

**JOINT MEETING OF
THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
AND
THE GREATER DOWNTOWN TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT
ADVISORY BOARD**

June 16, 2009

MINUTES

EDA and GDTIF Members Present: Cy Gregg, Hope Taylor, Jack Burnett, and Rick Monahon.

Also Present: Carol Ogilvie, Director and Laura Norton Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development and Rodney Bartlett, Director of Public Works.

Louis Berger Group: Brian Clogston, Tim Higginson and Jeff Hyland.

Merchants and Public: Nancy Adams, Laura & Steve Mahoney, Bill Anders, Michael Morse, Pamela Gleeson, Liz Thomas, Barbara Miller, Chubb Whitten, Randy Brown, Richard Fernald, Bill Perry, Gordon Kemp, Sheila Kirkpatrick, Mose Olenik, Dick Adler, Rick Monahon, and Randy Brown (Library Trustee).

The focus of the meeting is to review the results of the Place Audit that was conducted in the Downtown last month, and to begin the formulation of a problem statement relative to the construction project.

Mr. Clogston reviewed the the four sites (Granite Street intersection, Granite & Pine Streets, Main & Grove Streets, and Depot Square) adding “we have broken down the issues to equate out the feelings of these areas.”

He began with *Access, Linkages & Information* as it related to pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles. He reviewed the issues of pedestrian and bicyclist safety, the width of sidewalk separation of pedestrians and bicyclists form vehicles, well marked routes, well marked crosswalks, accessibility for disabled individuals, sidewalk connectivity minimal roadside distractions and parking for vehicles and cycles.

Mr. Clogston went on to *Uses & Activities* and explained both the cultural and historical significance of the community as well as the resources that afford the opportunity to use the downtown area for walking, shopping and dining.

Image and Amenities were then discussed; Mr. Clogston reviewed both the land and streetscapes of the downtown area, highlighting the natural and historic features of the community. He noted a need for additional benches to sit on, more recycling receptacles and greater restroom

availability. He spoke about *Sociability* and the mixture of people coming together at these locations by choice.

Mr. Clogston then reviewed General Comments gathered from the participants of the Place Audit at each of the four sites audited, as well as recommendations for the Bridge Aesthetics Committee (including traffic calming, lighting, bridge appearance, sidewalks, planter boxes, and width of Route 202).

Mr. Clogston then referred back to the purpose of the meeting, to begin the formulation of a problem statement relative to the construction project. He distributed a draft of a statement he had begun and the group reviewed it. Mr. Clogston noted “we need to look at what needs to be fixed, we need to look at the critical elements.” He went to note that some of the concerns and suggestions were more long term planning items with the current focus on the bridge and the retaining wall at the Main Street intersection. He reviewed bullet items from the Place Audit that addressed crosswalks, signage, accessibility, traffic calming, and amenities such as landscaping and the need for additional public seating. “From this we develop a purpose and need statement” he said.

Mr. Anders asked about DOT funding and an attempt to complete all concerns derived from the Place Audit asking “what would it take for the town to do it all?” Mr. Clogston noted the Place Audit acted more as a foundation for a Master Plan for the downtown and that projects could and would be completed as funding became available. Mr. Anders replied “what is the possibility of that? Why not take a stab at it right now?” Mr. Bartlett interjected by noting the several regulatory agencies that must be involved and that the project was still in a conceptual stage of planning. “It will be 6 months to see a final plan” he said, adding it will be a transition of enhancement projects for the downtown that begins with the development of the Main Street Bridge. When we get further down the road with the final design we will put our efforts into interconnecting what we have” he said.

A brief discussion about the width of Route 202 followed with Mr. Bartlett noting there were no plans to widen that road. “That piece of 202 is there by prescription. It is there because it is there” said Mr. Bartlett, adding “it has had little attention for 40 or 50 or 60 years because it is difficult to do.” In conclusion Mr. Bartlett noted “there are a number of hurdles still ahead of us. If there were any easy fixes out there they would have been done. This is a difficult site for a myriad of reasons.”

The discussion turned to the Granite Street site described as a residential area with heavy traffic and “a dangerous area with many safety concerns.”

Michael Morse asked about installation of a smart traffic light at the intersection with Mr. Clogston reviewing the necessity to meet the warrants for a traffic signal.

Jeff Hyland then spoke to the audit results for Site #3; he reviewed the plan to selectively cut tress on the river bank and improving the aesthetics and enhancing the businesses. Mose Olenik interjected that right in the heart of the downtown was the Mariposa Museum and the Unitarian Church and that Mr. Hyland “should shift his definition of the downtown being largely

commercial.” It was discussed briefly and decided the downtown would be best described as having a business and cultural flavor.

Mr. Hyland reviewed some parking ideas and how the business and cultural establishments of the downtown go hand-in-hand with necessity. “By that I mean electricity, parking or police and emergency responses cannot be overlooked when it comes to aesthetics” he said. Barbara Miller commented on the amount of concrete her group noted during the Place Audit and suggested “adding some green and some benches.” Mr. Hyland reiterated that the project “was tipped to functionality right now, we must balance aesthetics and functionality.”

Ms. Thomas noted her concern that the communal character of the town is “what makes Peterborough, not the trees or the benches; it is the people who make this community what it is.” She went on to say “if something happens to the downtown businesses because of the bridge it will leave us all in trouble. We need to keep the people coming to the downtown; we need to keep that in the foreground as we think about what we are going to do. A bench isn’t going to get you there.” Ms. Thomas concluded by noting “make sure you have a way in to town so people do not have to change their habits.” Mr. Hyland replied “so put business impact at the top of the list” with Ms/ Thomas replying “at the top of the list an big letters, yes.”

Mr. Anders spoke about the need for a safe bridge but noted “how it will be accomplished, that is where we are coming from.” He added “getting and keeping the flow of the downtown is very important.” Ms. Thomas added “keep in mind many small businesses are relatively fragile.”

The discussion turned to having a walkable, safe, accessible and inviting downtown. Laura Mahoney noted “having the downtown walkable is great but most of the people walking around have parked somewhere, they did not walk in from Milford.” Mr. Anders noted “there are very few available spaces (in the downtown) on a given day, it is a real concern, it has always been an issue in Peterborough, from day one.” He went on to note an editorial in the local newspaper “seems to want us to build a better mousetrap for getting people into our shops, I think we do a pretty good job, I’d like another editorial to tell us where people will park.”

A brief discussion about the removal and planting of trees for the vista, general aesthetics, and noise buffers followed.

Mr. Clogston thanked the audience for coming. He noted the next meeting would be in August and that the Louis Berger team would be preparing a final version of what was presented this morning. He added “we will be working on conceptual sketches and have an interactive workshop at that time.” A member of the audience asked about the lifespan of a new bridge with Mr. Clogston replying “new bridges are designed to last 100 years.” Mr. Bartlett noted that there would be an effort to vary the meeting times with hopefully some night and possible a Saturday morning meeting. He stated the meeting would be properly noticed and that an informational blog (an interactive message board) would be operational and available through the town’s home page web site soon. These notices will go out beyond the merchants to make sure we have not missed anyone, he said. Another member of the audience asked about the bidding process with Mr. Bartlett replying nothing had gone out to bid to date. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, August 18, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant