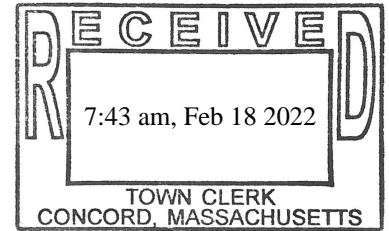


Concord COA Board Meeting minutes
January 18, 2022



The Board Meeting took place using Zoom. The meeting was recorded.

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

Attendance:

Kristin Nelson	present	Margaret Hoag	present
Teri Stokes	present	Patty Keane	present
Rod Riedel	present	Carol Ann Hannan (chair)	present
Michael Rudd	present	Christine Kendrick	present
Susan Bates	present		

Absent: Carole Cushing (arrived late)

Approval of Minutes

Teri made a motion to accept November's minutes. Rod seconded.

Patty Keane: yes
Carol Ann Hannan: yes
Michael Rudd: yes
Christina: yes
Kristin: yes

Director's Report: Ginger Quarles

- The COA started a new club this week with *Beeyonder* which offers virtual tours of cities around the world, as distinct from armchair travel. The trip took them to Lisbon and was very well received.
- Ginger attended the board meeting of Concord Friends of the Aging (private non-profit organization that helps COA fund activities) and provided an update on COA activities. They asked if there are particular financial needs with which they could assist. She mentioned two specific needs: 1) a new van (which would have to be electric, per the town's energy goals) and 2) a carport (to help reduce shoveling time for staff and other snow related inconveniences). The Friends sponsored a holiday lunch drive-through and would like to do something similar in the spring. This will, again, have to be drive-through since the event generates a level of interest that outstrips the occupancy limits of the building.
- The COA has had some employees out on medical leave who will be returning later this week.
- Community Chest grant request and annual report have been submitted.
- For the town, the annual report, FY23 budget and the narrative draft have been submitted. This past week, there was a request for all town departments to cut 1.4% from their FY23 request. This amounts to about 8k for the COA budget and a smaller amount for the Harvey Wheeler budget (which covers custodian and utility expenses). Ginger will discuss the reductions with Kate.

- Ginger commented on the dramatic increase in COVID cases for Middlesex County in recent weeks. To best serve the community needs, the COA will be holding another mask giveaway in February although this time, they will be giving away regular disposable masks (which were donated) since cloth masks are no longer recommended.
- Ginger is working on the COA's weekly bulleted activity report which Concord's Interim Town Manager has requested. This report was introduced by the former Town Manager to be delivered to the Select Board on a weekly basis.
- Ginger will attend the upcoming Disability Commission meeting as a guest.
- Lion's Club has agreed to again sponsor Valentine's Day lunch. They will hire a caterer and, again, offer this as a drive-through event on Friday, February 11. This will be announced in the February newsletter.

Teri relayed some comments from the 'Concord After 60' call.

- 1) There is some concern that people are not wearing masks (or keeping their masks up) at COA events. As a result, some individuals are no longer comfortable attending the events. Ginger noted that if the activity has COA staff present, they have been encouraged to police mask wearing as best they can. Unfortunately, some activities do not have COA staff, leaving few options although there is signage about mask wearing throughout the building.
- 2) There was a question as to whether people could schedule a gift shop slot so as to avoid crowds. Recognizing that the shop is small, Ginger has asked that one of the two volunteers leave the shop if a buyer comes in and that they not let multiple shoppers in at once. Ginger noted that they could perhaps allow people to call ahead but that might get unmanageable quickly. Instead, it may be better to encourage people to shop on-line. Teri suggested that it would be helpful to advertise this in the newsletter periodically.
- 3) Teri also asked if people have to prove they are vaccinated to come into the COA? Ginger said that everyone is required to be masked, per the mandate, but that the COA cannot exclude those who aren't vaccinated from entering. When there wasn't a mask mandate (during the summer), you could be without mask if you provided proof of vaccine but with the mask mandate, proof is no longer relevant. In the future, they will likely go back to the policy of requiring proof of vaccine if you want to come in without mask.

Liaison Reports:

Minuteman Senior Services (Margaret)

- They have spent a considerable amount of time figuring out implementation of the vaccine mandate which has now been revoked. This was going to be expensive because they would have needed to test all non-vaccinated individuals (including volunteers) once per week.
- As a result of a recent lawsuit brought by the ASAPs, Minuteman will be receiving additional money from the state for a retention bonus and a rate increase for care workers. Hopefully, this will help with the availability of workers.
- There was a bump up in the 60+ category in recent census data (60+).
- Minuteman and other ASAPs have formed a new business entity called "Care Coordinate" which is designed to provide services to Medicare Advantage plans (such as Tufts, etc.). The group has hired a Managing Director and will be ready to start business soon. The purpose of Care Coordinate is to allow a Medicare Advantage plan to contract with all ASAPs in Massachusetts using one contract to provide the same services to their members.

- Minuteman is still looking for at-large board members if anyone is interested.

Concord after 60 report (Teri)

They didn't have a meeting in December but just had one on Sunday. For this meeting, Marian Ryan, the attorney general for Middlesex County led a very informative discussion on Middlesex county from a legal perspective. They group also had a social, lunch zoom.

Minuteman Network (Carole Cushing – report given by Carol Ann Hannan)

The Network posted a video for a hard-of-hearing support group. Carole suggested that there may be other interesting meetings that could be recorded and posted online – but that it is important to make sure that there is a good way to let people know about them.

Carole asked whether it was possible for the COA to help people order at-home tests. Ginger noted that the COA could potentially help although there is a plan for a telephone line to be set up.

Chair's Breakfast (Carol Ann)

None since last meeting.

Susan:

Susan announced that there is a special town meeting in Thursday January 20 to discuss the funding of the Middle School Project. For those concerned with COVID, there are accommodations for a limited number of individuals to participate from their car. They will be able to pre-register in the cafeteria, get a slip, go back to their car, listen to deliberations on radio, go to outside microphone to speak, and vote by raising their ballot out their window. Registration will start at 6; meeting is at 7.

Other:

- To volunteer at the COA, everyone must complete a CORI check (criminal check) every 2 or 3 years. Volunteers fill out the volunteer application and give permission for a CORI check to be completed. The volunteer coordinator keeps track of CORI applications and status.
- Rod suggested that everyone on the board should receive the High Spirit newsletter. Ginger took down the names of those not receiving it and will add them to the distribution list.
- Rod noted that he and Teri have been making progress on the COA articles. They have met with COA staff and are working on drafts.

Motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Teri which was seconded by Patty. The motion was approved by a roll call vote.

Rod Riedel: yes

Kristin Nelson: yes

Carol Ann Hannan: yes

Michael Rudd: yes

Carole Cushing: yes

Christina: yes

LIAISON REPORTS FOR DECEMBER 2021 COA BOARD MEETING

Minuteman Senior Services (Margaret Hoag)

During our board meeting on December 1, 2021, we discussed that filling care plans for consumers who need only a few hours per week is very challenging because of the low work force. This is causing Minuteman to underspend. Another spending challenge is that the state was very late in paying and still today owes Minuteman \$500,000. Local shares have been declining and were very low this year. Minuteman's health insurance was quoted to have a 25% increase so MSS went out to bid for a lower rate. The board discussed offering two plans to employees one of which would have a higher deductible but include a Health Savings Account.

Minuteman is receiving a donation from the Subaru Share the Love event. Also, the offices will be moving to another location in Bedford in the Spring. The new office will be much smaller.

Board of Health (Patty Keane)

First discussed was the White Pond advisory committee's request for a letter of support from the Concord Board Of Health regarding efforts to remediate toxic algae blooms in order to allow for safe swimming.

Also the Board of Health discussed proposed signage and cleaning and staff monitoring protocols given by Deborah Stark in order to comply with conditions needed for refilling returnables at Deborah's Natural Foods. The details of this are still being worked out.

As usual, a brief COVID-19 update was given. Some of the salient points are listed here:

- 1) Close contacts of a person who has tested positive for Covid do not have to quarantine unless they test positive also. However, if a person tests positive, it is now that person's responsibility to contact all who came into contact with them before quarantining.
- 2) Concord has an excellent 95% vaccination rate.
- 3) There are about 15 to 25 new cases per week in Concord. The positive test rate in Concord is 2.51% compared with 4.79% in greater Massachusetts.
- 4) There is general reluctance from the Board of Health to initiate an indoor mask mandate for Concord (just as Governor Baker similarly has not agreed to do for MA). Two of the primary reasons for this seem to be that there would be difficulty in enforcement and also the possibility of suits being brought forward against such a mandate as has happened in other towns and to other boards, etc.

The Board of Health will watch the data as time goes on and if there is a very significant jump in the Covid positivity rate, they will review this present decision.

However, the Board will continue to strongly recommend mask usage indoors and they will support any business that requires this.

- 5) The Board of Health has recommended that all at The Beede Center be vaccinated. Since it's not possible to wear a mask while swimming at the pool, the Board of Health will recommend to the Select Board to require vaccination for swimming there.

Finally, Susan Rask, Public Health Director for the town of Concord, will be retiring in the near future.

PEG Access (Carole Cushing)

A Comcast rep was at the meeting to answer some questions about the upcoming renewal of the PEG channel contract. A few interesting issues were mentioned:

Out of approximated 7500 Concord households, Comcast has 4993 subscribers.

PEG channels are not currently HD but this can be requested in the new contract.

Electronic program guide for the PEG channels was requested again. It appears that the cost of this is not the only issue. Multiple towns are on the same "head end" and so the program guide for each PEG channel would only be able to reflect what was being presented to one of the towns, not to each of the towns. It was not clear that this could easily or cheaply be fixed.

Concord After 60 (Teri Stokes)

On November 21 CA60 had enjoyed a talk by William H. Bailey, former Concord Academy teacher and author with Renee Garrelick of the book: ***Concord in the Days of Strawberries and Streetcars***. "A topical portrayal of community life during the earlier days of this century as told through the memories of the town's long-time residents"

Bill reviewed the history of Concord's Immigrant Communities starting with John Jack who died in March 1773 at age 60. John was a slave in Concord and his epitaph was written by a Tory. At the time of the 1775 Revolution, Concord was English.

In the 1830's Irish immigrants came to build the railroad to Fitchburg. In the 1850's the Town Clerk recorded more Irish births than English. The first priest at St. Bernard's Church was head of the school committee in 1868. The next group was from one town in Norway. Then came Canadians to work in the Mills. They were followed by three Inferara brothers who were Italian farmers. Finally some Jewish families came from Lithuania. So the town continued to grow with new citizens from many communities.

The CA60 Steering Committee met on December 14th. Group would like to pursue non-profit 501-C status and is seeking pro-bono legal support to that end.

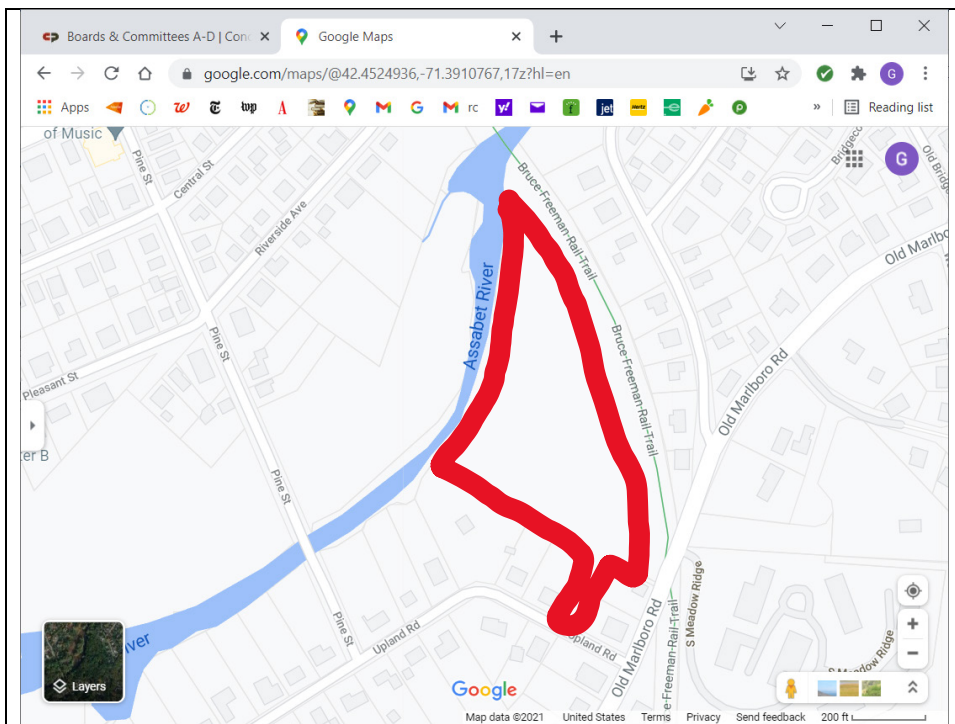
Concord Housing Development Corp. (Michael Rudd)

No more news on Christopher Heights. Still expect to break ground next year, 2022.

Concord Housing Authority meeting [December 2, 2021] (Rod Riedel)

- Concord Housing Development Corporation is evaluating several housing construction options on the 5-acre property in West Concord that is currently for sale (@ approximately\$3million).

Each option includes the use of the house on the property as two family house. The options vary based on the number of additional units proposed for construction: 6 or 7 or 10.



The decision to purchase this site by the Town will require approval vote at Town Meeting.

Public Works Commission meeting December 8, 2021]:

The Winter Maintenance (including road/sidewalk plowing/snow removal) presentation is now available on YouTube. The link to the video is on the Public Works web page – for convenience, here is the link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wHS1ANgDoQ>.

The public works department plans to record and post more of their presentations so that more people in Concord can learn about what the department is doing. The next presentation that will be posted is the road/pavement maintenance plan for the next five years.

LIAISON REPORTS FOR JANUARY 2022 COA BOARD MEETING

Board of Health (Patty Keane)

No meeting since December.

PEG Access (Carole Cushing)

PEG Access Committee met on 1/6/2022. Of interest to COA is the upcoming Town Meeting on Jan 20 at 7pm. If seniors cannot attend this meeting in person, it will be broadcast live on Government channel, channel 9. It will also be available for viewing after that from the town's web site.

The special Town Meeting will vote on an override to allow borrowing for the proposed new Middle School. This override also requires a special Town vote which will be on Feb 3. Channels 8, 9 and 99 frequently airs a 4 minute tutorial from the League of Women Voters, when there are no other programs on those channels. This tutorial informs voters of the new voting precincts. (Note - I have seen this 4 minute tutorial once but have not been able to view it again.)

From Susan: If a citizen wants to vote at the Special Town Meeting on January 20 he or she needs to be at the meeting. You can watch the meeting live on TV but need to be physically present at the meeting in order to vote. The vote for funding a new Middle School requires a 2/3 majority to pass at The Special Town Meeting. The vote at Special Town Election on February 3 requires a simple majority to pass. The funding of the Middle School project needs to pass at BOTH the Special Town Meeting and the Special Town Election.

Concord Housing Development Corp. (Michael Rudd)

Still no start date for groundbreaking of Christopher Heights.

Concord Housing Authority meeting [January 6, 2022]: (Rod Riedel)

No news relevant to COA to report

Public Works Commission meeting [January 12, 2022]: (Rod Riedel)

DPW will propose a 5-year capital improvement plan requiring approximately \$34 million for the entire five-year period. Note: this capital plan addresses long-overdue maintenance that has not been performed previously, due to lack of funding.



CPW Comprehensive ROW 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan

CPW General Fund Five-Year Capital Plan for FY23 through FY 27

Engineering (Tier 1. PayGo)	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	5 Yr Total
Asset Management Tools	40,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	100,000
Roadside Safety	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	375,000
Striping & Signage	88,000	100,000	90,000	92,000	94,000	464,000
Traffic Signals	32,000	-	50,000	35,000	35,000	152,000
Subtotal Engineering (Tier I. PayGo)	235,000	190,000	230,000	217,000	219,000	1,091,000
Engineering (Tier II. Debt)	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	5 Yr Total
Culvert & Bridge Repairs	772,000	440,000	780,000	450,000	790,000	3,232,000
Parking Lot Rehabilitation	310,000	435,000	255,000	520,000	230,000	1,750,000
Pavement Management	3,521,000	3,680,000	3,870,000	4,060,000	4,270,000	19,401,000
Pedestrian and Bike Improvements	537,000	666,000	336,000	479,000	676,000	2,694,000
Stormwater Improvements	479,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	2,079,000
Traffic Improvements	382,000	1,130,000	385,000	1,140,000	387,000	3,424,000
Traffic Signals	-	450,000	-	-	-	450,000
Subtotal Engineering (Tier II. Debt)	6,001,000	7,201,000	6,026,000	7,049,000	6,753,000	33,030,000
Total Capital Requests - Engineering	6,236,000	7,391,000	6,256,000	7,266,000	6,972,000	

Description automatically generated

PWC reviewed information from Historic Districts Commission regarding proposed scenic roads by-law. Nine roads are proposed for designation as scenic roads:

Proposed Scenic Roads

- Balls Hill Road
- Barretts Mill Road
- Garfield Road
- Liberty Street
- Monument Street
- Old Road to Nine Acre Corner ("ORNAC")
- Strawberry Hill Road
- Sudbury Road
- Westford Road

For detailed information, including identification of properties affected by this proposed bylaw, please use the following link:

<https://concordma.gov/2971/Scenic-Roads-Bylaw-Information>