

Clifftondale Revitalization Committee
Minutes: September 20, 2021
Town Hall Conference Room
Posted for: 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Starting time: 5:35 PM

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

Guest: Chris Reilly, Director of Planning and Economic Development

Absent: Allen Panico, Jeannie Bartolo, Julie Mitchell

Welcome & Recap

Chairman Joe Vecchione (the Chair) gave an update on the June 28th public meeting at the MEG (Marleigh Graves School). There were approximately 35-40 people in attendance. There was a discussion among the group on policy, public safety, and short-term goals.

The Chair spoke to Kevin Tierney on 9/15/21 as well as other business owners. He approached a brewery to take over the space where 'Everything's Hair' used to be. No external grease trap would be needed. There is a mixed-use building in Clifftondale Square for sale for \$2.6 million.

There was a discussion on the North Shore Bank and if they were enforcing parking. It was noted that the loan center was still open.

Farmer's Market

Peter Rossetti noted that there is an issue with the Farmer's Market. First, we need a farmer, and we don't have a lot of farmers in this area. The group discussed where there are currently Farmer's markets in the area, which included Melrose. The day and time are also issues and having a Farmer's market in a parking lot causes a liability issue. According to Peter, approximately 200 people attended the Farmer's market when it was in Saugus. The people from Little Brook sold their business. The Committee discussed publicity, and how we would be "fighting against" supermarkets. Signage was not economically feasible. Regarding having it at Anna Parker, there was an issue regarding child safety. As a sidenote, the Town "gave" the Farmers Market the electric to use in the past.

Additional Discussion

Chris Riley stated that "there is nothing left in Clifftondale to make you venture there." Debra Panetta brought up bicycles since the Northern Strand/Bike to the Sea would like to see a safe passage for bikers. Depending on the demographic in the Clifftondale study, some people liked the idea of bicycling to Clifftondale where others did not. The Chair mentioned that any new restaurant going into Clifftondale would have to make a significant investment. He also stated that he's been asking for a traffic and egress study since May, and that there is a dead tree in the square that need replacing. More signage is needed. Sue Palomba discussed transportation into the square as being an issue.

Peter asked the question, "where does Clifftondale Square officially start and stop?" The consensus was that it started at the Barbershop (across from the Post Office) to the Marleigh Graves School (MEG).

There used to be open parking in Cliftondale, where the Town picked up the tab for plowing, including the liability. That ended when Ed Collins was no longer the Town Manager. St. Margaret's Church was discussed, where they don't want the liability of having people parking on their land. They couldn't charge people for parking because of their 'non-profit' status.

Everyone agreed that we needed an active economic development committee.

Chris asked the question, "what do we want?" We need design standards. Do we hire a consultant? He mentioned that the master plan would be ready by mid-October.

Glen Davis spoke on mixed use in the square. Commercial use is only allowed currently, unless grandfathered in. Peter mentioned that there was a 5&10 store in the square, which was a three-story building (first floor burned down). Peter also mentioned that the gas and water lines would need to be replaced for future development, and there was once a Broadband-Communication for Safety Infrastructure grant that people could apply to (no longer). The Chair suggested an overlay.

The Chair will put together a report of the Committee and send it out once completed. Joe will try to obtain additional feedback by the property owners. Director of Planning, Chris Reilly stated that he would submit recommendations.

Debra made a motion to adjourn. The Chair seconded.

Voted: Unanimous

Adjourned: 7:04 PM

Respectfully submitted, Debra Panetta, Secretary