



**TOWN OF ACTON
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES OF July 5, 2017 MEETING
7:30 p.m.
Room 126, Town Hall**

DRB Members in attendance: Holly Ben Joseph (Chair), Peter Darlow (Vice-Chair), David Honn, Emilie Ying (Planning Board Liaison) and Janet Adachi (Board of Selectmen Liaison)

Architect Sven Heistad guest.

Meeting called to order 7:30 pm.

Holly Ben-Joseph to contact Proponents from the 184 Main Street housing project and invite them to attend a meeting to discuss their proposed project.

Review of Project for 533 Main Street, Acton Storage. Sven Heistad brought architectural drawings but no site plan. We were able to discuss the architecture of the proposed buildings but recommended Sven return to the DRB with site and planting plans for review.

A quick synopsis of the project: the existing building will be converted into storage units and will open soon. Phase 2 will include the addition of several new pre-fab metal buildings, one-story high for additional storage units. One very long building that parallels Main Street and its potential visual impact caused the most concern amongst members. Refer to the Memo dated 6-19-17 for complete DRB review comments.

Review of Kelley's Corner Forum:

The engineering firm of GPI, and a traffic engineering firm are the prime consultant in developing Kelley's Corner street redesign and the plans thus developed are heavy on traffic mitigation and light on details for the pedestrian experience and Town image.

Up to now, DOT standards are driving the plans.

The logistics of adding a bike lane and middle turning lane were discussed; due to the tightness of space, landscaping will be removed from the center median and in some areas from the street side buffers as well.

It was suggested that another forum be held that will focus on the landscape concept, site amenities and aesthetics.

Review of the Walker Property Public Meeting:

A site analysis was conducted and the design firm, Landscape Architect Dennis Dale, presented five possible scenarios for the property:

1. Add 7 homes of 20,000 SF lots (only scenario that can be developed as by-right under R-2 zoning)
2. Cluster housing on Kennedy property and open space or an orchard on property near Route 2.
3. Retail/market place. Restore Route 2 border with landscaping.
4. Do nothing to the site. –Keep the nursery and use it as a meeting space for agricultural/gardening events and learning.
5. Boutique hotel and restaurant with green space near Route 2. (Most popular)

In all of the popular schemes showed most of the development on the Kennedy side of the site. Most people did not favor introducing retail/commercial across from the Route 2 exit.

The next steps is for the designers to take this feedback information and develop a final scheme.

The DRB would like to investigate how the multi-unit housing project, at 282 Main Street, currently under construction, was able to get permitting and start construction without any design input from the DRB. This is especially pertinent because it is located within the Kelley's Corner area and it seems to be in direct conflict with many of the goals stated in the Kelley's Corner Master Plan.

If this was a by-right project, and didn't have to go through any special review process, and only needed to be approved by the Building Department, then the DRB would like to figure out some mechanism to have these projects reviewed as well.

Tree Protection By-Law

Many towns have tree-protection by-laws in place, that protect existing mature trees. West Concord is currently attempting to pass a by-law as well; the DRB reviewed a powerpoint presentation developed by the tree preservation committee.

How can Acton get support for a Tree-Protection law?

Tom Tidman, town ecologist is in favor of one.

The BoS does not have this as a priority this year, but this could be an item on their agenda in future years.

If people get behind this idea, already there is interest from Green Acton.

If a By-law was developed, this would require only a simple majority at Town Meeting.

If a zoning change is enacted, this would require 2/3 support.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Ben-Joseph