

Meeting Minutes
Drew Garden Task Force
Thursday, 28 July, 2016
Cameron Senior Center, Room 217 “Card Room”
7:00 p.m.

APPROVED August 11, 2016

Present: Bob Boonstra, Kate Hollister, Joyce Minosh, Andrea Peraner-Sweet, Bob Webb, Keith Bohne, Jim Geraghty, Juliette Mount, Charles Andrews

Staff: Chris Kluchman

Absent: Bob Waskiewicz, Jane Calvin, Chris Burns, Zac Cataldo (alternate)

Open Forum/Public Comment

No comments for open forum.

Review Minutes of July 16, 2016

Deferred to next meeting for members to submit significant revisions.

Review town records from late 1990s and early 2000s

Webb presented a summary of his research, with Kluchman’s help, of references in town documents to the Drew Garden parcel. He handed out a one-page summary to the task force. At that time, the Board of Selectmen was concerned about maintaining the parcel as a positive visual “gateway” and nod to Westford’s agricultural past. Bill Harman, Chamberlain Rd, noted additional references in the 2001 annual report, and will provide these to Webb.

Westford Gateway LLC presentation/discussion of proposed development

Domenic Sicari and Jeff Kevan reviewed their revised plans. The building footprint was reduced from 14,020 sf to 11,336 sf. The food preparation building was removed and the wash room relocated to the restaurant basement. The greenhouse on APR 2 is smaller. Drainage for the restaurant was moved so it is all in APR 3. They also provided revised planting plans. By moving tables closer together, they kept seating numbers approximately the same. Sicari noted that the building is reduced horizontally as well as vertically from the original plan.

Peraner-Sweet asked for how much reduction in gross sf (3884 sf), the restaurant (1800 sf) and function room (1440 sf). She asked why the number of seats was not shrunk to retain the atmosphere. Sicari responded that this was the price point to make the project viable.

Geraghty asked for clarification of seating in the dining and function areas, and commented that there would be no change in traffic impact. Ebi Masalehdan replied that table spacing was reduced from

around 8 ft to 6 ft. Peraner-Sweet asked if part of the dining area would be closed when there was a function. Masalehdan replied that it would depend on the Fire Department.

Webb was concerned about the number of seats and the amount of traffic. Masalehdan replied that there are usually 2 to 3 turnovers per table per evening. He noted that he might not even need a function hall. Peraner-Sweet suggested that he might consider doing that.

Webb asked about traffic analysis. Kluchman said town staff received a scoping assessment in February or March and she would provide it to the task force. Webb asked about the footprint of the existing building. Bohne replied that it is approximately 5,000 sf. Webb asked about the roofline. Sicari said the original was 44'6" and is now under 35' in height. The new grade is 5' lower and the roofline is 11' lower for part and 12' lower in front. It would look 11' lower for traffic going northbound on Boston Road, and would seem 16' lower for southbound traffic because the building is now 2 stories instead of 3 stories from that direction.

Geraghty asked how much of the food for the restaurant would come from the farm. Masalehdan said he would not know until after the first year. He noted that there are other farm-to-table restaurants in the area that do not have their own farm. Webb noted that it is more important that 100% of the rest of the farm will be used to produce food.

Boonstra asked what Masalehdan would do with the property if the restaurant were not approved. Masalehdan said he would do something agricultural; perhaps cows or goats. Boonstra and Hollister asked about the greenhouse, and how it would compare to the existing greenhouses. Masalehdan said the structure would sit on top of poured concrete supports or perhaps it could be built with iron stakes instead of footings. Bohne stated that if they poured concrete footings then the structure would sit on top, therefore would not be a permanent structure. Bob Krankewicz, Boston Road, said that if they put in footings then it would be a permanent structure per definition in the APRs. Masalehdan said he would provide information about the model he plans on using.

Mount asked which way the building was adjusted since the footprint was reduced. Sicari said the front would stay at the same spot and the rear moved further from the back lot line. She asked how many seats could be accommodated with the reduced size if table spacing were kept at 8 ft. Sicari did not know the answer. Mount asked if dining would be closed if the function hall were in use. Masalehdan said he would have to think about it. Peraner-Sweet said that total occupancy is still a concern. Webb said the task force has to deal with traffic and other related concerns.

Diane Hendricks, Crown Road, asked about seating in the silo and patio. Sicari said the silo was included in the total count. During the summer, a few tables could be moved to the patio. Hendricks was concerned that the Fire Department would approve for higher occupancy and that seating could increase someday.

Bob Jefferies, Boston Road, asked for clarification of drainage and would the grading extend into APR 2. Jeff Kevan said that the storm water treatment area for the restaurant was moved to APR 3. With the basement reduced, less slope is needed so less would go onto APR 2. Grading along the back was reduced, and the area and trees along the road were preserved.

Review BOS direction on Agreement

Peraner-Sweet said the task force will have an executive session at the end of the 8/11 meeting to review the proposed agreement and provide input to the Board of Selectmen. Krankewicz said that CMR 330.22 provides guidelines on determining APR value.

Discuss possible subcommittee tasks/meetings

The list of task force charges was reviewed and most will be done by the group as a whole. Boonstra volunteered to lead a subgroup to review APRs 3 and 2 with respect to the proposal by Westford Gateway LLC. Mount and Hollister also volunteered.

Sandy Martinez, Main Street, asked how to get to the committee web site to access documents. Kluchman provided directions from the town's home page. Martinez asked how many APRs in Westford. Kluchman said she knows of two: Drew Garden and behind 31 Tadmuck Road. She noted that some conservation restrictions, such as Picking Gould Farm and O'Brien Farm, have agricultural components but they are not APRs.

Set next meeting date

Kluchman previously provided the task force with a proposed schedule through September. Mount moved and Boonstra seconded to approve the draft schedule. Motion was approved unanimously. The next meeting is August 11, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room 201.

Motion made and unanimously approved to adjourn.