

**TOWN OF DEDHAM  
TOWN GREEN WORKING GROUP  
450 WASHINGTON STREET  
DEDHAM, MA**

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN GREEN WORKING GROUP MEETING  
MARCH 30, 2023, 7:00 P.M.**

**MEMBERS:**

Mike Butler	Chair
Jessica Porter	Vice-Chair
Tom Polito	Member
Micah Flynn	Member
Mark Pearrow	Member
Tara Ikenouye	Member

**GUESTS:**

Jason Mammone	Town Engineer, Town of Dedham
Doreen Labrecque	Assistant to Administration, Town Manager's Office
Bryan Jereb	Halvorson/Tighe & Bond
Vesna Maneva	Halvorson/Tighe & Bond
Rana Mana-Doerfer	Director of Procurement, Town of Dedham

Minutes prepared by Cassidy Civiero of Minutes Solutions Inc. from a video recording.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Butler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**On a motion made by Mr. Pearrow, seconded by Ms. Porter, it was resolved to approve the minutes of the meetings held on January 5, January 26, and February 23, 2023, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**4. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN OPTIONS**

Bryan Jereb provided the presentation. There have been efforts to incorporate the historic character of the area. There will be three entry points and a sense of enclosure to mitigate roadway noise. The sound from the stage will be projected away from the neighborhoods. Signage locations will be set in the design, with content to be determined later. There are opportunities for green infrastructure. There are many utilities surrounding the site, which will impact the ability to plant trees. Ideally, for the bus stop location, the police spots will be converted to public parking spaces, depending on the will of the MTA.

## **Concept A, The Community Porch**

Concept A involves the following features:

- Green buffers on all sides.
- Raised planters on Washington Street and High Street.
- A rain garden on Church Street with a storm water feature to channel the water.
- A pergola in the active retail zone.
- An overhead feature to de-emphasize the Verizon building.
- Flexible seating on both sides.
- Sculptural seating elements.
- Green space at the entrances.
- Planting areas in the north.
- Drop-off/short-term/food truck parking instead of permanent parking off High Street.

Mr. Jereb presented renderings of the design for Concept A.

## **Concept B, The Crescent**

Concept B involves the following features.

- Green buffers on all sides.
- Rain gardens on all sides.
- Urban wild screening for the Verizon building.
- A pergola on the opposite side of where it was in Concept A.
- Tables and chairs activating the edge, with a tree canopy rather than a structure overtop.
- Sculptural elements within the space.
- Green space at the entrances, making connections to the interior space.
- Drop-off/short-term/food truck parking instead of permanent parking off High Street.

Mr. Jereb presented renderings of the design for Concept B.

## **Working Group Comments and Questions**

**Mr. Polito** asked if more cars could fit on Washington Street where the open driveway is.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that the bus uses that opening to turn to access the bus stop. Bus stop Option 1 accomplishes the most parking spots.

**Mr. Polito** asked if the sidewalk will be made larger.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that the sidewalk width would stay the same, but the curb extension would be bumped out to create a planting area.

**Mr. Polito** stated that he does not like having the pergola in the back corner and expressed that sound from the speakers should not impact the residential neighbors.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that it is better to place the speakers closer to residents but face them away.

**Mr. Polito** asked what would be under the pergola.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that there would be flexible furniture like tables and chairs.

**Mr. Polito** asked how far out the trees are from the Verizon building.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that they are 12 feet to 18 feet away depending on size.

**Mr. Flynn** asked about the size requirements from the MTA for the bus stop.  
**Mr. Jereb** responded that it is usually 80 feet, but with a curb extension it is 120 feet.

**Mr. Flynn** stated that it is better to have something cohesive than incorporate all desired elements. He is in favor of the stormwater movement. Concept A has better placement for the covered area. In Concept A, the ceiling/artificial edge is effective in distracting from the façade.

**Ms. Porter** stated that she likes the location of the covered area off Washington Street in Concept B, but the scale seems large.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that it is roughly 28 feet wide by 40 feet long and 18 feet high and could accommodate roughly eight or nine tables.

**Ms. Porter** stated that she likes the emphasis on green spaces and the use of storm water.

**Mr. Jereb** noted that the urban wild is approximately 10 to 12 feet, and a wood screening element could be favorable behind the plants so cars could not be seen.

**Ms. Porter** expressed concern with a 15-minute loading zone. She added that if the roof of the structure is too high, it could impact shade and allow water in when it rains.

**Ms. Ikenouye** asked if there is a slope change across the green.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that the site is flat. There could be elevation changes in the urban wild.

**Ms. Ikenouye** asked how this would affect site drainage.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that there would be drainage within the space with the rain gardens.

**Ms. Ikenouye** asked if the urban wild section is wider in Concept A than Concept B.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that the space will be capitalized as much as possible in either design.

**Ms. Ikenouye** asked where the most sun would be on the hottest day of the year in either design.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that the sun pocket will be the lawn.

**Ms. Ikenouye** stated that Concept B feels more organic than Concept A, and she likes that Concept B has a walkway within the green space. If there were to be solar, a battery would be needed to store it, but the solar could be used to power a charging station or lights in the area.

**Mr. Jereb** noted that there are solar developers who could pay for installation if solar is over the budget, with the Town to pay it back in power over a period of years.

**Ms. Ikenouye** asked what the site would look like in winter.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that the next round of graphics will be more photo realistic.

**Mr. Pearrow** asked if there are any utilities along the Verizon façade, as the design suggests there will be trees there.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that there are no utilities there in any of the plans he has reviewed thus far.

**Mr. Pearrow** asked about the maintenance burden with the water features.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that they are not water features; only if it rains would the rain gardens be active.

**Mr. Pearrow** asked if there would be lights underneath the pergola.

**Mr. Jereb** responded affirmatively, and the type of lighting depends on the budget.

**Mr. Butler** stated that he likes Concept A but with the walkway in Concept B. A solid roof structure over the tables is favorable so that there is no water on the chairs or tables after it rains. It should be considered how much seating there is overall in the site. He likes that the design is up against Washington Street. Scale is a prime target for discussion. 14 feet is a good height for pergolas.

### **Public Comment and Questions**

**Adam Chapdelaine, 88 Stoney Lead Road**, stated that both concepts are well thought out, but he prefers Concept A, as there is better continuity between the lawn and covered porch. Permanent shade should be programmed in via trees and an expansive pergola. Concept A also has better accessibility from all angles, and a performance space to activate the area. The amount of cement should be minimized. The curb extension and green buffer are favorable, and Phase 2 could be completed in conjunction with Phase 1 to save on costs.

**Susan Fay, 12 Church Street**, stated that the crosswalk does not align with the entrance to the site on Church Street, across from the Dedham Museum. Verizon trucks exit onto Church Street at unpredictable times. Pedestrians are being encouraged to use an entrance which is very close to a commercial enterprise with large vehicles. The safest route for pedestrians to enter the park should be considered. She added that High Street and Washington Street are not safe for cyclists, and it would make more sense to have a bicycle rack closer to Town Hall to encourage pedestrians to walk to this site. Seating should be accessible to all. It would be valuable to have a nod to traditional Dedham building materials, such as granite and red brick. She asked if long benches promote vagrancy.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that any bench that does not include barriers could potentially encourage someone to lay there.

**Resident**, asked if there can be electricity at the stage area.

**Mr. Jereb** responded affirmatively.

**Gianna Bird, 8 Clark Street**, stated that a bike repair kiosk near the bike racks with tools attached would be valuable.

**Resident**, asked how birds can be kept from nesting in the structure over the swings.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that the urban wild behind the area will be much more attractive to birds.

**Resident**, stated that she likes the drop-off area with room for food trucks, as well as the pathway in Concept B.

**Resident**, asked if there will be Wi-Fi access in the area.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that this could be discussed.

**Virginia Hickey, 264 East Street**, asked if Phase 2 could be done immediately, as the angle parking will quickly prove dangerous and an obstacle to traffic on High Street.

**An anonymous resident** expressed concern with the usability of the green space buffer screening the Verizon building.

**Bethany Gauthier, 89 Maple Place**, stated that she prefers Concept A, but it would be great to integrate the loop from Concept B. She asked about the buffering in Phase 2, as it seems like a disjointed planting in the middle of the sidewalk.

**Mr. Jereb** responded that there is the possibility to merge Phase 1 and Phase 2. There is strength in creating double rows of trees to enhance the pedestrian experience, adding a buffer between the park and the road.

### **Next Steps**

There will be consideration of combining some elements of each concept. The Working Group will work with the Town Manager and the Select Board to determine what happens outside the parcel limits. There must be a decision on what happens outside the existing curb line. The budget for the project is approximately \$1.2 million; therefore, not all concepts can be implemented. It is hoped the Land and Water Grant for \$500,000 will be obtained.

### **5. UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETING**

There will be a public meeting held during the first or second week of June, 2023, likely at Dedham Middle School.

### **6. OUTREACH**

There will be outreach to Dedham Square businesses and residents in advance of the police station demolition. It is hoped the demolition will take place in May, 2023, but timing is to be determined. It is unclear at this time whether the two nearby trees can remain. Each member of the Working Group could cover a block of the area and go door-to-door with flyers in April, 2023.

### **7. OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Needham Town Common:** Mr. Butler, Ms. Porter, Mr. Goodwin, and Ms. Winsten visited Needham to discuss their Town Common renovation with their project manager. The site is still under construction. Notes from the visit will be distributed to the Working Group. In the case of Needham, electrical components severely impacted lead times for the project.
- b. Verizon Site Walk:** Mr. Butler, Ms. Porter, Mr. Mammone, and Mr. Flanagan performed a site walk with three representatives from Verizon. It is assumed that the project will be designed right up to the Town's property line. If there is a desire to put trees on Verizon's property, they requested a landscape drawing in advance. Verizon did not agree to any murals being hung from their building.

### **8. ADJOURNMENT**

**On a motion made by Mr. Pearrow, seconded by Ms. Porter, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.**

**DISCLAIMER**

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chair

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Date

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