

Check Attendance

TOWN OF OAK BLUFFS
DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE
September 15, 2014

MEETING MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS:

Brian Packish, Chair
Duncan Ross
Gail Barmakian
Amy Billings
Erik Albert
Christine Todd
John Bradford

ATTENDEES:

Craig Lowe Mucima
Brenda Leonard
Christine Flynn (MVC Staff)
Bill Giordano
Kathy Laskowski
Larkin Stalling
Stephanie Mashik
Ken Maclean
Gregg Coogan

The meeting of the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan Committee was called to order by Chairman, Brian Packish at 1:10 PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room at 56 School Street in Oak Bluffs, MA.

The meeting has been called today to review the documents received from the Consultant Horsley Witten.

Brian Packish I've asked all committee members to review the documents from the previous week and begin to assemble thoughts in writing to bring to today's meeting for general discussion, moving forward.

We will generate questions that will need to be answered

Brian Packish In speaking with the consultant, he was informed that the conceptual plans presented were broad strokes and generalized areas very conceptual. Not a finished project and realize there would be several drafts before final draft. Suggest maps

The next item will be participation from the Committee members:

Gail Barmakian The committee should address any items omitted from the report. Suggest we mention items in need of repair and cleaning goals.

Brian Packish John Ford potentially requested that we review and discuss

1. Review and accept the market study and the results of the survey and public visioning process
2. Review and refine the Calibrated Project Goals; our foundation and road map for committee
3. Select a Way Finding Sub-Committee to work directly with John Seeley
4. Review the big picture preliminary Design Concepts we presented relative to the project

Recommendation from the Consultant is to create Sub Committees to manage very specific projects. First Sub-committee is Way Finding.

Planning Board discussed open to hearing recommendations

Duncan Ross

Feels at least one person on this committee be a participant.

1. First review and accept the market study and the results of the survey and public visioning process;

Gail Barmakian

is not prepared to accept #1 believes a few things missing.

Amy Billing

The consultants did what they could with what they knew, pretty accurate and what she expected. However, she went through this process with the Parks Committee and could have provided this information; considering whether you ask someone who is a first time visitor or people who have lived here for some time.

I want us to remember #1. Let's not concentrate too much on this being a three month change for our town. We need to get our town year round and we need to encourage year round businesses. Some of the report concentrates on summer traffic, is it necessary to make major changes for summer. Not as much on year round as she would prefer

Gail Barmakian

Even the shoulder season, the things they are proposing will address the tourist season only. However, the shoulder seasons (May, June, Sept, Oct) or year round was not the concentration at all. It seems as if we just want more tourist.

Christine Todd

Reality, we do have a tourist community, we swell in the summer and we need to address that. I would like to approach it with some flexibility – parking issues or things that go into place during that time and address them and then they are relaxed when off season.

Amy Billings

Geared toward the summer as opposed to gearing toward a year round community and tweak the issues in the summer. Parking and the Park &

Ride and the Bulkhead area loved their ideas. The harbor point, a green scape area or a place for bands and dancing.

Erik Albert Suggest we expand the town's parks

Gail Barmakian As long as we create Park and ride, landscaping, general attracting businesses that keep community alive or

Amy Billings I want a longer season. When you close up after Labor Day because no one is here that's a problem.

DISCUSSION ABOUT STREET FAIR AND HOW MANY PEOPLE STILL ON THE ISLAND IN SEPTEMBER

Brian Packish I think what you are all talking about speaks to the timeline and how you implement any of these items.

A lot of small items, alleyways and benches.
Timeline –easy items that can happen – improve transition areas etc.

Yes, some are quick and easy, however before you think about reconfiguring the parking downtown – really need to think about a Park & Ride. A real solution

We agree the sidewalks (are in poor condition)

DISCUSSION:

- a. Need new ones
- b. Don't have space to make wider
- c. Will probably be a long process
- d. Employee parking off of Circuit Avenue
- e. Expand Healey Square a good idea

Gail Barmakian We should look into some things they missed (Horsley)

Brian Packish This will be a long process and I want to maintain an open mind. I personally do not want to rule anything out and want to put preliminary thoughts on paper to the Consultants and work it out.

I think if there was a Park & Ride in play and it is actually being utilized. and if you got any double digit employee percentage parking out of Main Street in the summer months. If that the case – potential less used areas then we could discuss expanding.

Concepts and points of interest:

North Bluff – first concept:

I like the concepts put forth, although the change in traffic direction would need further discussion with stakeholders in the direct area.

End near Chowder Company is on of interest, but logistically needs a lot more discussion and design. A large piece of the additional parking would need to be curt cuts for the Wallace/Budget property. So parking gain may be minimal

The moped area/Strand Theatre needs a lot more definition, but conceptually workable

The additional Greenscape and Overlook Park are great ideas and would be a valuable addition to completing the walkability of the North Bluff and Harbor; also in line with the Concom goals for the flood plain areas.

Reclaim that area and get some pedestrian control. Parking does not exist Need more room for movement there. All Greenscape/Ferry Plaza is in line with the comments of 100 year.

This area is so in need of improvement.
Implement the larger scale projects earlier.
No positive representation of our town – No clean fresh inviting area you wish to want to come back too.

Expansion would be a great value to our town

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Gail Barmakian | Why make green areas that take away parking spaces? |
| Christine Todd | People want to be in town |
| Brian Packish | We must maintain conceptual discussions or this will take forever ... |
| Amy Billings | Doesn't see resolution to parking issues in the study
Town needs a "Park & Ride". |
| Brian Packish | Everyone that I have spoken to is in favor of a Park & Ride
Need to discuss – Grants parking mitigation funds
Another area |
| John Bradford | Can we discuss reconfiguring Healy Square? |
| Gail Barmakian | When do we discuss what was omitted from the report |

BP

This is their version based on what they heard and it is up to us to review 70 pages of document discuss and determine what our version is Ultimately it is a Master Plan effort and ...the goal here is to create a master plan with implementation schedule and really set a time line and goal to submit to the state and find funding

ALMOST EVERY ITEM THAT CAME OUT OF T HIS SURVEY – CAME OUT IN 1998 SURVEY. PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR THESE ITEMS FOR 25 YEARS.

We have to move through these points – discuss, hear opinions and decide:

Circuit/Kennebec Alternative A:

I like many of the design areas, especially Healey Square Extension. The expansion is a bit large and I struggle with the loss of 18 downtown parking spaces in one area.

Sidewalks need replacement and even stretching them as little as six to 12 inches wider would make a large difference.

Kennebec is going to prove to be a nice district capable of supporting restaurants and shops that can benefit from the lower rents and the developing nature of the street. I think the parallel parking may be problematic to traffic along Giordano's. Asking people to back up hill into a space and it is already a very congested area – create a gridlock

I think some softening and Greenscape at the public bathrooms would be a nice way to begin to define the area with signage and increase public safety

I would be willing to explore the addition of parking along the opposite side of Ocean Park as well as a sidewalk on that side.

The end of circuit by the new bank needs clear definition and is far too large in size, confusing and a safety hazard.

I like the idea of a mural to soften the size of the theatre and its current state of decline, not sure feasible without property owner's participation.

I am opposed to closing Circuit Avenue (other than for special events or select timeframes) during July/August months.

Circuit/Kennebec Alternative B:

The changes between A and B are not feasible or in line with the current goals of our year round population. Not a great idea

All districts/overall needing further exploration:

Park and Ride

Metered Parking

Options to expand parking along Harbor towards Our Market store

Signage/Way-Finding

Participation from the MVCMA to provide improved entrances and common areas between the downtown and the campground

MVCMA could benefit from a *public* bathroom at the Tabernacle

Create/develop an APP to provide narration of our history and direction. Most people are social media friendly

Civic pride; discussion with business owners about managing clean up in front of and adjacent to their business

Alleyways are full of trash and miscellaneous equipment etc. need gates or clean up

Many areas in town are under-utilized and with small and modest clean up and modification could become assets. Example of one would be Police station lawn/parking.

Erik Albert

Signage is huge. Just learned there is a bathroom in the SSA
One in brick building – no signage

Install a shower kiosk

Discussed with Anthony Capelli the bathrooms

There is garbage outside the bathroom

Need privacy and proper area for trash disposal:
adult diapers, feminine products, etc.

Police station – should have sign across the street so you see as you exit
a big welcome sign with map area to sit near grass –

Announcement on boat, we are entering the greatest city on the planet, keep MV beautiful. Proud to be Oak Bluffs.

South Circuit across from the bank (bump out the sidewalks not losing parking – makes it safe

Signage – Hartford Park, Niantic Park – turn left on
Bike racks
Directions to the Lighthouse

Circuit Ave sidewalks wider (Healy Square to Lampost, a mini plaza – no parking after a certain hour)

Metered parking – I think would not kill us –

DISCUSSION - IN OTHER TOWNS

Monument Make South Sircuit more of an entrance into town
Healy Square south

Amy Billings

Parking – down at the end of town – an nightmare because people park everywhere

Get the cars out of town – let people enjoy the town so they can see the improvements

Enforcement of parking

Bulkhead clean up – it could be awesome

Promoting year round businesses

Do not want to make changes that are only for three months of the year

Metered parking

Maintenance of the green areas and parks – when choosing keep I mind who is going to maintain them

Park department – (LAUGHTER) –

BRING BACK THE PARK DEPARTMENT

Duncan Ross

I missed last meeting – my sister died and I was away

CONDOLENSES

I basically agree with everybody – one thing about the PARK & RIDE, the real key is to get everyone to use it. We had something similar with the OB school – no one would use it.

It works for Edgartown because they have a Park & Ride

John Bradford

We need to separate pedestrians from the vehicles on the North Bluff

Define the areas with pervious material for the walkway
Handicap access

North Bluff – signage is important -
Parallel parking a nightmare - people have a problem backing into spaces

Not crazy about reversing traffic on Circuit Ave Extension – because may be a problem with the tour buses. Can experiment around Ocean Park
May have problem with tour buses, if can be worked out – a great idea
Metered parking okay – implemented during the day -but no cost at night
How about reversing it – free during the day and pay at night
or first hour free
Reconfigure Healey Square – a good place for signage too
Commercial parking on Kennebec – only certain hours of the day

Gail Barmakian

No metered parking in town – not good for people who live here
Feel bad about putting another tax on the people here
Maybe outside of town, Kiosk tickets or ticket system
Minimum infrastructure

Repair /cleaning program needed – for example scheduled cleaning of
sidewalks monthly – replacing with better material

Beach “railing” – fixing what we have

Identify “dead zones” – maybe putting small seating areas in those zones
Expansion means needing more employees to clean – these areas will need
to be maintained - more infrastructure - repair and cleaning
Potential on the Circuit Ave Extension - good idea if direction could be
changed for the cars –

We need to expand the traffic and pedestrian area (walking) and the far
end of Circuit Ave does not get the traffic

Amy Billings

Signage for the “Camp Grounds”

Christine Todd

Park playground – Niantic park – signage

Gail Barmakian

organize the areas in the town within close proximity
Look at the goals and review
I think a bigger role for our existing parks
Liked Erik’s ideas

Attraction of diverse businesses
More restaurants
More year round businesses
Focus and concentrate on the “shoulder season” businesses

Christine Todd

I view Oak Bluffs as a “mini-city”. Most cities have parallel parking

I am not opposed to widening the sidewalks on Circuit
Unsafe to have the narrow sidewalks and people backing out the way they do when you have pedestrians walking

Keep parallel parking – make it safer
More attention paid to educating the visitors and residents of Oak Bluffs about the historic value of OB.
I attended a gathering this summer at Union Chapel where OB being inducted into the Smithsonian and the National and African American history and nowhere is it affectively communicated.

Plaques in the Parks (Waban, etc.)

Signage and Way Finding –
Metered Parking should be done everywhere we can do it
Park & Ride critical to solving our issues – Apply pressure to the town to come up with a solution to solve this
Churches land - property next to the Catholic churches land it is time to see some action and stop throwing ideas around
Should revisit the elementary school area used as a park and ride – advertise and promote – to ensure it is a success
Development of parks near the top of Circuit- where the monument is proposed and the bottom where the police station is and the expansion
Healy Square is great – people have places to go that attract them and not just Healy Square
Parking around the parks is fine –

More restrooms by “Inkwell” and “Pay Beach” – we must find a way to accommodate this

Brian Packish

Erik is working on a project coordinating with the Highway – he is ready to talk about

Erik Albert

Community Clean Up we are trying to do through Columbus Day on Thursday's at 5:00 PM
Meet at Post Office Square – bring gloves, rakes etc.

John Bradford One thing on the metered parking would encourage employees to use the “Park & Ride”. Advertise - metered parking only at night on Circuit Ave

Amy Billings On the point that Christine made about Public Restrooms down at the Inkwell is not part of our ...

Brian Packish it’s outside of our scope

Amy Billings I just want the public to know that

Brian Packish I am going to take some public comments – please say your name and where you’re from

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Giordano – 18 year resident
 Question: Healy Square expansion
 No idea what you’re talking about taking parking by the gym - loading zones – Kennebec – problems with people parking overnight and and early morning deliveries. Need spaces to deliver
 Increased meal tax and room tax and now parking?
 Now 9 -8 instead of 9 – 6

Brian Packings CPC Railings

Erik Albert Into the loading zone

Brian Packish Conceptual by consultant and not yet clearly defined

Amy Billings Can you explain our target area and the
 Our target area is here (reference to map) we received an \$80K grant to do the research. These areas are outside the scope – but equally important
 We are trying to have a unified front and will be asking for more in depth information.
 Not sure what the scope of metered parking will be – we will continue to meet on a weekly basis and work toward making it happen

Gail Barmakian Ask a question –
 Start with the Park & Ride

Larkin Stallings Ritz Carlton
 Metered parking, we already have it – there called parking (tickets)
 Need widening sidewalks for parallel parking
 Park & Ride for employees essential

Need “Civic Pride” on keeping Circuit Avenue clean
Planters: he cleans Giordano’s and the Ritz every night and I will adopt if you place a sign adopted by the Ritz

Business community serious about cleaning the sidewalk and keeping the area clean

Ken Maclean

Hart Haven

I think what you are doing is great – spend more time on people and how the town looks rather than town parking

Problem from Healey Square to the bank some brick buildings not looking good – not sure what to do – maybe façade improvement loans

Surprised Circuit Avenue isn’t in the historic district because right now you can make your building look any way you want and we have to live with it

Ocean Park is wonderful and the town does a good job of taking care of it. I agree with Amy’s comment about Healy Square and seeing the ocean, but the cars take away from the site.

Walk toward Healey Square I think a good idea to link the pretty parts of the town with pretty links – improve HS and then the connections to the park.

Kathy Laskowski

Resident – intends to move here in the next couple of years

Signage important and people don’t know where to go

Be aware of parking and signage has a huge influence on where people go I think getting started with the signage is a good start so people can see how it will work and in the interim work on the harder parts. I think it’s a good start.

Brenda Leonard

Resident worked for the hospital & now works Brick Restroom

Is the Park & Ride – is it going to be free for the employees?

Amy billings

It would be free

When I worked for the hospital – they had it – can you

Brenda Leonard

Signage – big ugly sign - telling about the pier - enough already blocks the view.

Public restroom – whoever built did not do a good job.

That building is not very good. Too many things wrong with it

Sinks and toilets leaking

Building not constructed well

Plumbing is terrible

Need an outside shower for both men and women

Not enough drains in the brick bathroom

Puddles in front of the toilets
Damaged pipes within the walls
More signage directing to restaurants

Stephanie Mashek Architect
Is this material Draft Review available and can it be downloaded on the website?

Brian Packish Need to get it on the website. Shelley, can you get that on there?

Shelley Carter I will see what I can do

Stephanie Mashek Widen sidewalks
In favor of parallel parking
Plaques in areas where sidewalks widened and people can sit and talk

Survey indicated that tourist spend money are culture tourist. Is that right?
Thinks Christine mentioned the inclusion of OB in the Smithsonian – people know about the campgrounds. Doing what we can to enhance Circuit Avenue does not look like a culturally important place. Wider sidewalks will help immensely –

Signage with walking paths to Campgrounds, the African American Heritage Trail and different parts of Oak Bluffs it becomes attractive and not just about buying tee shirts

Bill Giordano “One Way” – what is the direction of the one way they are talking about down by the Circuit Ave Extension?

Erik Albert Opposite of what it is –

Brian Packish down by the lookout and down around and out by the movie theater

OPEN DISCUSSION

MOTION MEETING ADJOURNED @ 2:30 PM
SECOND:
VOTE: