

Ray Smith Histori District Commission, Brian MacMahon, Tree Warden and Ray Ajemian, Tree Committee

Councilor Perry asked where do we stand with the firms on the designs and where do we go with what they were recommending.

Mr. Rulli noted that we were intending to move out on Phase II because of Governors budget from last year there was another \$150k earmarked in there for us to continue to look at Central Square but that money was pulled out of the budget. We can look at resubmitting something. Applied for façade program through HUD and was told that would only be eligible if the Town Council designated the downtown area as blighted. There are other funding through Arts & Councils but limited to the amount and limited scope. I would suggest having Melissa doing an assessment of the common and what she would recommend. Police Chief and Fire Chief need to be part of those conversations. Short term looking to put in blinking lights to raise awareness.

Councilor McGrath asked if there were matching grants for the sign improvement program, is that still true and Mr. Rulli noted he did not know but added that matching grants means we have to have money available to meet that.

Mr. Rulli noted that with a Façade program the Florist and SRO building are the most hideous and would be hesitant to give owners free money to make improvements.

Councilor McGrath noted that looking at current stores and want consistent signs and there is grant money we can get. Do not want to burden the stores. Historic Committee has problem with the signs.

Bill Smith, Historic District Commission noted that we have to review any changes of the building, any building that comes down has to be approved. There are CPC funds available that could be used for the restoration of those facades but owners are hesitant about CPC funds because funds would have to be paid back if sold.

Councilor Perry asked Mr. Smith what his suggestion was for signed and enforcement.

Mr. Smith noted a fee for violations is something we are considering; most towns have a fee structure in place. We are not interested in making it difficult for businesses but they are not interested in paying \$50 per day.

Mr. Rulli asked if there has been consideration for National Register and Mr. Smith noted that this was done back in the 80s and nothing has changed since then and did not qualify. HDC offers a lot more protection than the National Register does.

Councilor Perry asked where would the funding for the trees come from and Mr. Smith noted that the funding for the trees currently there came from the BIA. Mr. Ajemian noted that the Tree Committee has mitigation money.

Councilor Perry noted that the Lions Club would like a Christmas Tree in the center of Town and named in honor of Don Schwartz – what is the approval process/funding to do this.

Mr. Rulli noted that he will speak with Melissa the first of the year and come back and take a look and then submit a proposal to us and then go from there. It will cost some money.

Councilor McGrath asked if the Transportation Committee meets to do sidewalks and crosswalks and Mr. Rulli noted that they tend to meet on citizen reactions/inquiries to stop signs and other things. Town Manager has prioritized short term items we can do to downtown. There are things we can do and are discussing related to parking.

Councilor Perry noted that the traffic plan was the big crutch on how can we go forward with the common. Crosswalks and sidewalks depends on the traffic patterns.

Councilor McGrath noted that her focus is fixing up the buildings and the trees.

Mr. Ajamian thinks we should have another meeting and any small improvement that people can see it a good thing. We also need enforcement.

Councilor McGrath would like the building inspector to come in and will speak with the Town Manager about that.

Councilor Perry noted that he would like a list of current businesses and what it would cost. Mr. Rulli noted that Nicole in the CED office has a listing of all businesses in the downtown area. At the next meeting invite Nicole and Melissa as well as Mr. Solari.