

Clifftondale Revitalization Committee

Minutes: March 7, 2022

Town Hall Conference Room

Posted for: 6:00 PM

Starting time: 6:05 PM

In attendance: Chairman Joe Vecchione, Secretary Debra Panetta, Chris Riley, Peter Rossetti Jr., Glen Davis, Tom Traverse, Allen Panico

Absent: Jeannie Bartolo, Julie Mitchell, Corinne Riley, Assunta (Sue) Palomba

Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order. He took attendance.

Tom Traverse made a motion to approve the minutes dated January 17, 2022. The Chair seconded.

Vote: Passed Unanimously

Chairman Vecchione explained that the draft report was sent to the Town Manager, Director of Planning & Economic Development, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Board of Selectmen for comments and an endorsement. Selectman Serino submitted comments that were read by the Chair (shown below):

Hi Joe and Committee Members,

After reading the final report of the Clifftondale Revitalization Committee, I would like to offer some comments regarding the report. I thought the report was in-depth and very informative, in particular the historical aspects including past reports. I know first-hand how difficult it will be to revitalize Clifftondale Square. I believe we all agree that the parking situation is the number one issue in the revitalization effort. When the Brooks building was up for sale, I did advocate for the town to purchase that property for municipal parking. Unfortunately, I did not receive any support from the Town Manager or Board of Selectmen at that time.

However, in the short term I believe we can take smaller steps in the revitalization of Clifftondale Square. Some suggestions include, brick sidewalks, old fashion lights and landscaping. After reading the TAP report I thought it had some good ideas in promoting a safer and slower traffic flow by narrowing the streets around the rotary, while at the same time, creating some green space in the square.

After reading the (draft) section 1.6 Zoning Overlay Guidelines, I do agree that some type of zoning overlay district would be helpful. According to the report, the support of mixed use zoning in Clifftondale was around a 50/50 split. Consequently, I do not think that 25 dwelling units per acre, the exact same density as Route One, would gather much support, including myself. Once a working group is established, I will offer my help in this effort of adopting an overlay zoning district for Clifftondale Square.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the committee members who volunteered their time in producing this invaluable report. Joe, could you please forward my comments to the entire committee.

Thank you and best regards to all,

Mike Serino

The Committee discussed the Selectmen Serino's comments. Peter Rossetti cautioned against using brick sidewalks because it makes it difficult to plow or shovel.

Mr. Rossetti explained that perhaps the reason the Committee didn't receive any formal endorsements was because Town Counsel cautioned the various Board and Committees about given endorsements. He also stated that he didn't think parking was the biggest problem in Cliftdale Square. He believes that the only way to get revitalization is to have mixed-use in the Square. Any mixed-use currently in the square was grandfathered in. Peter also discussed how the MBTA guidelines are changing which deal with residential density.

Chris Riley stated that parking is a problem, but not the only problem. We need to give people a reason to go to the Square.

There was a general discussion on some of the wording in the report, including rotaries (and people parking within the rotary, page 8 of the report) and the permitting process in Saugus (page 11). Some small tweaks were agreed to as well as changing the number of meetings had from five to seven.

Debra Panetta stated that the next Master Plan Meeting was going to be held in March and all residents are encouraged to attend.

Vote:

Debra Panetta made the motion to: To adopt the final report of the Cliftdale Revitalization Committee as the official report and distribute to the 50 Saugus Town Meeting Members with the small amendments suggested that evening:

Chris Riley Seconds

Roll Call:

Debra Panetta (yes), Peter Rossetti Jr. (yes), Tom Travers (yes), Chris Riley (yes), Glen Davis (yes), Allen Panico (yes)

Voted: Unanimously

The Chair explained that this will be the final meeting of the Cliftdale Revitalization Committee. He thanked everyone for attending and for their input throughout the process. The Committee has been meeting for over one year. He discussed next steps and hopes for additional collaboration with everyone in Town. Debra Panetta thanked Joe and the Committee for all their hard work and for SCTV for taping the meeting. Chris Riley also thanked Joe for his efforts.

Debra Panetta made a motion to adjourn. The Chair seconded.

Voted: Unanimous

Adjourned: 7:01 PM

Respectfully submitted, Debra Panetta, Secretary