

**Junction Village Open Space
Task Force
Meeting Minutes
September 2, 2021, 5 p.m.
In person at 141 Keyes Road and online via Zoom**

Pursuant to a notice and agenda filed with the Town Clerk, the JVOSTF met at 5 p.m. on Sept. 2, 2021, at 141 Keyes Road and also held a virtual online public meeting via <https://zoom.us>.

Members present: Harry Bartlett, Christa Collins, Sue Felshin (clerk), Carlene Hempel (chair).

Members absent: Robert Hartman

Also present: Peter Lowitt, liaison from the Concord Housing Development Corporation (CHDC); Marcia Rasmussen, Director of Planning and Land Management for the Town of Concord; Linda Escobedo, Select Board liaison; Linda Miller, Planning Board liaison; William (Bill) Murray of PLACES.

With a motion made by Carlene Hempel and seconded by Sue Felshin, Carlene called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Minutes:

William Murray started his presentation by explaining he had put together photos to show features that could be use on the site including interpretive panels, bench types, bike racks, story walk displays, overlooks, kiosks and wayfinding options. Bill recommended against active bike use and instead urged the committee to install bike racks at all entrances. He said he's not sure trash receptables are a good idea but suggested they should be discussed. He also envisions the paths to be paved, both for accessibility and maintenance. He said the gathering places could be built with pavers, bricks or stone dust.

Bill presented three concept plans to the committee.

Concept Plan 1 includes a meadow and a series of signs. The park would be open dusk to dawn. Bike racks would be placed at both entrances in this and all plans. A plaza would be a central focal point on the meadow side, as it gives a point of reference and space for people to gather and sit. Paths would take users to interpretive panels that would face toward the prison and identify the history of the prison. On the other side of the meadow would be panels explaining the town's history related to the Civil War.

There would be a split rail fence leading through the property to the other park area in this and all plans. On the parkside, Concept 1 calls for fast-growing evergreens to buffer from the prison and assisted-living land. There would be an earthen stage and rectangular amphitheater with a small retaining wall and gravel to give the space an informal look. It would seat 50 to 60 people. Committee member Christa Collins asked what the drainage would be in that space and Bill said

the area is already comprised of packed sand, meaning it would drain itself. All the schemes locate an amphitheater in this space because there is a natural depression that that would lend itself beautifully to such a construction, Bill said. In addition, an asphalt path would lead to an overlook and interpretive panels with history of the river. Much of the center part of the plan is maintaining the current forest and sumac grove. There would also be two small plazas with pavers or stone dust where art could be installed.

Christa Collins and Planning Board member Linda Miller asked about ongoing maintenance. Planning Division Director Marcia Rasmussen and Committee Chair Carlene Hempel both answered that there are plans to partner with a number of town committees and boards – Natural Resources, Trails Committee, Green Thumbs – for continued maintenance.

Concept Plan 2: Bill said this plan tries to “dress up” the meadow concept by planting wildflowers with specific color schemes (yellow, purple, etc.). There is also a specific gallery for art in this plan. Christa said any opportunity to install trees on the south and west sides would be helpful.

Many of the elements – such as the pathways – are the same in this plan. But it calls for a smaller, round amphitheater that would fit 20 to 30 people. (All amphitheater/stage space would be fully accessible.)

The group had a brief discussion of what constitutes native plants but determined most of those conversations would happen at a later date.

Concept Plan 3: The thought process here, Bill said, was to have planted mounds on the meadow side of the park so that visually, it would separate users from people walking on the path. It would also have uniform wildflowers and also prison interpretive panels. In this scenario, the amphitheater would only be depressed lawn with slopes to encourage seating. It also calls for a paved patio on the southerly end of the space for picnic tables. On the northeastern side, there would be a dedicated art display, from which a path would lead to an overlook at the river. There is also space in this plan for a “storybook walk.”

Concord Housing Development Corporation liaison Peter Lowitt asked Bill to compare the three plans by their wetland impacts, linear feet of pathways and amount of area for overlooks and displays. Bill said there is no direct wetland impacts and would quantify the rest.

Harry said he in general favors plans 1 and 2 as they are more directly acknowledging the site’s history and potential for art. Christa said she is gravitating to “less is more” by the river. Carlene said she favors plans with the formal amphitheater, as that would be the only such outdoor performance space in the Village. Sue said she would like to see huckleberry and blueberry bushes in the plan.

Harry departed the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Marcia said she likes the plans’ focus on interpretations and believes the spaces put aside for public art are critical to their success.

For next steps, the group discussed its application to the CPC for a first round of funding – due Sept. 17 at 4 p.m. - and acknowledged that members need to solicit comment from various groups and also the public in general. For the first round of funding, the group will seek funds for grading, pathways and entry areas and basic signage.

On a motion made by Christa and seconded by Sue, the meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carlene Hempel, chair