to the Board of Selectmen with a cover letter to be written by Gary Kleiman. The Task Force discussed the schedule: if the Task Force is to present a report to the Board of Selectmen at their June 20 meeting, including a brief review of the Task Force's charge, accomplishments, and a proposed charge for a WCAC, then the draft charge must be delivered several days earlier; it would be preferable to meet with the Board of Selectmen earlier to avoid losing momentum; we should shoot for the May 23 meeting; depending on the date with the Board of Selectmen, Mr. Clayton will present if Mr. Adams is unavailable.

NEXT MEETING

A meeting was scheduled for May 19th, at 7:30 p.m., location TBD, with the understanding that it would be cancelled if not needed.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was UNANIMOUSLY

VOTED: To adjourn the Open Session and to conclude business for the evening.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Felshin
Approved: 28 June 2011

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

1. **"DRAFT CHARGE for a WEST CONCORD ADVISORY COMMITTEE"**, Draft WCAC Charge 2011.05.12.doc

Next meeting

Adjourn

DRAFT CHARGE for a WEST CONCORD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mission

It is the intention of the Board of Selectmen (BOS), in creating the West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC), to provide a mechanism for thoughtful and public examination of the issues surrounding future development, growth, and improvement in West Concord Center. As an advisory and liaison to the Planning Board, the Committee will be an advocate for West Concord in preserving and enhancing its character and feel. The WCAC will also be a resource for developers advising on how future developments can best support the implementation of the Village Master Plan and adhere to the Planning Board's approved Design Guidelines. Finally, the WCAC can be a focal point for soliciting input from citizens, business operators, and property owners as appropriate. The WCAC was recommended by the West Concord Task Force (2008), the Village Centers Study (2007) and the Comprehensive Long Range Plan (2005).

Responsibility

1. As an advocate for West Concord, the WCAC shall work with the Town Manager, town departments such as the Planning Department and Public Works, and town committees such as the Planning Board and Board of Selectman, to review proposed ideas for development, renovation, circulation, beautification, etc. and promote the enhancement of the existing character, by using the West Concord Village Center Master Plan ("Master Plan") in current or updated form, and its successor documents and plans. The Master Plan is the roadmap for future development in West Concord Center and the primary guide for the WCAC. The WCAC shall also use the West Concord Design Guidelines as a frame of reference and shall solicit community feedback as appropriate.
2. Create a process whereby commentary from the WCAC shall be required by the Building Inspector prior to issuance of a building permit and shall be part of the application whenever a Special Permit or Site Plan Review is required. These guidelines and the process for review shall be updated as needed as changes to design guidelines, zoning revisions, and/or other recommendations of the Master Plan are adopted by the Town in the manner required.
3. Review and comment on any addition, modification or new building or landscape project, except a single-family detached dwelling or existing two-family dwelling unit that shall remain as that use that is proposed within the outline accepted by the BOS as the WCAC domain. Projects include new construction, additions, and visible exterior modifications.
4. Reviews by the WCAC shall be publically promoted and encourage awareness and community feedback.

Suggested Timetable

1. Quarterly status reports to the BOS
2. November 30, 2011, establish a Design Review process for acceptance by the Planning Board
3. Town Meeting 2012 and following years: Submit to the Planning Board proposals for warrant articles for reimplementation of design guidelines as form-based codes with regulatory force (if and when determined appropriate).

Membership Requirements and Expectations

1. Seven members will be appointed for three year terms. Terms will be staggered to ensure continuity: no more than three terms will end in any one year.
2. The Committee shall hold scheduled monthly meetings, and meet with greater frequency if deemed necessary by the Committee, the BOS, or the Town Manager.
3. The committee shall include members with the following qualifications, skills, and/or expertise:
 - Working familiarity with West Concord Task Force initiatives including but not limited to the Master Plan, Design Guidelines, and Zoning Bylaw
 - Connection to West Concord (at least three members): Resident, property owner, local business operator, tenant
 - Specific skills: Architecture, planning, site design, engineering, environment and natural resources, sustainability
 - General skills: Community outreach, meeting management, communications
4. The Committee shall include the following liaisons as additional, non-voting participants:
 - Planning Board
 - Finance Committee

Other Considerations

The Committee shall elect a chair and a committee clerk, who will be responsible for maintaining the record of the committee's discussions, votes and actions.

All meetings will be conducted in conformance with the Open Meeting Law including proper notice and posting of meetings, and all records will be maintained in conformance with the Public record Law. Public discussion is expected to take place before recommendations are forwarded to the BOS.

Requests for staff assistance or operating expenses will be made through the Town Manager who will endeavor to comply with reasonable requests.