Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC) was held at 7:00 p.m. in the Clock Tower Room at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center.

**Members present:**
Peter DeRosa, Chair
Jeff Collins
Steve Irza
Amy Kaiser
Susan Mlodozeniec
Geoff Walton

**Members absent:**
Tim Alexander

**Other town committee representatives present:**
Matt Johnson, Planning Board
Carlene Hempel, WCJ CDC
Susan Bates, Select Board

**Public**
Jack Madigan, 215 Prairie St.
Margot Kimball, Proprietor, Village Art Room

P. DeRosa called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Item No. 1: Approve Minutes**
May Minutes were unanimously approved.

Pete said that Tim has offered to take over as chair of committee as of next meeting and Pete will go back to being Clerk. Steve said that we usually take one of the months of the summer off. The group agreed that our next meeting would be in August, skipping the July meeting.

June meeting minutes will be approved in August.

**Item No. 2: Debrief about the Open House**
The Annual WCAC Open House was held at Harvey Wheeler Community Center on May 8th, 2019.

a. The Open House was a success. People were engaged at the various stations. We should continue in years ahead. There were lots of side conversations people amongst people in the room together and the room was buzzing.

b. Suggestions for future Open Houses were proposed
   i. It would be good to have sign in sheet and have attendees sign up to follow us on social media.
   ii. We should create an email list
iii. We should have people sign up for the West Concord Google Group

c. Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Table (BFRT)
   i. There were questions about when it is opening and when phase 2B over Rt 2 will be completed. Marsha [Rasmussen] was in the middle of the room & she answered questions when stations couldn’t answer. Marsha made a good connection with a BFRT abutter.

d. Complete Streets Table
   i. Chris Olbrot, the town engineer and a consultant attended to discuss the Cut Through Study and the Complete Streets Initiative. All major streets with cut through issues had been identified and CPW was collecting traffic data that week. Chris said that they would have a public session about the findings. The Complete Streets Initiative will involve public input to identify missing connections for sidewalks, pedestrians, bikers. CPW will have one public session, will digest the feedback, and then will have another public session to identify priorities for using state funding. We will help promote these public sessions.
   ii. Jack Madigan, resident 215 Prairie St., asked why they didn’t measure the traffic flow of Rt. 62 for The cut through study to create a baseline.
      1. Possible that it was measured when studying the impact of building a development at 1440 Main St., the state may have the data

e. West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee (WCJCDC) Table
   i. Margo Kimball and Ann Sussman were staffing the table.
   ii. Carlene Hempel, representative of WCJCDC, is concerned that the Dance Studio in West Concord Village has sheer curtains and lights in one of their windows facing the street. It is a gateway business to the Village and should look welcoming. Margo suggests that the window could become a display window for the Village Art Room. Also, they have a longtime customer who’s a professional photographer may be putting photos of dancers there.
   iii. Margo: Village Art Room (Art Gym) had big public project that culminated in Art Scramble. The last project was commissioned by WCJCDC. It would be great to figure out where the next art installation will go.
   iv. WCJCDC is at the end of its consultant process – on Mon. at 5:30 [June 10, 2019] they will get the preliminary findings. WCJCDC would like to partner with the WCAC to create a public/private partnership rooted in the Village to support businesses. The Chamber doesn’t focus on businesses here. There’s not enough staff in town. The design of the bridge to Baker Ave will be a work of art, a game changer for the Village. On June 30 there will be a report from the consultants. WCJCDC should go on a road show and pitch the ideas. The Baker Ave businesses should be part of it. Ideas suggested during the meeting to promote the Village are a steps challenge, publicizing new rental bikes and publicizing a map of canoe landing spots that has just been created.

f. Green Thumbs Table

g. Concord Recreation Department (Concord Rec) Table
   i. This table shared plans for the Gerow Land. Various phases of Gerow Land development include adding parking spaces, restroom facilities and a dock. The back of the property will be accessible from the BFRT after the trail is built out further.
More BFRT construction is happening in the fall. There was a vote at the most recent Town Meeting to have an easement on the property for the BFRT.

h. WCAC Table – Topic: 1440 Main St. PRD
   i. There was discussion of the 1440 Main St. Planned Residential Development (PRD). WCAC Member Jeff Collins recused himself. Select Board Representative Susan Bates said that she liked the reference point of showing the PRD compared to the previous proposed development plan at 1440 Main St. at the Open House. Jack Madigan, resident, said that the Open House was the first he heard of the 1440 Main St. PRD, it will completely change the land by removing the trees, and that it’s the last big parcel near West Concord Village.
   ii. There is a town tree health study going on. The town will plant shade trees in your yard. Unhealthy trees are being removed and it’s important to replace them to sequester carbon.
   iii. WCAC has seen plans for the 1440 Main St. project. It’s being considered by the Planning Board and is in its 4th/5th iteration. WCAC would not be re-involved at this point.
   iv. Matt Johnson, Planning Board, speaking on his own behalf, said that the current PRD plan is creating a more pedestrian-friendly, less car-centric layout. On the Planning Board many feel like it’s not what we preferred. But we haven’t gotten to the recommendation stage. It checks off boxes of existing PRD bylaws more or less. The PRD bylaw is out of date, we need to revise it. For future PRDs we’d write bylaws that are more in line with our long range plan. The current PRD laws are not aligned with our long range plan. It will be part of town meeting next year. It won’t affect this project. But it’s not too late for WCAC to have input. At our joint meeting in the fall we can do that. WCAC is supposed to weigh in on zoning laws.
   v. Most of the conversations about the 1440 Main St. PRD at the Open House were about the comparison between the initial plan and the current, denser plan. The current plan is a by-right design that the developer can build. We’d like to think there’s a 3rd better option but we don’t have one on the table right now.

i. WCAC Table – Topic: 2 questions posed at Open House, one about reactions to having more 2 family homes within ½ mile of West Concord Village and another about amenities people wanted to have in West Concord Village.
   i. 2 family homes
      1. There is concern about schools getting overcrowded if we have higher density housing in Concord
      2. Currently 26% of Concord families have kids in school; observation is that when older residents move out, families with kids move in
      3. In other communities where 1-family homes have been converted into 2-family homes, what are the impacts been?
      4. Would one-bedroom homes encourage households that don’t increase the school-age population?
      5. Matt Johnson, Planning Board, says that all of these questions have already been raised and require lots of investigation. We may not have time to get 4 different options for housing choice completely vetted. WCAC has a role to
play especially in the village center and 2 family discussion. We will try to put draft bylaw language out there in July. Sept. would be good time for WCAC to get involved. Look at the historical patterns of development and master plan and come up with recommendations.

6. We are struggling with the perfect picture of higher density, defined by number of units of housing. We need a variation in housing, we need to have workforce housing.

7. We’ll put it the 2-family home question on a WCAC agenda and provide a forum for West Concord input.

There was a brief segue about the Town budget and taxes:

Susan Bates: This is an initiative that the Select Board is taking on, the excluded debt that we’re carrying now. There’s $90M for CMS and more capital projects also introduced. We need a capital plan. We have [repair] issues with municipal buildings. We’ll have a plan in place by the end of the CMS planning process. We want to make the right financial planning decisions. We can’t bundle this all together. We are still paying for Alcott and Thoreau [schools]. The High School doesn’t come off until 2040.

Steve: Is there any talk about bifurcating commercial + residential tax rates? They are currently the same.

ii. The 2nd question at our table was what kinds of businesses, activities, and amenities would you like in West Concord town center? WCJCDC was doing a poll at their table and we’d like to see the results of that as well. Responses to our question were:

1. A theatre
   a. Concord Youth Theatre is moving to a space in the West Concord Village area, it will have more seats and will be a great fixture in town. Would like to know if there’ll be more programming than youth theatre.

2. A grocery store
   a. Debra’s has room to expand
   b. A big box grocery would be pushing through product, it would be hard to have 2 groceries in West Concord

3. At this point we’ve solicited feedback in person in different ways. Should we survey on a platform? How do we respond to what people want?
   a. Grocery, zoning, and parking challenges: the WCJCDC consulting study results will help inform this. If we were to try to get input via social media or an online poll, how does this get impacted by open meeting law?

Item No. 3: Homework for the Aug. meeting is to read the WCJCDC Consultant’s Report and review Zoning language from Matt Johnson.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held Aug. 7, 2019

Respectfully submitted, Susan Mlodozeniec