



Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk of Concord, a meeting of the Permanent Memorial Subcommittee of the Concord250 Executive Committee was held in the Trustees Room in the Concord Free Public Library on July 18, 2023.

Members Present: Gary Clayton, Christa Collins, Nancy Koehn, Joe Palumbo, Polly Reeve, Tooley Rogers, Sasaki Associates members Joe Hibbard, Greg Havens, Ponnapa “Gift” Prakkamakul, and guests Ann Clifford, Architectural Historian and Senior Planner, Concord Historical Commission, and Nancy Fresella-Lee, Historian and Monuments Documenter, Mimi Graney, Concord Economic Vitality Manager

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 2:03 PM; a quorum being present.

Minutes of the June 28, 2023 meeting were reviewed and adopted

Gary reminded all in the room of the three legs of our subcommittee initiatives: 1) uncovering and bringing to light the stories of Concord veterans by organizing and conserving documents in the Concord Free Public Library, 2) planting 250 commemorative trees all around town to commemorate both Concord’s history and the changing environment, and 3) bringing to life the green space at the end of Main Street (heretofore called Parcel 1693) by creating a welcoming and reflective space that honors Concordians whose stories have heretofore been overlooked or not told. He also introduced the Sasaki Associates members and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

1) Messaging Joe Palumbo then led members in a discussion and role playing about messaging of our three initiatives by brainstorming ways to describe these important initiatives to different audiences in a clear, accessible and informative manner, as exemplified by Gary above. We brainstormed tactical methods of getting a clear message to Concordians and others including:

- Select Board and Town Manager
- Conservation Commission Coffees
- Beth Williams’ Tourism Huddle
- Chamber of Commerce
- Concord Business Partnership
- Historical Topics Forum
- Concord Public Schools
- family events
- host tables at town events.
- letters to the Concord Bridge
- write articles for the Concord Bridge and Discover Concord
- listings on the Concord calendar
- create a short traveling video or visual display
- host another public forum

Joe said we also need to get high school students to help with listings on TikTok and other social media sites. Tooley and Joe will work on a spreadsheet to connect these venues with potential audiences, and present this at our next meeting on August 9.

Other concepts discussed: Christa, “Who else’s problem will be solved by what we are trying to do?” Mimi, “What are you asking for when you make your presentations? Understanding? Funding? More historical documents hidden in the attic (Nancy K)? Participation?” Also mentioned was Lexseeher.com a Lexington program to “spotlight ... women and girls across 300 years of the HERstory”. Should we connect or research what other local towns are doing?

2) 250 Trees - Christa will continue to coordinate with the Department of Public Works and volunteers for a Working Group for this project. We will review a draft CPC application at our next meeting on August 9.

3) Sasaki Associates Work Proposal Joe Hibbard described the calendar of Sasaki's three project tasks to be completed by January 2024. He discussed the welcoming green space at the end of Main Street in general, asking about its cultural history. Ann Clifford stated that she has been researching the history of the site and of Concord. Gary asked Ann to complete her historical review in two weeks for them. She agreed to do so.

Mimi stated that the town has recently received a grant from the New England Foundation for the Arts for a work to be installed on the green space site in the fall of 2023. The installation is to be inspired by the location of the jail that Thoreau was kept in and by Thoreau's essay "Civil Disobedience", and how this writing relates to people of today. There will be five finalists selected this fall by a steering committee yet to be determined. Joe Hibbard stated that this could dovetail well with Sasaki's planning for the site, and help to raise its profile for the final project.

He then described the three tasks of the Sasaki conceptual design plan over the next five months: Task 1 - Design Problem Definition - into September, Task 2 - Design Concept Alternatives - through October, and Task 3 - Final Concept - into December. He referenced gestalt psychology that focuses on people perceiving patterns and whole configurations rather than just the individual components - "The whole is more than the sum of its parts." For the purposes of a conceptual design, a project may be broken out into different parts:

- 1) Location or Locality** - and in the case of the green space at the end of Main Street, we have a "home run" - an excellent location;
- 2) Size** - people relate to size - how do people feel when they encounter a statue or memorial that is small, life-sized, or extra large? Without doubt, larger tends to carry more importance;
- 3) Directionality** - horizontal, vertical, neutral, front-to-back - where do we want to establish the emphasis. For instance, an obelisk has meaning to people, as it is a shape used for millennia - people recognize it as important. It is large, vertical and familiar.
- 4) Shape** - hard or soft edges, round, smooth, symmetrical, asymmetrical? All of these decisions can be intentional to carry out the greater meaning of the whole.
- 5) Color, texture, material** - stone? metal?

Projects can non-verbal expressive in form, Joe continued. Are we looking at the green space as a place or an object - or both? There could be a bronze statue or structure, or there could be an abstract monument - like a boulder with a plaque as we see in Monument Square. We can use interpretive words, or convey meaning non-verbally. He reviewed how some of the existing monuments in Monument Square conveyed their message - "The Town of Concord honors...", "To those who died...". Will this project call out the names of individuals, and if so, who, how many? And what are the criteria? If not, a memorial can become generic, have less meaning. But if so, how do we account for new findings of people involved? If African Americans, Native Americans, and women are included - what about the Italians and Irish of the 1920's and 1930's? What about the Chinese? One criterion is did they lead in a way that resonated with social justice and freedom? Joe Palumbo said that we were thinking of using 19th century Concord resident Ellen Garrison for the name - kind of a "place holder" name that would carry a personal meaning for all the other names and the concept of social justice. Polly and Greg Havens stated that technology - a QR code for instance - might be a good way to provide more details with names - something that could easily adapt to changing information - rather than having to re-etch stone or cast a new bronze name plate. He also stated that the memorial needs to be mindful of inclusivity - for the hearing impaired, the blind, and the physically challenged. Joe Palumbo and others said that there needs to be a sense of atonement in whatever we present on the green space. This is our chance, our time to acknowledge this.

Polly added that this is a place - more than a statue or edifice - to be welcoming and for reflection. Since Concord is a literary town, words are important - words that might well fill in for statues. There is always the concern with plaques and names that we will leave people out. Nancy Koehn averred that we could have both words and a statue, that the site has enough size and texture to allow for different modalities. Nancy Fresella-Lee reminded members that statues and physical monuments also involve the on-going cost of cleaning and repair.

Mimi responded to Joe's questions about the intention of the memorial on the green space. There are not many places in the center of Concord where visitors and locals can meet, convene, gather, and feel welcomed. There is no adequate place in the center of town to bring visitors to appreciate our history, our existing monuments and houses. Right now the town doesn't have a place that says, "come on in!"

Joe Hibbard asked how the green space and Monument Square are currently used. Members responded: it is a traffic crossroad for vehicles and bicyclists to other towns, a place of walking tours, vigils of all kinds, political sign holders, parades, the front lawn of the Colonial Inn, which is a hub for visitors itself, funerals, Christmas tree lighting ceremony and more.

Gift asked if we were including others who have an interest in this green space - people that should be included in this process, and that Sasaki Associates should meet with. She mentioned Brandeis Associate Dean Maria Madison regarding African American History in Concord. Members came up with the following list of public agency representatives: • Historic District Commission - Ann Clifford • Natural Resources - Delia Kaye • Department of Planning - Elizabeth Hughes • Public Works - Alan Cathcart • Town Manager - Kerry Lafleur or Megan Zammuto • Public Schools - TBD.

Joe Hibbard answered Gary's query about near term next steps by saying that Task 1 is to define the particulars of the site - the pragmatic issues - the physical issues like the stormwater management system, existing monuments, the driveway and more, as well as the town regulatory scope and process. This review will help direct the project.

Joe Hibbard stated that the best way to meet with key town staff would be for a member or two of Sasaki Associates and a member or two of the Permanent Memorial Subcommittee to meet with each staff person individually. Mimi said she will help organize the calendar for these meetings.

Calendars and timing were discussed, and times for next meetings with for Permanent Memorial Subcommittee, for interfacing with Sasaki Associates and for holding the next public forum were set:

August 7, 2023 - 9:30 - 11:00 AM PMS in Trustees Room Concord Free Public Library

August 30, 2023 2:00-4:30 pm PMS & Sasaki Trustees Room Concord Free Public Library

September 27 - 7:00-9:00 pm public forum The Hearing Room, Concord Town House

Meeting adjourned at 4:34 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted, Tooey Rogers