

Notes from 12/10 Village Center Visioning Public Hearing

Attendance: 17 citizens + PB

ACTIONS:

1. Take a look at Marion Center (TB)
2. Obtain ownership info/contact for Mobil gas station (PB)
3. Look into ownership/MGL re: American Legion (PB)
 - a. Update: Legion bought property from Town in 1954, paid off mortgage in 2008, needs to be used for non-profit, if they want to sell Dover at least gets first dibs.
4. Update slides to reflect Town ownership of old chapel/fire station on Whiting Road (TB)
5. Visual of what different frontage setbacks look like (TB)

Takeaway quotes:

1. Create a new vision to change the DNA of our bylaws and regulations
2. *Incentivize*

SWOT - Strengths

1. Town House well situated with nice lawn space for activities/programming: usage not optimized in/out
2. Library is an active community center with very usable surrounding land
3. Basically, a walkable town center but with crossing dangers and a few missing sidewalk pieces (Dover Market to Channing Pond and Springdale Meadows; in front of Needham Bank building around to Dover Country Properties so contiguous on Walpole)
4. Dover Market/wine store
5. Unique landscape and streetscape has natural feel. Buildings are worked into the natural landscape.
6. Current businesses, though limited, cater to residents' needs, yet overall there is a dearth of retail establishments
7. Surrounded by towns with full services (also a W/O)
8. B/M districts abut a lot of town-owned open space; needs to compliment and identify synergies

SWOT – Threats

1. Chain retail coming in
2. Unconstrained development - No architectural guardrails
3. Drive throughs
4. Balance development so VC does not look cookie cutter
5. Development that caters too much to outside Dover needs; however, what is viability of retail spaces given Dover's small population?

SWOT – Weaknesses and Opportunities

1. Dunkin Donuts building to Dover Market connector roads/intersection problematic (The Meadows-owned connector; narrow two-way town-owned connector)
2. improve and extend sidewalk connections around VC and from VC to open spaces (e.g., Chickering Fields/tennis courts and School, Springdale Meadows, Channing Pond.)
3. Build contiguous sidewalks along all main arteries within x distance (0.5-1 mile) radius of VC
4. Rail Trail is a weakness as it is and a big opportunity.
5. Traffic volume and flow around VC a disaster
6. Existing parking behind buildings on Whiting Street is underused
7. VC is stark and cold; bereft of people, bare, lacks an invitation
8. Pedestrian access and use of VC is not safe due to traffic (congestion, traffic patterns, sidewalk non-contiguous, traffic lights, crosswalks) so if one needs to get in a car, why not just go to a surrounding town centers.
9. Lack of destination locations – a coffee shop that folks actually want to hang out at
10. Lack of public transportation
11. INFRASTRUCTURE; modular systems now available for small, shared wastewater/septic systems instead of lot-by-lot approach

Table 2 Large view

1. need to *create reasons* to come to VC with places and activities for folks to come together (Arlington Center- Kickstand Café); make VC a dynamic destination
2. *connections* via sidewalks, trails (improve trail from Chickering to VC)
3. significant interest in the Rail Trail to bring non-vehicular traffic to the VC and connect various parts of the community with the VC (use as connector to VC and Springdale Meadows) and increase possibilities to create a vibrant VC
4. VC should have a coordinated programming so it's not just a collection of buildings
5. Dover is a segmented community so needs compelling reasons to come together
6. New residents choose Dover due to schools and green space. They want to use the VC and would like places for kids to hangout safely, connect to open space, and support a rail trail
7. No need to cede VC to cyclists on weekends; if VC a destination for residents Library could be open on Sundays
8. Town House lawn activities: DMA programs, Classic Cars, Holiday Market, Craft Fair, Summer Concert Series, Farmer's Market. However, there is not the population capacity to duplicate (e.g., Powissett Farm has a farmer's market); build a pavilion to encourage outdoor events/activities and seating
9. CCC has plans for back space activities, not an inviting Springdale Ave public face
10. Lighting on Town green for evening programming?
11. Integrate Library & Am. Legion into Springdale corridor through walkways and signage
12. Whiting Road: lack of sidewalks severely impacts access to retail spaces
13. The "traffic light intersection" is uninviting; the corner needs to be "dressed up"
14. An opportunity in the VC to add warmth and charm

15. Promote use of Town House green with more benches and clearer access to those spaces
16. Consider view corridors as a precious public asset for both connectivity and visual esthetic
17. Public Art program; develop bylaws and guidelines
18. In thinking about VC, split the Springdale/Whiting Rd. area from the Centre St/ Walpole St areas. They have different traffic characteristics that impact all sorts of criteria
19. Parking cannot be considered on a lot-by-lot basis as it is too limiting. Dover's bylaws incredibly restrictive. Look at parking as a totality of the VC
20. Encourage bikers with appropriate rack placements
21. Cemetery – view also as an historical site with added plaques and historical information

Table 1 – Focused View

1. What is the current site plan for the CCC and how does it help the VC
2. Use the CCC parking area and the back areas along the railbed for Whiting Road retail parking spaces; redesign or relocate ccc parking plan
3. Consistent architectural style - Town House, CCC & Library. Dover Cafe is a favorite with brick facade.
4. Dover Cafe could be expanded to rear and with addition of second floor.
5. Recreation space is important, space for playground needs to allow parents to watch children.
6. Create more functional space near/on the Town House green (e.g., permanent stage, defined picnic area); add small areas of outdoor seating all over the VC as there is little. Now.
7. Sidewalk Whiting Road; traffic concerns into neighborhood part of road
8. Use development of the old chapel/fire station as a catalyst to upgrade Whiting Rd; move storage out of historical building and build elsewhere. Storage is the most wasteful use of valuable property in the VC
9. Consider making the Springdale/Whiting Road area a pedestrian corridor and move road to run between the CCC and businesses along Whiting
10. If we have a rail trail, it has an impact on placement of a building on the Dover Market site and back parking lots
11. Centralized parking could benefit businesses
12. Are there grants available? Grants for startup businesses could incentivize
13. Mobil corner: develop a plan for the Needham Bank building, gas station, Dover Country Properties Building and maybe empty lot
14. Redesign the traffic light intersection to reduce curb cuts, extend sidewalks, use sidewalk pump outs, etc.
15. Traffic light timing should be looked at again with timing adjusted to actual time of day realities. Could be done now
16. Signage to public buildings, parking areas
17. Mixed Use housing needs to be explored and is important
18. Whiting past end of Business District could be a transition zone with higher density housing

19. Interesting businesses could help draw customers - Yarn shop, Basil's (Medfield), separate wine shop = more visible
20. Create a business roundtable with VC property owners to communicate and identify opportunities to collaborate, discuss creation of a cross-lot plan and coordination since individual lots are so small and limiting