



53 RIVER STREET MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 15, 2024
7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Present: David Martin, Peter Hocknell, Bill Alesbury, Stephanie Krantz, Lou York, Ilana Liebert, Thomas Begin (Assistant Town Manager).

Absent: Bill Klauer.

1. Opening

David Martin called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM via a virtual meeting with no committee members in physical attendance and broadcasted via Zoom.us virtual meeting platform.

2. Regular Business

- A. A quorum is present.
- B. Notes from the Chair – none.
- C. Resident concerns – none.
- D. Town Engineer QinRui Pang provided an update on the River Street sidewalk:
 - a. The 25% design plan was received last week and is currently under review.
 - b. Next step: get quotes to see what 75% and 100% design costs will look like, budget accordingly, and try to secure funding.
 - c. Plan is to carry the sidewalk along frontage of the 53 River St park. Sidewalk plan includes reconfiguring the intersection of River and School Streets on the south side at this point.
 - d. The design standard is 5' wide and the Historic District Commission requires a uniform look – granite curb, poured concrete which would extend until Vanderbilt or Harley Lane.
 - e. Proposed crossing to be added from the sidewalk to the River Street condo complex.
 - f. The narrow width of River St near intersection with Chadwick should help avoid potential conflict with westbound River St traffic.
 - g. The sidewalk will need to shift to the north side of River St east of Vanderbilt.



- h. There are 3 stream crossings – question is whether they can tolerate the weight of the added sidewalk and use of heavy plow equipment. The one crossing by Carriage Drive is not wide enough to accommodate a new sidewalk without widening the bridge. Suggest adding a separate walkway structure.
- i. A retaining wall will be necessary just west of Carriage due to the steep hill. Also, the wide intersection of Carriage + River needs to be addressed.
- j. A Bike Path not currently in this design; insufficient road width. Shared use path requires 8' – stands to impact abutters.
- k. Construction sequence (where physical work will begin) is not clear at this stage. Also may have to complete the project in phases, based on costs.
- l. Due to complexity of project, may be a year or two before work could potentially start. 2026 Town Meeting likely earliest / best case scenario. Requires coordination of stormwater management, bridges, railroad safety etc.

E. Soil remediation update: all contaminated soil has been removed from the site. The licensed site professional (LSP) does say some analysis work remains for the riverbed. However, should contaminants be found there, it is unlikely to be remediated; often it is preferred to not disturb to avoid bringing contaminants out into the open. Lou indicated he would like to see testing given sediment has moved near his property. It is unlikely the lead arsenate is due to insecticide use but rather related to work done at the mill itself. The chemical proportions found at site differ than that in historic insecticide formulations, according to the LSP.

F. Tom and David met with the construction manager to modify the project to fit in with the available budget. The construction piece will be done by the firm S+R and scaled back accordingly to fit in with monies we have in hand. CPC requests for both landscaping of the park and for historical signage will be submitted. We are required to add signage due to terms set by the Massachusetts Historic Commission (MHC) along with certain construction aspects. Highlights include:

- a. Switching from paving to gravel parking spaces to save money (except for the 1 handicap space); 10 spaces in total. The Park Entrance will be paved as well.
- b. A foot entrance added; likely connect with the new sidewalk.
- c. The outline of mill buildings is different. Propose to use stones to identify corners rather than full walls. Placed stone as opposed to masonry wall (saves \$).
- d. Walkway from overlook to tail race; stairway likely to be removed.
- e. Amphitheater: 1 row masonry seats are done then work stopped due to soil contamination. 2nd row masonry switching to flat stone and a 3rd row eliminated altogether.
- f. Keeping carefully placed stones as walkway towards the river.
- g. Posts to be placed but signage to be added later.
- h. Seat boulders added back.
- i. Bioretention area added back.



- G. Approval of the minutes from the 03 SEPTEMBER 2024 committee meeting: Motion to accept made by Lou York and seconded by Bill Alesbury. Voting took place via role call:
 - Peter Hocknell – Aye
 - David Martin – Aye
 - Bill Alesbury – Aye
 - Stephanie Krantz – Aye
 - Ilana Liebert – Aye
 - Lou York – Aye
- H. This committee's next meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place on November 12 at 7pm.
- I. Lou raised the question of what the role of this committee currently is, given we are not party to engineering design discussions, etc. Peter added that consideration should be given to disbanding the committee, given the critical work related to dam removal has been completed. Stephanie shared concerns regarding the proposed ~3 year time frame to complete the River Street sidewalk. Several committee members expressed concern with the utility of the concrete barriers. Suggested one way sign at end of Chadwick. Trim weeds and poison ivy along both sides of River Street also suggested.
- J. Motion to adjourn was made at 8:26pm by Peter Hocknell and seconded by Ilana Liebert. Voting took place via role call:
 - Peter Hocknell – Aye
 - Bill Alesbury – Aye
 - David Martin – Aye
 - Stephanie Krantz – Aye
 - Ilana Liebert – Aye
 - Lou York – Aye

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting:

- Meeting Agenda for 15 OCTOBER 2024
- Draft minutes from the 03 SEPTEMBER 2024 committee meeting
- Scaled back park design with notes
- 25% River St sidewalk design. Once reviewed by Town Engineering, files will be deposited here: <https://doc.actonma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-18205>