

**Minutes**  
**April 20, 2017**  
**Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee**

Present

Craig Piper, Chairman  
Robert Foster  
Nick Kjeldgaard, Avesta Housing  
Tom Falby  
Quang Nguyen  
Peter Stanton  
Merrie Allen  
Marilyn Reilly  
Adrian Dowling

Staff and Guests

Rick Harbison  
Art Hammond  
Anthony Johnson  
Jennifer Lessard  
Jesse Thompson, Kaplan Thompson  
Stephanie Carver  
Lee Jay Feldman  
Tex Haeuser  
Scott Morelli  
Josh Reny

**1. Welcome**

The following documents were provided:

- The agenda and minutes from the March 16, 2017, meeting
- Draft improvements plan

**Chairperson Craig Piper** welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

**2. Adoption of the Minutes**

**Bob Foster moved to adopt the March 16, 2017, minutes. Peter Stanton seconded. Unanimous approval.**

**5. Project Update/May Forum**

The Committee began with Item #5 as Tex set up the projector.

**Stephanie** said they've continued their engagement activities. They have met with a number of people, had a bike/ped presentation, and have done a site walk with the City. Zoe Miller went to the latest Community Connections dinner.

The May workshop will take the place of the regular May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, 6 PM, at the Opportunity Alliance, 50 Lydia Lane. They will focus on transportation, land use issues, and affordable housing. Design will present their renderings and there will be public exercises, with hope for more feedback from residents. They will work with the City to get word out through local papers as many residents are renters.

The survey is up to 212 responses. The goal is 300. The majority of responses have come from the neighborhood residents. They hope to talk about the results during the May workshop.

**Adrian** suggested reaching out to the Department of Corrections for the Youth Center and **Nick** suggested Greater Portland Health. **Stephanie** thought the Department of Corrections was a good idea; Zoe has worked with someone from Greater Portland Health.

### **3. Transportation Presentation**

**Rick** handed out maps that are draft ideas based on feedback from outreach. He showed a slideshow highlighting the points listed on the map.

Connectivity to/from the West End Neighborhood was the first category, focusing mainly on Westbrook Street and Western Ave. Important themes included safety issues with children walking to/from school and other intimidating spots for pedestrians, intersection redesign, poor pavement conditions, new signage/stripping, and a new road/trail and multi-use bridge.

The second category was Connectivity within the West End Neighborhood. Important themes included new sidewalks/crosswalks, improvements for ADA compliance, pedestrian refuge, neighborhood connectors, and traffic calming measures on Westbrook St. There was talk about how dark it is in the neighborhood and adding pedestrian-scale lighting.

The last category was Trail Network Considerations. This included discussion on trail maintenance, improved access to the dock, connecting various trails, improving the trailhead to the Clark's Pond trail, and adding a new trail around the Maine National Guard property. There was also discussion about adding additional trails as many people don't see this area as a place to hike. **Tex** suggested some sort of trolley tour for tourists to hike the trails.

During outreach, they have found that many different people want a recreational loop in the area: people who want to exercise, those with dogs, those with children. Open space is something neighbors value and recreational trails are an amenity recognized as special.

Runoff associated with residential was briefly discussed; **Tex** said the area is highly protected and have the most stringent stormwater restrictions.

**Stephanie** asked everyone to review this at home. Feedback and questions are appreciated.

**Craig P.** asked for more focus on what areas are priorities. He thinks it's a great concept overall.

### **4. Triangle Parcels Mixed-Use Project**

**Jesse Thompson** from Kaplan Thompson Architects passed out sketches for the triangle parcels. He explained that they were asked by Avesta to look at a potential project in this parcel that would help add a good amount of affordable housing.

He explained how the funding works: there is a competition where projects are entered and the state awards a small number each year. Those awarded are funded and are able to build. There is a points system used in the competition based on how affordably you can build the project; things worth points include green housing, elderly housing, being in service center communities, and getting Planning Board approval. It's very competitive; projects can win or lose by one point.

He explained the sketches. This would be a four-story building with the market built as part of the new building. They worked with streetscape work from the last meeting and rebuilt Westbrook Street and Wermuth Road. They included 22 on-street parking spaces with bump-outs for walking across the street. He also showed a narrower street and room for a bus stop.

He showed the lower and upper floors of the building. They have to be in a 45-55 unit scale with mostly two or three bedrooms with some one bedrooms. The ground floor has the new variety store on the corner—the classic “corner market.” There is a lobby on the other side; some apartments on the back bottom floor have private gardens. There is a space for the Opportunity Alliance and an additional space for co-working. This space could turn into something else, such as a restaurant, in the future. Currently, they show 45 parking spots. He explained that initially they sketched a building that was long and on the edge of the street but comments were to add a plaza.

Next he passed out handouts showing landscape design and explained the four different concepts. He also showed before and after photos. They feel like this is a good proposal that could win.

Talking points included:

-This parcel being the first thing you see. The building is oriented with the store facing the residential side, not the cars driving in. **Jesse** explained the reason for the orientation and how it felt better putting a parking lot on the other side. With on-street parking, people going in and out of the neighborhood can park and run into the market.

-The triangular end of the parcel is private property. It was explained that they can still create concepts for this area. The group discussed the possibility for planting trees on the City’s property along the edge. **Quang** said that he is working to acquire the lot on the left that is for sale. **Jesse** noted that in order to go through the Planning Board, you need right, title, and interest.

-**Stephanie** spoke about David’s work. One thing he wanted to show is that there are many ways to design the plaza and each can change the feel of the space. It was discussed for him to expand to the monument area. If budget allows, they talked about a gateway.

-**Art** discussed the bus shelter. Busses go by at least once an hour and they are thinking of increasing that service. He mentioned being considerate of ADA requirements. The main thing is the visual; he encouraged them to be creative.

-**Quang** spoke in favor of the project. He said this is a great possibility. He knows a lot of people in the community and loves the neighborhood. He sees this as an opportunity to grow and be part of the plan; to give back to the community. They are 100% on board with the project. **Merrie** noted that it’s extraordinary to switch to the concept of affordable housing as an anchor.

-Height and zoning was discussed. They are thinking of four stories so they don’t spread out over the site. It would be about 45’ tall. **Jesse** explained that if you go over four stories, it cannot be built from all wood. They need to be affordable and efficient. **Adrian** doesn’t think there will be an issue with the neighbors regarding height. **Lee Jay** said they still can make adjustments in the zoning as needed.

-Affordability was discussed. There will be a mixture of rates. **Nick** discussed Avesta’s rates.

-The group talked about the possibility of shadows cast on the houses behind this project. **Jesse** said they didn’t calculate a study. It’s about 55-60’ from the back of the closest home.

-Green amenities were discussed. They are considering planting things on the street and keeping everything low energy. **Tex** spoke about benchmarking and acquiring data for the building.

-Applications are submitted in January. The group discussed timeframes. **Tex** hoped they would start the approval process of master plan zoning in August and be complete by late October.

## **6. Comments from the Public**

**Adrian** spoke to an earlier comment about not having trails too close to the airport. He doesn't think airport management is totally against this; they've worked extensively with Portland Trails. He wouldn't give up on having trails close to the airport. **Peter** asked if they could link to Portland Trails and connect the communities.

## **7. Round Robin**

**Merrie** said this is invigorating and exciting.

**Peter** said many families are moving to Westbrook where there are new affordable housing opportunities. **Nick** said that you can buy places in Westbrook for less money than in South Portland. **Merrie** said public housing has been opening there as well. It's not that families want to move, but they aren't getting the openings here.

**Tex** requested that people bring two friends to the workshop. They hope for many residents but it's important for others to come as well.

**Rick** appreciates input and reminded everyone that they can reach out to him and Stephanie.

**Stephanie** thanked Nick and Merrie for helping out as much as they have.

**Craig** thanked everyone for their work.

## **8. Adjournment**

**8:00 pm Bob Foster motioned to adjourn. Craig Piper seconded; unanimous approval.**