

**Junction Village Open Space  
Task Force  
Meeting Minutes  
September 23, 2021  
Online Zoom Video Session**

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Pursuant to a notice and agenda filed with the Town Clerk, the Junction Village Open Space Task Force met at 5 p.m. on Sept. 23, 2021, and held a virtual online public meeting via <https://zoom.us>.

Members present: Christa Collins, Sue Felshin (clerk), Robert Hartman, Carlene Hempel, (chair).

Members absent: Harry Bartlett

Also present: Peter Lowitt, liaison from the Concord Housing Development Corporation (CHDC); Marcia Rasmussen, director, Planning Division; Elizabeth Rust, director, Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO); Linda Escobedo, Select Board liaison; William (Bill) Murray of PLACES.

The meeting was called to order by Carlene Hempel at 5:02 p.m.

Minutes:

Carlene tabled approval of minutes from the Sept. 15 meeting so that members had more time to review them.

Bill Murray began his presentation by showing two concept plans based on recommendations from committee members from three original plans. He launched his talk by mentioning a new trail substance he's become aware of that's a form of stone dust. It binds to itself, thereby making surfaces fully accessible without paving them. He is going to look into it further for a later discussion.

Scheme 1:

This plan has an initial entry point in the left or "meadow" side of the site, similar to Plan 1 of the original set, with some modifications including removal of a seating area and expansion of the wildflower section. It still includes two sets of interpretive panels. On the park side, it depicts a round amphitheater with seating for 50 to 60 people, a picnic lawn to the south, screening plantings to the north and west and a singular principal path running from the meadow to the amphitheater and onto Winthrop Street. On the park side, there are two sheltered nooks. The sumac grove is preserved. There is an overlook against the riverbank with a seat wall. And the plaza on the southern end has a bench and bike rack with mostly passive space on the river and connecting bank. The plan also features multiple plinths for art in both the meadow and park sides of the site.

## Scheme 2:

This plan changes up the entrance/principal entry and calls for a designed feature in the center of the plaza, such as decorative pavers. This plan also calls for two sections of interpretive panels and a reflective space. It too has a defined path all the way through the site. Rather than an amphitheater, there is a recessed lawn with a seat wall all the way around, measuring about 2 feet in height. In this plan, the trees would reflect a “savanna” look. To get that effect, the mostly invasive underbrush trees and shrubs would be removed and replaced with select trees and grass. There would also be a southernly entrance with bike racks. This plan would increase the introduction of wildflowers and buffering trees.

Bill said that in both plans, he would recommend mowing the space right next to the paths for tick control (unless these spaces are planted with ground cover.) He also said he is not recommending removal of any mature trees, but would recommend removal of all invasives, including the honeysuckle and Oriental bittersweet on the site.

Liz mentioned that Grantham, the company building the 83-assisted living facility that will be located in the center of the site, does not want any additional paths connecting the building to the parks because of safety concerns. Bill mentioned there will be a necessary break in the rail fence pathway to allow for fire trucks so suggested that he make that space the only obvious entry point for people coming from the facility.

Christa said she likes the meadow as it is depicted in the plans and also likes the idea of engraving the pavers. She advocated for fewer impervious walking areas, and recommended removing one of the overlooks and one of the reflection spots near the river on the park side of the plan. She prefers the plan with the grassy recessed seating area to the one with the more formal amphitheater.

Bob said he preferred the plan with the amphitheater.

Sue said likes the art stations in both schemes and also subscribes to the idea of less is more, but also loves the nooks and crannies for people to “have a sit.” She prefers the plan with the grassy recessed seating and advocated that all paths be built with pervious materials.

Bill said he could make all surfaces pervious.

Carlene said she prefers a plan with interpretive panes, overlooks, seating areas and an amphitheater, pointing out that there are numerous trails in town that are untouched. This site is different, unique in the landscape, and could showcase a very special set of design elements to take advantage of its distinctive features and proximity to the Village and rail trail.

Marcia cautioned that the idea of programming an amphitheater extensively is counter to the conservation restriction; therefore, the committee has to be careful in what it plans and proposes. She said the Natural Resources Commission needs to weigh in. She also said leaving the wooded area along the river intact is important. She said she understands the concept of creating space to

sit and reflect but cautioned against being heavy-handed. As for the meadow area, she would like to see shade trees installed and would like to see that repeated along the path.

Liz said she walks by this site at least once a day and likes the idea of providing areas to sit and reflect and rest and agrees the area is primed to be a special place. She added that she prefers the plan with the more formal amphitheater.

Linda said she's spoken with members of the public about the park and meadow and said they anticipate this will be a space with features that allow people to gather, sit and reflect.

Audience member Pam Rockwell of 1810 Main St. said she would be concerned that the site affects the natural view from the water, as this is part of a wild and scenic river system. She also asked about the once-mentioned idea of providing a canoe access or launch site near the site. Bill answered that the site is too steep to contemplate a boat dock or launch. And Sue mentioned that both the amphitheater and grass sitting area proposals are recessed and would not likely be very visible from the water.

The group then brainstormed a bit about what members could do to advertise the upcoming public forum, on Oct. 14, including writing a press release, making a flier and posting notices to local news and community groups online. Carlene asked Bill to create or help create a PowerPoint to illustrate some of the design elements they are considering as part of the plan.

On a motion to adjourn made by Christa and seconded by Sue, the meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carlene Hempel