Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, the West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC) held a virtual online public meeting at 7 p.m. via https://zoom.us.

Members present:
Amy Kaiser, Chair (AK)
John Cooley (JC)
Susan Mlodozeniec (SM)
Amy Robinson (AR)
Ann Sussman (AS)
Geoff Walton (GW)

Additional staff/committees represented:
Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management
Andrew Boardman, Planning Board liaison
Patrick Cleary (Brookside Square Owner LLC)
Kara Angeloni Williams
Janet Miller

AK called the committee to order at approximately 7:11 pm.

Approve Minutes from June Meeting
- AK still working on them, not yet complete
- AK will have them out in a few days to review before September

13B Commonwealth Ave: Proposed Revisions to Architectural Elevations
- Patrick Cleary here from Brookside Square Owner LLC
  - An original developer and current owner of Brookside Square
- AK thanks him for coming on late notice
- Cleary shares screen, with PowerPoint
  - 12/29/20 got approval for amendment to original special permit
  - Shows aerial view of property
  - Permit granted for mixed-use 3-story building
  - 8 residential units, ground floor retail/commercial space
  - Shows rendering of the building before approved changes
  - Shows old photos of Association Hall building that was nearby in the late 1800s (location was where Saltbox Kitchen is now)
  - Based new design off photos of Association Hall, shows side-by-side
  - Eastern half of building is bumped back 5’ to make the building look like 2 situated against one another
○ “West Concord Junction” sign on western facade, to be seen as you enter the Village from the west
○ Original architect passed away, have transitioned to new firm
○ Conscious of significance of location and position within the Village -- owners briefed new firm on major considerations
  ■ Association Hall as inspiration
  ■ Fit with look/history of West Concord
  ■ Simple elegance, look like 2 buildings
  ■ Signature statement for those entering the Village from the west
○ Owner asked for drawings, delay in response, then finally architect responded with a suggestion for making it better
  ■ Shows drawing the architect sent, said it was clear he was right and this was better, so back to the drawing board
  ■ Ran it by Town (Marcia, Elizabeth), who encouraged further development of the plan
  ■ Fairly major changes resulted -- exterior changes lead to significant changes inside as well
  ■ Have spent last few months getting that all set to present
○ New design is a little bit more directly connected to Association Hall
  ■ Shows old vs. new rendering, from all 4 possible approaches
  ■ Windows are a big change (front, sides, and on eastern portion)
  ■ Switched white/red sides
  ■ More consistency with Concord Outfitters building
  ■ Balconies in line with lower signage, no longer extends over sidewalk
  ■ Looking at varying white side in color/materials -- maybe shiplap
  ■ Thought about making sure all 4 sides are architecturally significant, beautiful
  ■ Will ensure windows on all sides look classy, are timeless
● AK thanks him, opens for questions from committee
● AS says to understand design of such an important building, we need to see a plan that shows how it fits with the other buildings (positioning compared to existing buildings)
● MR interrupts and says that is not appropriate, already approved, and only issue is elevation
● AS says she can’t tell how it fits, she’s new to committee and needs to see how it fits in with the whole community, walkability, etc. -- need a drawing to show all of this and show it’s a perfect fit
● Cleary says he tried to show us changes next to previously approved building to show how minimally the footprint has changed
  ○ Change in depth of each recessed door maybe changed overall footprint by about 28 square feet
  ○ Otherwise it’s all the same as before
● AS asks if red building is in line with Debra’s
● Cleary says it is -- says they went to great lengths to accomplish each goal they were given for the property in the community
  ○ One of those was keeping it in line with other businesses on Commonwealth Ave
  ○ AS says thanks, and has one more comment
- AS says evidence-based design is an important thing now, says taking care with windows is super, references Concord Outfitters and 17 Beharrell as buildings that are being careful about wood construction in a way that respects the history/tradition of the area
  - Some of the building looks like simulated wood, but not clear if all is?
  - Cleary says it will be stick built, with elements of steel for structural elements mostly in commercial level
  - Panels outside will be cementitious panels, will look like wood but is hardier and longer-lasting
  - AS thanks him
- AK asks if there is any change in number of units, amount of commercial space
  - Cleary says a couple of very small changes
  - One is recessing of doors
  - Another is some square footage added in common area for necessary utility rooms, took it from a hallway that was not an issue with building codes
  - So have maintained the correct amount of retail/commercial space to account for parking ratios
  - Upper levels, added balconies on southwestern corner -- this took square footage away from that corner, but they added more to the northwest corner
  - Change was minimal, hasn’t altered number of units, where they are situated
  - 2 3BR units, 6 2BR units -- remains the same as before
- AK asks about the arched windows at the top, whether there is living space behind them
  - Cleary says there is living space behind them, lunette windows
  - In previous version they were on false parapet, sort of faux windows
  - Now they are in living space
  - AS says that’s much better
- JC asks if red portion of building is going to look like wood or brick
  - Cleary says it will look like clapboards but is the color of brick
- JC comments that this is a refreshing approach, he had seen presentations before he was on WCAC and by other developers, and he appreciates this approach
- SM asks whether in course of redesign they considered any new energy-efficiency measures, EV hookups, and also whether there is any green space around the building
  - Cleary says re energy efficiency, building will have the same aspects that formerly approved building had in this regard
    - High-grade insulation
    - Water-saving equipment
    - Long list he doesn’t have in front of him
  - Have been exploring in great detail the possibility of going 100% electric and are getting more comfortable with that approach than they were in the winter
    - Probably not prepared to have that be a condition of the approval, but thinks they will do 100% electric for residential units
    - Would like to stub gas line to commercial space to avoid limiting factor preventing tenants from entering building, but if tenant doesn’t ask for gas they will not turn the line on
    - Will try to see if they can do 100% electric on commercial level if they can satisfy commercial tenants doing that
- Don’t expect to do a restaurant here due to parking, but have been approached by kitchens that deliver or have pick-up meals w/o a dine-in experience -- a new and interesting concept due to the pandemic, so might have someone want to do gas cooking
- SM suggests that induction cooking is faster and safer
- Cleary doesn’t disagree, but doesn’t want to limit tenants that way

- SM reiterates question about green space
  - Cleary says same as previous plan, some green space on western side of building
  - Looks for a file showing the green space
- MR asks WCAC to prepare statement for Zoning Board of Appeals, which will receive the same presentation next Thursday night
  - Can we write letter of support or disagreement by then -- that’s one goal for this evening
  - Second, kitchens would require change to Zoning Bylaw -- Planning Board likely to take that up this year in light of safety/business concerns that arose during COVID
    - Current bylaws only allow takeout as ancillary to restaurant with dine-in
    - Change would be to allow the sort of kitchens Cleary described
    - Cleary not advocating for that change now, it will be up to the tenant who wants to do it
- Cleary shares screen again showing the green space and landscaping around the building
- AK asks about impediment to extending sidewalk at northeastern edge of building, so it cannot connect up to sidewalk by Post Office
  - Cleary explains grading problem, need for easement from family at abutting property
  - Have reached out many times to the family, others have done so on the developer’s behalf, they have not responded
- AS says the building looks amazing, will make a great front door for the Village and will be a big news item promoting the town and allowing for arts celebrations
  - AS asks what the ideal timeline for the project is
  - Cleary says he hoped this design would be well received, has already told the architect to get going on construction drawings
  - If they are done in 2 months, then 4-6 weeks of review by Building Dept
  - They will seek funding in the meantime
  - It would be spectacular to break ground in October, probably more like November
- AS how long will construction take?
  - Cleary says 12-16 months
- Cleary explains that with Planning Board they talked a lot about not having the venting come out horizontally to the street, push to the back of the building
  - On Brookside in the rear, all vents are through the roof so none come out front or sides -- that made construction hard and was very difficult, especially with snow
  - Fingers crossed for a mild winter, so that issues like those won’t hold things up
- AK opens for questions from public, there are none
- AK thanks Cleary, moves on to committee discussion of letter to ZBA
  - Cleary stays to listen
- AK asks MR about timing -- by meeting next Thursday, before is better
AK says that means someone should circulate letter by end of weekend, comments by Monday so time to revise
○ All agree that sounds reasonable
● MR suggests voting to see if everyone is in support of the redesign
○ AK suggests having a conversation first about what we’d want to incorporate, then vote on that
○ MR says that’s ok and all agree
● AK asks who can draft
○ SM willing to start it off
○ AS asks if Google doc
○ AK explains SM would provide document, we’d give her comments, she’d incorporate them to best express group sentiments, she’d have final call in how it is revised, no time to revisit and vote at next meeting
○ AK says it’s been done this way in the past and has not been contentious
○ AS wants to make recommendations in short time allowed
○ AK says share those messages now, SM to take all of that and develop the letter
● AK asks for sentiments to incorporate
○ AK suggests appreciate developer’s commitment, many visits to committee and very responsive to suggestions by committee and public
○ AK suggests attention to community and Village
○ AS says they are attending to what the building means to the community in a way that will benefit us all
○ SM asks if we should say something about the specific elevation change
○ AK asks Cleary what the elevation change is
  ■ Cleary says no real change in height, new permit allows them to go up to 40 feet, but until structural drawings are complete they will not know what the final height will be
  ■ Expects at most will be 1-2 feet off previous design
○ SM summarizes changes, asks if we must mention each or give holistic blessing
  ■ MR says more the holistic view, could mention changed orientation of two pieces to the street
○ AS says change is a definite improvement
○ AK asks if there is any disagreement or discomfort
○ JC has none, liked design before, happy with considerations that led to the new design, changes all look good to him
○ AS suggests they be careful about the look of the cementitious board that is chosen, how it looks, cites Concord Outfitters as an example of modern construction but classic/traditional look
○ AK agrees with suggestion that more wood-like materials are preferable
○ AS talks about new Chase Bank building, using wood
○ All agree with comment re wood
○ AK says pleased with addition of new residences, new businesses, will extend and support vitality of business district
○ SM asks if energy considerations are a done deal, can we mention it in the letter
  ■ Cleary does not want those as condition to approval, but can note that developer spent time working with experts to learn about going electric
MR suggests saying we are encouraged to hear the developer continues to explore reducing the use of fossil fuels in this building
  ○ GW says he appreciates the work they’ve done, liked it before and agrees that this version is better
  ○ Cleary thanks him
○ No further suggestions
○ AK asks for suggestions from the public, there are none

● AK moves that SM prepare a letter on behalf of the committee for the ZBA incorporating the committee’s comments on the revised elevations
  ○ GW seconds
  ○ Roll call vote, unanimous approval
● Cleary asks us all to come celebrate breaking ground and opening when those things happen, leaves
● AK thanks SM for taking on the letter

West Concord Bike-Ped Improvements Update
  ● *took agenda items 3 and 4 in reverse order
  ● AK explains she and AS attended Transportation Advisory Committee meeting, asks MR to summarize information about upcoming improvements/grants
  ● MR prepared grant a long time ago, learned in 2020 that we were receiving funding for shelters with 16 bike racks
    ○ Funding is for equipment, Town funds shipping and installation and is reimbursed
    ○ $30K of equipment, Public Works has agreed to do the installation this fall
    ○ Equipment to arrive in Sept/Oct
  ● AK asks about flashing beacons
  ● MR says this is another grant, safety improvements for Old Marlboro Road at BFRT
    ○ Pavement-activated beacon where trail crosses road, and new beacons also at Williams Road
    ○ Additional speed signs to alert drivers to how fast they are going in that area
    ○ New school signs, flashing
    ○ Also bike share system in West Concord and Concord Center
  ● AK was thinking about this, new open space resources, and recalling how many people work from home (and did so even before pandemic)
    ○ Handful of places where there are gaps in sidewalk network, missing speed limit signage, posted signs aren’t visible due to trees
    ○ Maybe we can look around the Village Center for some things we can line up as low-hanging fruit, list of 5-10 doable projects that we could help identify and get addressed
    ○ This way when grant funding becomes available, we can pick off those things
    ○ Will address increasing bike/pedestrian use of the Village
  ● AS says this is a great idea -- suggests a group walk around town
    ○ No one knows speed limit on Commonwealth Ave because sign is buried
    ○ Lots of little things like that we could address, now that the area is becoming a pedestrian/biking zone
    ○ Bradford Mill is at capacity, 200+ people leaving and walking around for lunch everyday
Like evidence-based design (look at where people are crossing, how successful are new/existing crosswalks)

- AK suggests bonus meeting for September, walk around town
  - Maybe invite Transportation Advisory and WCJCDC representatives
  - Walk around, make a list -- or smaller near-term list and harder long-term list
  - Foundation for this in Complete Streets work
  - Says while walking on BFRT, crossing by prison there are different speed limits depending on the direction you are driving/approaching the trail
  - Members generally agree
  - AS thinks bike subcommittee will be into it and will have ideas we don’t have
- AK will reach out to WCJCDC and Transportation Committee to see if there is interest
- AK suggests shooting for mid-September, so we have one more meeting to discuss and to allow for public comment
- MR cites possible issues with Transportation Advisory Committee, residents raised issues with Town Staff serving on committee, so it might have to be reformulated
  - That might prevent the collaboration AK is suggesting
  - AS says we can still reach out to residents who bike
  - SM suggests reaching out to BFRT committee too
- AK says we will post the walk as a meeting so that public can come
- MR says September is filling up, cites Concord Ag days, Porchfest -- suggests October
- AR suggests we all start on our own, making lists as we move about, instead of waiting until we can all coordinate
  - AS and AK agree
  - AK says maybe the independent walks could help create agenda for a group walk
  - SM suggests taking photos of what we see to share/show in committee meeting
  - AS asks if we can do Google slides
  - SM says yes, individually before the meeting, then can put them together
  - AS willing to collect them
- AS says we can email our ideas for “safe walkability” issues to her, she will compile for discussion
- AK suggests focusing our efforts around the Village Center
- AS says people driving too fast, she has to bike on the sidewalk
  - SM agrees
  - AS says cars speed around her when on the road, terrifying
- SM points out Janet Miller has hand up for public comment
  - Miller explains it is less safe to bike on the sidewalk, as people pulling out of driveways are not prepared to stop before they get to the street
  - If we painted bike lanes, narrowed road, would force people to go slow

Commonwealth Ave, “Complete Streets” Improvements Update

- AK cites prior presentation, then the changes that were circulated based on our committee’s comments
- AK shares prior plan, recounts concerns about crosswalks and desire lines
- AK shares revised version, points out changes
  - No space for bike lanes without eliminating parking, so paint and signage about sharing the road
At/after Transportation Advisory Committee AK thanked town staff for being responsive to crosswalk concerns and comments

The Transportation Advisory Committee talked about grass buffer/strip between parking and sidewalk, would be challenging, Town was considering shrubs

AK suggested as member of public that trees or pavers would be better, maintain space on sidewalks that are already narrow

AK also suggested crosswalk closer to Laws Brook Road, understanding it’s beyond budgets

AK asked about streetlights, which are part of the character of the street

Town sent her images showing the new lights, which she shared

AK says town moving fast, want to complete plan and begin work this fall

SM agrees grassy strips not wise, but also concerned about trees getting pummeled by snow and salt

Suggests seasonal low planters, removable in winter months

MR says no staff to put it out and take it down each year, and no storage capacity

MR has been trying to “green up” West Concord forever, but utilities are under the sidewalks and that complicates and limits options

MR suggests encouraging property owners to add them, says this is happening in places in Concord Center

JC says he’d support trees, asks if utilities preclude them

MR says yes, lists utilities under there that would all have to be moved

AK talks about need to maximize sidewalk space

AR expresses concern with trees, grass because of the need for maintaining them, which might not happen

AS agrees planters are a good idea, also suggests red pavers for crosswalks marks the area more as a pedestrian area

These are used in Concord Center, but not in West Concord

Suggests considering it in the future

AR suggests showing new lighting to Concord Park to consider in their improvements to the parking lot

MR says Town could share and AK could share too

AS agrees good to have consistent look

MR will tell AK who should receive it

AK asks if we can table things on agenda for next meeting, MR says yes

Commuter Rail Parking Lot Upkeep

AK pulls up copy of AR’s draft letter to share

AK suggests everyone read through it

SM comments on the size of the photographed crack, someone could fall

AR says her daughter fell off her scooter riding over that crack

AK asks for comments/suggestions

MR confirms recipients, use of titles is correct, can send by email

MR suggests cc’ing Town Manager Stephen Crane

AK asks to cc her too

SM asks what typical response might be

MR not sure, Director is new, learning as he goes
This issue was not addressed by prior director despite multiple requests by MR.
Helpful to bring to their attention, but staff and resources are limited.
Most likely they will respond with letter or email.

- AR asks if she should forward response to the committee
  - MR and AK say yes
- SM asks if we should make a more specific request (e.g., monthly maintenance) to avoid one clean-up then back to nothing
  - AK suggests adding “on an ongoing basis” to last paragraph

- Andrew Boardman -- public comment
  - Introduces himself, new Planning Board liaison
  - Was on Public Works Commission for 6 years before that

- AK moves to send the letter as amended, as addressed, requesting upkeep of lot
  - SM seconds
  - Roll call vote, unanimous approval

**West Concord Design Guidelines Preamble Update**
- AK says on the Planning Board agenda for August 10
- MR asks if a quorum from our Committee will attend
- MR says it’s fine for one person to go; but if it’s a quorum, she must post it as joint meeting
- AK says she will try to go unless someone else wants to attend, plus SM and AS for sure
- SM asks if they must prepare presentation
  - MR says at least an introduction, explain process, then ask that they adopt it

**Gerow Park Improvements Update**
- Tabled until September

**Liaison Updates**
- GW mentions sidewalk celebration this weekend, and tax-free days the next weekend
- SM mentions Porchfest in mid-September, can discuss next time
- All other liaison updates tabled until September

**Public Comment**
- None besides those noted in above sections

AK reminds all to provide comments on SM’s letter to the ZBA, and to start lists of bike/ped improvements and send to AS. AK to send meeting notes, and Doodle poll for Planning Board meeting coverage.

JC asks for final copy of design guidelines preamble; SM to send

AK moves to adjourn, AR seconds, unanimous approval

**Meeting adjourned at approx. 9:00 pm**

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Robinson