

## **Minutes**

**December 4, 2014**

### **Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee**

#### **Present:**

Craig Piper, Chairmain  
Councilor Maxine Beecher  
Tex Haeuser  
Robert Foster  
Mark Eyerman  
Milan Nevajda  
Pat Doucette  
Joe Picoraro  
Peter Stanton  
Kathleen Phillips  
Jon Jennings  
Craig Gorris  
Nathan Marles

#### **Absent:**

Fawn Dunphy  
Stephanie Carver, GPCOG

#### **1. Welcome**

Craig Piper welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **2. Adoption of the Minutes**

Bob Foster moved to adopt the 11/20/14 minutes; Maxine Beecher seconded. Unanimous approval.

Members were provided with the 11/20/14 minutes. The following documents from the 11/20/14 meeting were provided if needed:

- Mill Creek Master Plan memos from Mark Eyerman
  - Cover Memo: Overview of documents
  - Vision and Objectives
- Existing Conditions maps: Census Block Populations, Land Use, Streets & Blocks Patterns, Transportation Infrastructure, Traffic Volumes (2014), Utilities Infrastructure, Environmental Conditions, Zoning
- Improvements maps: Gateways and Visual Environment Improvements, Parking and Street Improvements, Pedestrian Improvements, Greening Improvements
- Proposed Land Use Plan map
- Maps of current layouts and corresponding photos of areas

### 3. Mill Creek Master Planning/Review of Action Strategies

Mark Eyerman stated that the intention of this meeting was to review the Action Strategies portion of the Visions and Objectives memo that was not covered on 11/20. He noted that there was no new material. He began where the group left off--with the review of Action Strategies, Objective #1, Short Term Action #6 (page 5).

After Mark reviewed Objective #1, Short Term Action #8 (Reduce the off-street parking requirement for small apartments in mixed-use buildings to 1 space per unit for 1 bedroom apartments and 0.75 spaces per unit for studio apartments), there was a group discussion. Maxine noted that she has heard a lot about parking issues from residents in Knightville and she's not sure reducing parking requirements here will work. Kathleen was interested to hear that Mark noted some projects want less parking because that's not what she has heard as a real estate agent. Tex said that we have never talked about parking reduction for small units only. Mark noted that Maxine's observation is fair but the development community should be responsible for providing the parking they need to make units work. Jon agreed.

There was a discussion about parking bans and available parking around the Post Office, Thomas Street, City Hall, and Knightville businesses. Jon noted that parking bans are an issue for people who don't have a place for guests to park. Mark said that many parking issues come to parking management—business owners need to regulate where employees and customers park. Craig P. asked what the requirement is now. Tex and Mark stated it is 1.5 spaces for a one-unit or studio. Maxine stated that it's important to look at what's happening in Knightville and Mark replied that it's a fair concern but the issue is in finding balance—being reasonably protective but not imposing unnecessary cost for someone who is looking to do business in Mill Creek. The group agreed. Jon asked Tex if there are areas with no parking and Tex said no, not on Market Street.

Objective #1, Short Term Action #10 (Clearly sign the Post Office and City Hall parking lots as public parking and provide appropriate directional signage.) was discussed in detail. Mark noted that having clear signage adds to the supply of available parking in the area. Jon asked if it could be counted by a developer and Mark said yes, it could be and, more importantly, it could be used. There was a discussion about time limits and Jon replied that issues arise because there is no parking enforcement in the city. Mark noted that parking management is a key element.

Objective #1, Development Driven Action #1 (If redevelopment occurs within the block bounded by Waterman Drive, Market Street, Q Street, and E Street, work with the developer to recreate a public or private interior street system connecting Market Street to E Street and/or Waterman Drive to Q Street and using proceeds from the Downtown TIF to assist in this work.) raised discussion in regard to the Existing Conditions: Streets & Blocks Patterns map. Mark explained that this action focuses on the McDonald's/Finard block. Craig P. asked if Q Street could be the end of the block versus Ocean. Peter asked if the land where the diagonal parking lot is, between Q and Ocean, is owned by the city or if it's a paper street. Tex said there is no paper street there and said that many paper streets have been discontinued. Jon asked if the group has ever discussed the potential of Q Street. He reimagined it as a walkable street with businesses (think Church Street in Burlington or Exchange Street in Portland with no cars). Mark said he would add both the extension of the street system toward Ocean and Q Street's potential to his revisions.

Objective #1, Development Driven Action #2 (Utilize funds from the Downtown TIF District to provide pedestrian improvements, parking, and interior street construction to support a mixed-residential /commercial redevelopment project.) raised discussion about the Finard parcel and TIF money. Mark said that there should be priorities on what the TIF money will be used for. Jon would like to have that money exclusive to what is agreed upon so that it's not redirected. Peter said it should be used for things that can bring on the next phase of

development, as an investment to the next phase happening. The committee agreed. Maxine asked if the wording should be added to the memo and Mark said he will add language in his revision.

Objective #2 (Establish Mill Creek as a distinct and special place with a clear identity, attractive gateways, and a high-quality visual environment so Mill Creek becomes a destination and a place where people want to spend time and live.) was discussed in detail. Knightville's design standards were mentioned, particularly the inclusion of standards for signage there. Mark explained that signage is a sensitive subject with business owners and setting design standards for redevelopment was discussed. Craig P. mentioned the large scale of the Cape Elizabeth sign on the bridge and asked if there's a way to have a DOT discussion to have the scale reduced. Jon said Jim has had that discussion before and will continue it as needed. Peter mentioned the issue of light pollution. He also asked if the lights in Knightville are energy intensive and Tex said they are. Mark said he would add exterior lighting standards in his revision.

Mark asked if the Waterfront Market Association is still active. Jon said it is, but there is an interest in getting more active. Mark asked if revitalizing the organization is a goal and Jon answered yes.

There was a discussion of the area's identity and different names—Knightville, Mill Creek, Waterfront Market—and signage in the area. Jon said the area needs a clear identity for the area and the group agreed. Mark will add language into his revision.

There was discussion of food trucks, encouraging space for outdoor dining, and the positive reaction to Movies in the Park at Bug Light. Peter asked if there's a way to get movies in Mill Creek Park, but there are issues with traffic.

As a side note, Mark said he would change the round symbol on the maps because it can be confused for a roundabout.

In the wording for Objective #3, Short Term Action #2 (Develop a plan for improvements at the intersection of the bridge approach, Broadway, and Waterman Drive to make it easier and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross this intersection including the possibility of a pedestrian bridge.), Jon asked for "possibility" to be changed to "probability." Tex agreed that the wording as-is sounds too soft. Mark said he would change the wording. Peter asked about the high tension wires and Tex said he heard from CMP that they will work.

There was a group discussion of Objective #3, Short Term Action #8 (Vigorously enforce the yield to pedestrians' law.) The group agreed that this isn't an issue. Mark said he will remove Short Term Action #8 under Objective #3 during his revision.

Peter asked Mark about how sidewalks could be added, if there's room to carve out of existing street, and preserving green space. Mark said it's a fair question but that the Short Term items are more about developing a plan and looking at how it can be done.

Tex discussed the stretch of Broadway where it could be "greened up." He spoke about Jim Gailey's idea of leaving a central common access way in the median (to allow access to/from businesses) and extending landscaped medians away from it, forcing a common circulation scheme. Peter asked if this is car-focused and Tex answered yes, but noted that landscaping and islands can add refuge for better crosswalks. There was a discussion about entering/exiting the businesses on that stretch of Broadway, particularly Dunkin Donuts. Jon said that Sebago Technics should take a look at this area. Maxine said these ideas would make a difference in the calmness of the area and the group agreed. Peter asked if it would be worth adding a traffic light there and the group said no. The group discussed placements of lights and crosswalks around the city.

In regard to Objective #3, Short Term Action #11 (Develop and implement a wayfinding directional signage program throughout Mill Creek, and upgrade signage along the Greenbelt entry points.), Jon noted that there are wayfinding signs that have been approved and made in the Maine Mall area but they are not out yet. Mark asked if there is a need for more fine scale within the Mill Creek area and the group said yes.

In Objective #3, Mid-Term Action #2 (Make the improvements at the intersection of the bridge approach, Broadway, and Waterman Drive.), Tex asked to specifically state “pedestrian bridge.” Mark said he would make the change.

Nathan asked if Objective #3, Mid-Term Action #1 (Reconstruct the intersection of Cottage and Broadway to eliminate the free right turn lanes and to make it easier for pedestrians to cross Broadway and Cottage Road.) is to eliminate the right-hand turn near the library. Mark said yes, that and the turn near the senior housing. Peter asked if there have been traffic studies and if bringing traffic to a full stop will force it to back up to the previous intersection. Maxine asked if Nathan was suggesting improvement and he said he would leave this alone. Peter said these are dangerous spots for pedestrians. Nathan said if the traffic is free and pushing the crosswalk button stops it, a momentary stop in traffic is much better. Mark said the issue is looking at what’s more important: getting a car through faster or reconnecting the community across Broadway. The problem with quarter-circle turn lanes is that drivers go straight through without looking for pedestrians. Peter said that, to him, the problem is having triangular islands and said they are dangerous for pedestrians.

Objective #3, Mid-Term Action #6 (Construct a direct pedestrian connection to the Greenbelt from Broadway through the municipal sewer pump station lot next to the Pratt-Abbott parking area.) was discussed. Peter said it would be nice to cross to the library and to cross over the pond to cut across the park. Mark said they will revisit in the essence of time.

The group discussed Objective #4 (Make Mill Creek “greener” both with more open spaces, trees, landscaping, and flowers and with upgraded environmental conditions such as green buildings and improved stormwater management.) The Cape Elizabeth/bridge sign issue was revisited. Tex asked if, under Development Driven Actions, the wording should change to “LEED and/or EnergyStar maintained buildings.” Mark said the Neighborhood standards are more fitting because they are about how buildings fit into the standards of the neighborhood, setbacks, etc. He will revisit this point in his revision. Jon suggested adding another action here to require developers of a certain density to report on the EnergyStar portfolio. Tex will send Mark information he has on this and Mark will add the language.

Mark noted that, due to the previous discussion, the wording in Objective #6 (Minimize the potential impacts of sea level rise on Mill Creek so that it can remain a viable and attractive area in which people want to live, visit, and invest.) has now changed (in regard to “sea level rise”) and this objective will be updated.

In closing, Mark said that Milan has been working on illustrations of what the development in some of the areas might look like. Some should be available at the next meeting.

Jon recommended that, along the planters/trees line in Objective #2, a public art requirement should be added. Mark will add this in his revision.

#### **4. Comments from the Public**

None

## **5. Round Robin**

Peter said that in looking at high density residential with limited parking, Zipcars seem useful.

Tex asked if Mark and Milan will have enough of the revision and illustrations completed in time for the next meeting. Milan said many of the illustrations should be complete, but maybe not all of the multiple options. The group agreed to see where everything stands and possibly have a shorter meeting on 12/18. If there isn't enough completed, it will be cancelled.

Jon mentioned that along the same line as Zipcars, there could be bike sharing. He is working with Portland and Mill Creek seems like a logical place for a bike share facility. Mark said that in the long term, the advantage of Mill Creek is that you can get on a bus and be in downtown Portland in 11 minutes. Jon also mentioned looking into lighting on the bridge to make it look more distinctive and interesting.

Joe revisited the idea of South Portland having a clearer identity. He likes the Church Street idea for Q Street.

Craig asked Jon of the potential of having a pedestrian link-up to Hinkley with the Armory Sale. Jon said it's a requirement. Craig asked, with the bridge/bikeway, if there is there a way to go north/south as well to connect the beltway and Mill Creek to the neighborhoods surrounding it.

## **6. Adjournment 8:30**