

meeting notes

date

8 February 2006

project

Byram Comprehensive Plan

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Advisory Committee Meeting: Refined Concepts for Walkway, Open Spaces, South Water Street and Mill Street

prepared by

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present

See attendance list

The following comments were made at the meeting (responses are shown in italics):

Diane Fox began the meeting by stating that the plans for 84 South Water Street are being redone by the developer. Also the attorney for Catalano and the Town Attorney are in discussions regarding the paper Church Street. Catalano may have plans for their other properties soon.

Deneen Cosby (DC) from CSS then presented the Schematic Designs for the waterfront walkway, South Water Street, the Church Street access enhancement and the DPW Park. The following comments were made during the discussion period.

Waterfront Walkway:

1. The landscape architect for 88 South Water Street had suggested a walkway railing with a wood handrail and steel mesh in place of the steel pickets described by DC, but were flexible about the details. *DC responded that the steel pickets would be more compatible with potential security fences put up by adjacent landowners. DC will provide a schematic elevation and section of the proposed handrail for use by the 88 South Water Street developers within one month.*

2. There was a discussion about lighting on the boardwalk. Diane Fox (DF) stated that right now, the town is assuming that the walk will only be in use from sunrise to sunset, but accommodations should be made for adding lights at a later time. The 88 South Water Street development will need to light the access to their docks, as well as their parking lot and access from South Water Street. Bollard lighting was suggested for the boardwalk to protect condo residents from unwanted light. It was also suggested that bollard lighting might be less expensive than pole lights. *DC responded that pole lights could be shielded on one side to protect condo residents and that she thought pole lighting would be more attractive because it would reflect on the water and would provide a nice detail to the very simple boardwalk. She also felt that it would not be more expensive because so many more bollard lights would be required. Also, it would be very difficult to add bollard lighting at a later date. DF directed CSS to not include lighting in Phase I, but to consider adding conduits in Phase I and a recommendation for lights to be added at a later date. CSS will provide a cost comparison of bollard lights vs pole lights.*

3. DC showed three bench types – one all wood, one wood and steel and one all steel. It was suggested that the wood bench (or wood and steel) would stay cooler and be more comfortable. Everyone agreed that using a very hard, durable wood such as ipe wood for the boardwalk, handrail and benches is desirable for limiting long-term maintenance issues. *DC will include ipe wood or equivalent in the cost estimate.*

South Water Street Streetscape

4. DC stated that the South Water Street streetscape plan includes trees within the planting strip, but that the Tree Warden had mentioned that if property owners agree, trees can be planted on private property within 10 feet of the sidewalk, with the town taking care of the maintenance. She indicated that 88 South Water Street was a good location for additional trees. *The Developer responded that they would be open to discussion of additional trees on their property.*

5. DC recommended the use of granite for the waterfront access points. It was suggested that the benches and bricks (if used instead of granite) could be opportunities for soliciting donations. Others thought that the donated bricks idea had been overused already.

DPW Park

6. DC stated that the fishing pier was shown as extending 40 feet. It was suggested that at 40' the pier might extend into the navigation channel of the river. *CSS will determine where the navigation channel is and shorten the pier accordingly.*

7. DC stated that the plan showed terracing the site down to the high tide line, but that waterfront sites are frequently contaminated which could dramatically increase the project cost. *It was mentioned that a waterfront building had previously been demolished, suggesting that the site may have been cleaned already. DC also stated that this idea had not been discussed with DEP.*

Church Street Access Enhancement

8. It was suggested that the boat ramp be turned to run perpendicular to the shoreline to make it easier to use. *CSS will look at whether it can be turned without encroaching on the navigation channel.*

9. People agreed that they would like to see power and clean water available at both the fishing pier and the boat ramp.

10. It was suggested that a piece of public art, or historic artifact be installed in the middle of the plaza to act as a focal point. *CSS will make that change.* It was also suggested that the path be moved a little further south to make it more separate from the Catalano property. *CSS will consider this change.*

11. One person mentioned that a kayak launch was not a necessary component of the design, but several people disagreed, because of the long stretch of river available at this point.

12. It was suggested that a bathroom somewhere along the walkway would be desirable. DF stated that it had not been considered because public restrooms become a town maintenance issue. *DC described structures in Cambridge that are used to house port-a-johns. She will provide a photograph and indicate a location for a porta-john structure near the building on the DPW site.*

Mill Street Streetscape Improvements

13. It was suggested that the town work with business owners to obtain agreement on tree planting locations. *The Town will work with business owners prior to developing the final tree locations.* DC noted that final tree locations will need to be coordinated with existing and proposed utility locations.

14. DC showed a photosimulation illustrating new banners on Mill Street using the existing utility poles. She explained that the poles already had so much stuff on them that attaching arms for hanging baskets would be very difficult. It was suggested that

the introduction of new decorative lighting (dark green poles with acorn luminaires are being used by the town in other locations) would provide a stronger rhythm of poles and would allow for hanging baskets and banners. *CSS will assume that the utility poles are remaining, but will look at the introduction of new light poles with hanging banners and plants.*

15. It was suggested that the best time to underground the utilities on Mill Street would be at the time that the streetscape improvements are being made. The high cost of this work and the precedent it would set for other areas of town were raised as concerns. There was also concern that residents want to see improvements in the near future and burying the utilities would be a much longer term project. The feasibility of rerouting the utilities to the back side of buildings was discussed but there was concern that many parcels didn't have sufficient land to accommodate the utilities on the back side of the buildings. The early cost estimate for burying utilities was \$3.5 million and that did not include actually connecting to individual properties. There was some confusion about whether that estimate included all of the utilities or just electricity. *Ray Heimbuch will look into the cost estimate in more detail.*

16. It was suggested that burying the utilities could be paid for with a special assessment, with property owners receiving rebates on other taxes. This needs to be looked at in more detail with the Assessor and the Comptroller. *Ray Heimbuch will look into conducting a survey of business owners to see if they would be willing to pay an assessment to cover the cost of burying the utilities.*

17. DC showed examples of stamped concrete used to highlight crosswalks. That technique is being used in Greenwich. Everyone agreed that it appeared to be effective and attractive. *DF will send CSS plans of the design for the Water Street/Mill Street intersection. DC will look into stamped materials where the color is integral so that it doesn't have to be repainted.*

18. *DC will ask the Town Tree Warden where in the town columnar sergeant cherry trees have been planted.*

19. There was a length discussion regarding pavers and installation/maintenance issues. People agreed that the use of pavers for the sidewalk was desirable because they were easy to replace when sidewalk/utility repairs are necessary. *DC will provide a cost comparison of pavers vs concrete.*

20. The Town would like a cost estimate for the waterfront walkway soon. *CSS will prepare a cost estimate by March 1.*

21. A community meeting will be held in April. *Drawings of South Water Street, the two parks and the boardwalk will be shown at that meeting.*