

**Cliftondale Revitalization Committee**  
**Minutes: Monday, April 26, 2021**  
**Zoom Meeting: Scheduled start time 7:00 PM**

Starting time: 7:02

**Attendees:** Chairman Joe Vecchione, Secretary Debra Panetta, Corine Riley, Allen Panico, Chris Riley, Jeannie Bartolo, Susan Palomba, Peter Rossetti Jr., Glen Davis

**Absent:** Tom Traverse, Julie Mitchell

Joe Vecchione stated that he invited business owners to attend this evening's meeting. He has e-mailed the Town Manager and Planning Department some ideas, but he has not received any correspondence. He asked about the Farmer's Market, tree, micro-enterprise fund up to \$10K, zoning overlay amendment for mixed-use, status of parking and egress study (parking is the number 1 issue, and a cornerstone of the success of the Square), banners for Senior graduating, and perhaps a car show in the Square (short term vitality).

Debra Panetta made a motion made to take the Cliftondale Business Owner Discussion out of order.

Seconded by Jeannie Bartolo.

Vote: Passed Unanimously

**Cliftondale Business Owner Discussion / Forum**

**Vicky Wiegman** – Owner of Banana Splitz for 14 years. She does have a walk-up window which has helped. Anything we can do with business and residents would be great. She would like to see more of a community aspect.

Joe said that this business does well and creates a lot of foot traffic in the square.

There is shared parking with Banana Splitz, which is contingent with the Town and with agreement with the landlord. She has had the same landlord for 23 years.

Joe believes that we do not need to reinvent the wheel. He believes that a mix of the field of planning, business owners, property owner, and the Town to discuss the needs of Cliftondale Square.

**John Surabian:** He has a law firm with his Dad, Ron Surabian. They have some parking onsite, so it does not impact them. They are located on 1 Essex Street. He is an attorney and CPA.

No other businesses wanted to speak at this time. Joe noted that The Tax of Life (Rob Catiello) and Mike Moriello were on the Zoom call.

Joe talked about the solar lights (beacons) that were discussed at the Board of Selectmen meeting, where Representative Wong was able to get \$50K for this purpose.

Joe had some ideas of flashing beacons within the Square and discussed where he would like to place these beacons. Joe would like to put one near Banana Splitz and across from St. Margaret's Church.

Chris Riley agreed that he would like to see a beacon across from Banana Splitz.

Glen Davis agreed with the two suggestions that Joe had.

Corinne Riley agreed with the two suggestions.

John Surabian would like to see Lincoln Ave. to Jackson Street people driving right through. He would like to see the two beacons where they were suggested.

Joe talked about how the rotary is wide, which leads to an unsafe environment. We need to look at curb cuts.

Jeannie Bartolo agrees with everything that everyone said. She notices that lots of people park in the Eastern Bank parking lot. If we could have something there (maybe a beacon) be placed. The Jackson/Essex/Lincoln street area is crazy.

Debra agreed with the two beacon places presented. She suggested prioritizing where we wanted to put the beacons. She mentioned the Traffic consultants report, and perhaps we can review the portion dealing Cliftondale Square – especially dealing with curb cuts.

Joe discussed where snow was put in the middle of the Square, so perhaps we can put the snow in a different location (not as hazardous).

Corrine asked Debra about the Traffic study that was conducted by the consultants. This will be added to the Board of Selectmen's next agenda (May 4<sup>th</sup>).

Joe submitted his letter of interest for the Planning Board to the Town Manager and Christine Moreschi.

The Committee is planning a public meeting sometime next summer. He reached out to the Town Manager. He thought a workshop type of format, in person, would be best. We discussed having an online survey and presenting those results. We would invite the public, business owners, and property owners to this forum. He would like somebody from the MAPC to attend this meeting. We discussed having the forum in June.

The Town will be receiving money on a municipal level from the American Rescue Plan which can be used for economic development.

Corrine discussed sending in questions to Joe to coordinate. Joe would like to have all questions completed by Memorial Day and coordinating with the Town Manager's office.

**Citizen Comment:**

Nobody from the Public wanted to speak.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Corrine Riley made a motion to approve the minutes dated April 7, 2021. Chair Seconded.

Vote: Passed Unanimously

**Chairman's Report:**

Main Streets of America was a three-day conference that Joe attended. It is the primary program in the United States which targets professional development aimed to equip downtown and commercial district leaders with the tools they need to lead results oriented and preservation-based community revitalization organizations. Success stories are Downtown Peabody and Downtown Beverly where they have seen significant revitalization. It is important to have a vision: creating economic viability. We haven't been able to help the small businesses as well as we should. The design is important (the look and feel of the Square). Cliftondale used to have a sense of 'place,' and how do we recapture that? What are you marketing you Square for? We need better promotion plan for the Square. We need to promote the strengths of the Square and we need to find a better way to promote. We need to build an organizational group, with business owners, stakeholders, and townspeople.

**Final Comments:**

Chris Riley would like an additional trash can in front of Dunkin Donuts or the Saugus Deli. He would like to see another one near Kent Street. A resident contacted him regarding this area. This would be a short-term improvement. He appreciated that two Selectmen were on the meeting as well as at least six Town Meeting members, but he noted that the Executive Branch of our government needs to make this a priority. He is disappointed that the Planning Department is not on this call. He will reach out to them directly. Joe said that he reached out and will continue to reach out. He stressed that economic development is important, especially in the Square. He is committed to do whatever it takes to make it happen.

<b>Site walk-thru is to be held on Monday, May 24<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 – 7:00 PM.</b>
---

Sue Palomba brought up that we do not have a train station or commuter line. That would make a big difference. We have the 426, 238, and 430 bus routes. Peter discussed how there was considerable discussion about having the Blue Line extend to Route 107. It was discussed at the State level but did not go anywhere. There was a discussion of making Lincoln Ave. one-way, which makes it difficult for Jackson Street. Corrine discussed how the State Delegation is coming to the Board of Selectmen meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Debra mentioned how we also asked from a representative from the Mass DOT attend as well. The meeting is from 5:30 – 7:00 PM via Zoom.

Chris Riley would like the business owners invited to the site walk-thru.

Debra Panetta made a motion to adjourn. Joe seconded.

Vote: Passed Unanimously

Adjourned: 8:29 PM

Respectfully submitted, Debra Panetta, Secretary