



TOWN OF CONCORD

2229 Main Street Advisory Task Force

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

July 11, 2023

Paul Boehm, chair, called the meeting to order at 8:01AM. Members present per roll call: Court Booth, Rich Feeley, Carrie Flood, Kurt Herman, Pam Hill, Kleiman, David Ropeik, Karl Seidman.

Also present on Zoom: Terri Ackerman (Select Board), Matt Robbie (SKEO), Kara Nierenberg (EPA), Pam Rockwell (2229 MSOC), Megan Zambuto (Deputy Town Manager), Chris Carmody (Town Risk Manager).

The Task Force discussed the next steps in the legal analysis. The Town Manager will request a budget and workplan from Town Counsel. The Select Board has not yet approved an allocation for this work. There was general agreement with the four tasks outlined. These are:

1. Research title to the site
2. Develop a plan for legal acquisition of the site by the Town (should it decide to acquire).
3. Specify an approach to limiting the Town's liability if it acquires the site.
4. Steps to maximize the legal right to proposed reuses.

In the discussion, members expressed concern that this scope of work may need more detail, and should indicate the coordination between Counsel and the Task Force and SKEO as use options are further developed. The analysis should consider the likely reuses, and the applicability of the Town's current insurance policies to any future liability. Mr. Boehm indicated that he would flesh out the tasks and bring the proposed Scope of Work for Counsel to the Task Force for approval at its next meeting. This would not be a formal RFP, but rather a document to be used by the Town Manager to obtain a proposed budget for these tasks Counsel. This would then need to be funded by the Select Board.

There were no changes in the proposed minutes of the June 28 site visit. Members thought it would be good to have photographs (perhaps the drone photographs taken by de maximis) to provide a better background for community input. Ms. Nierenberg said she would check EPA rules on the use of drone photographs.

Discussion followed on the future sequence of events. Clean up work is likely to continue through at least 2028, but if the Town is to acquire, it should make this decision before clean-up is completed, even if actual acquisition occurs later. This would allow time for more detailed planning of the recommended uses before the site is available, and potentially to complete the clean-up in a way that is supportive of the recommended uses. The final analysis should also include the risks to the Town if it does not acquire the site.

Mr. Kleiman, Mr. Feeley and Mr. Robbie presented an updated version of the Reuse Work Plan included in the meeting packet. Mr. Kleiman recommended that the group start with the sub districts of the site developed in the previous report. A “zoning approach” should be used, specifying the uses to be permitted /encouraged in each zone, but not to recommend a very specific project. Mr. Feeley presented the preliminary list of “market” data to be developed by the Reuse Group. The results of the market research and risk assessment would then provide input for discussion at community meetings

Task Force members had the following suggestions/recommendations for the Reuse work group.

1. The Council of Aging should be added to the list of Town Agencies who are potential users.
2. Town agencies should be formally asked for their input to the “demand” questions, and asked to provide this input in writing. Most agencies will have applicable data which they can provide
3. Siting a regional emergency communications center at the site was suggested, given that this is a current issue. Public safety leadership will be added to the list of Town agencies asked for input.
4. Reuse considerations should take a longer term view of the future, and not just focus on the Town’s immediate needs.
5. During the preparation of the previous report, concern had been raised about using the site as a collector for regional commuter parking that would increase traffic on Rte. 62, as opposed to a link in the multi-community *Concord Connect* transportation network under development serving Concord and adjacent communities that would serve to reduce traffic on Rte. 62. Other Task Force members indicated this could be important to consider as part of the “Responsible Regionalism” principle under our long-range plan.
6. Any queries of developers should specifically include firms/individuals who have already worked with “brownfield” sites.
7. Assessment of potential demand at the site should take into account planning for reuse of the Peabody School site. The School Board is already considering reuse options at that site.
8. The possibility of placing solar panels at the site should be included in the discussion with CLP, in addition to energy storage and other space needs of the utility

All agreed that it is important to be careful to remain neutral in receiving input on future uses. Any personal preference for future use should be acknowledged, and not bias the evaluation of market research and community input.

The minutes of the June 27 meeting were approved as submitted.

Next meeting: July 25, 7:30 PM. The work plan submitted by the Risk Assessment and Communications work group (included in the packet for this meeting) will be discussed then.