

Kelley's Corner Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes – 30 September 2015

These are the meeting minutes from the Kelley's Corner Steering Committee of the Town of Acton, Massachusetts. The meeting took place on 30 September 2015 in the Land Use Conference Room at the Acton Town Hall.

Present: Andrew Brockway, Eric Solomon, J D Head, Jeff Clymer, Kat Hudson, Larry Kenah, Margaret Busse, Peter Darlow

Not Present:

Board of Selectmen: Peter Berry

Planning Department: Kristen Guichard, Robert Hummel, Roland Bartl

Stop & Shop Representatives

- Linda Costanzo – Director of Real Estate, Stop & Shop
- Adam Winstanley – Winstanley Enterprises LLC
- Francis Mastroianni – Trilogy Law LLC
- Katie Enright – Howard Stein Hudson

Other Attendees

- Nina Pickering-Cook – Town Counsel's Office

Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm by Andy Brockway.

This meeting was dedicated to a discussion about several points of interest that Stop & Shop representatives raised about zoning details and design guidelines.

A memo from Winstanley Enterprises to the committee lists each discussion point in these minutes.

General Comments

The Stop & Shop people suggested that additional editing would make the various documents clearer and more consistent. There were two specific recommendations.

- Add a flowchart that illustrated the overall process
- Describe the various players in the approval and decision processes (Board of Selectmen (BoS), Planning Board (PB), Planning Department, Design Review Board, etc)

The committee pointed out that the ownership of certain decisions between the BoS and the PB is under active discussion in the town.

Zoning Details

Maximum Height

There was a lengthy discussion about the maximum height in the current documents (45 feet) and whether it should be increased to 55 feet. Some of this conversation focused on the actual numbers (45 vs 55) but a part of the discussion was less about building height and more about zoning regulations (rigid) and design guidelines (flexible). Here are some key points from the discussion.

- Retail plus two floors of residential might not “make the numbers”. (Adam Winstanley)
- Andy Brockway provided some context and reminded everyone that the committee’s focus is all of Kelley’s Corner and not just the KMart parcel.
- Peter Darlow commented on what Acton is trying to achieve compared with “inner belt” cities and towns (Waltham, Arlington, etc).
- Roland Bartl asked whether we can trust the process (master plan, etc).

Ground Floor Setback

The existing language was viewed as “too restrictive”. The committee agreed.

During this conversation, Margaret Busse reminded everyone that town meeting is sensitive to adding more residential projects due to the impact on the schools. Adam pointed out that some of the “walkable residential” projects are aimed at empty nesters and baby boomers, residents that the town wants to attract or retain but who do not add to the school population.

Cost Obligations

Fees for sewer connections were offered as an example of such costs. The committee agreed with the general point but was unsure where such costs should appear.

Section 4.5.13

This point was not discussed during the meeting.

Proposed New Section

This point was not discussed during the meeting.

Design Guideline Details

Second Story Signage

The committee agreed that other types of signs should be allowed for upper level offices. “This should be easy to fix.”

Parking Bays

Committee members pointed out that this restriction was an attempt to keep buildings closer together and not separated by rows and rows of parking. They also pointed out that the design guidelines apply to all of Kelley’s Corner and not just to projects that are part of a master plan.

Walls

We agreed that this is a point where the guidelines can be more flexible.

Pedestrian Lights

It was not clear where the 16-foot height limitation came from. The restriction might be eased. There was also a discussion about the light temperature.

Storm Water Management

When this point was raised, we realized that it probably did not belong in the design guidelines.

Wrap Up

Andy Brockway asked whether affordable housing might be a part of Stop & Shop's plans. Adam Winstanley said that there were no plans but that they might entertain such a conversation.

Kat Hudson expressed the committee's gratitude for this much appreciated feedback.

In Closing

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

These minutes were recorded by Lawrence J Kenah.