

Town of Westwood
Islington Center Task Force Meeting
April 6, 2016
7:00 PM
Islington Community Center, Sanctuary, 288 Washington St.

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Task Force Members Present:

Michael Walsh, Michael Jaillet, Trevor Laubenstein, Nancy Donahue, Mary Beth Persons, Helen Gordon, Trish Tucke, Nora Loughnane, Abby McCabe, Tricia Perry, Sarah Cleveland, Michael Reardon, Paul Sicard, Rabih Shanshiry, Kela Klosi.

Members Absent: Pam Dukeman, Todd Korchin, George Hertz, Nicole Banks, Albert Wisialko, Jack Patterson, Danielle Sutton.

Update on Pending FMUOD Special Permit Application for 301-323 Washington Street

The proposal for a mixed use project at 301-323 Washington Street was reviewed. Ms. McCabe and Mr. Laubenstein reported that the Planning Board's continued hearing on this application is next week on April 12, which may be the last hearing on this application. One of the items to be reviewed in more detail at the next hearing will be the parking and updated plans, which are expected later this week and will be posted to the website. When the Board closes the public hearing, staff will prepare a list of suggested conditions for the Board to consider based on what came up during the course of the public hearings. Conditions related to parking, on-site signage, and hours of construction are typical conditions of most approvals, while consideration of signage within the public way falls under the purview of the Board of Selectmen as the road commissioners.

Islington Center Focus Groups:

Chairman Laubenstein invited members to break into small focus groups to review specific areas of Islington. Members broke into the following small groups for discuss before and reporting back to the full group.

Group 1: Traffic, Parking, Transportation – Issues and Opportunities

Issues:

- Traffic congestion
- Properties on the east side of the train tracks are close by but physically distant because of limited pedestrian connections
- Perceived insufficiency of parking in close proximity to uses
- Location of MMO and playground space

Opportunities:

- A major thoroughfare to capture a high volume of people/traffic.
- East Street bridge and roadway improvements will increase the height and width of the underpass to allow more safe vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic flow
- Roche Brothers – possible pedestrian connection under train tracks to allow access to the Glacier Drive business area, and to encourage more physical connectivity
- Consider MassDOT land for parking expansion for train station, which would create an alternative location for commuter parking and might free up the spaces at Morrison Park and the Municipal Parking Lot which are currently being used by commuters
- Consider providing more on-street parking
- Consider adding a middle turning lane

Group 2: Community Elements - What new or existing elements should remain or be integrated into Islington?

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Positive Elements to Remain or to Add:

- Small town charm desired to be maintained and preserved
- Walkability
- More landscaping
- More parking
- Preference for condos rather than apartments
- Sports facilities and fields, recreation

Areas in Need of Improvement:

- Better public facilities such as bathrooms
- Enhance other areas to allow walking to park and fields, carried throughout the area
- Public gathering area such as green space

Group 3: Beyond Islington - Other factors, initiatives in Westwood (or beyond) that influence Islington Center

- Area of the temporary fire station may be an opportunity
- Increase commercial uses along Washington Street
- Foster Block site on Everett Street – mixed use, office or potential senior residential area
- Hanlon School – potential for consolidation
- The second phase of University Station

Islington Center Redevelopment RFP (Request for Proposals)

The draft RFP is under review by the Town's procurement officer presently and will then be forwarded for review and approval by the Board of Selectmen. It is anticipated that the RFP will be finalized and released by the end of April with responses due in in late May.

Minutes:

On a motion by Mr. Jaillet, seconded by Mr. Walsh, the minutes of November 18, 2015, were unanimously approved as written.

On a motion by Ms. Gordon, seconded by Ms. Tucke, the minutes of December 10, 2015, were unanimously approved as written.

On a motion by Mr. Walsh, seconded by Ms. Tucke, the meeting notes from February 2, 2016 were unanimously approved as written.

On a motion by Mr. Walsh, seconded by Ms. Tucke, the meeting minutes from March 9, 2016 were unanimously approved as written.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for either Tuesday May 17th or Thursday, May 19th, but both dates will be reviewed with the absent members. The date that is convenient for most members will be selected, and the location will be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.