

# Old Webster Special Business District Advisory Commission MEETING MINUTES

## APPROVED

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, July 12, 2023  
 LOCATION: City Hall & Zoom  
 CALLED TO ORDER: 8:00 AM  
 MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:59 AM  
 NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, July 25, 2023

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
Ron Clipp, Chair	X	
Tim Delanty		X
Stacie Swederska	X	
Dan Warner	X	
Karen Drexler	X	
David Smith	X	
Frank Romano	X	
Emerson Smith, Council Liaison		X
Eric Peterson, City Liaison	X	

Also, in attendance:

Joe Rath – Former Commission Member  
 Fran Sudekum – Administrative Support

**Approval of Minutes** – A motion to approve the June minutes was made by Karen Drexler, seconded by Ron Clipp, and unanimously approved.

**Parks Department/Staff Communication** – Commission Members expressed their desire to improve communication between the Commission and the Parks Department/City Staff. Members volunteer their time and expertise to work on the Commission and want to know they are valued and not “wasting” their time. The Commission would like to be engaged when settled recommended decisions are not followed. They would like an opportunity to discuss the decision in question before action is taken and understand the thinking behind it and/or have an opportunity to express why it’s important to follow the Commission’s recommendation; recognizing that the Commission is an advisory board.

Members feel Commission decisions regarding the District are made to maintain and improve the overall vibrancy, atmosphere, function, authenticity, branding, and historic nature of the District so it continues to thrive. Some of the items discussed included:

- The 1978 Old Webster Old Town Revitalization Plan; the “District Blueprint”
- Historical style of District “wood” benches vs. modern metal benches
- District landscaping; trees, plantings, pots, baskets
- Disposition and function of the area known as “Concrete Park”
- Parks Department Services ~ “paying more and more for less and less”

Eric Peterson has a meeting with Scott Davis, Director of the Parks & Rec Department next week and will discuss improving communication, address siloing, and also get clarification about recent decisions. An improved method of communication is the goal. Mr. Peterson shared the City is moving to more sustainable landscape plantings which require less personnel and resources to maintain; i.e. water-saving baskets. In addition, the City is moving to the use of homogeneous items throughout the entire City, such as the benches.

The Council has been working on a Strategic Plan for the City which carries an economic development component. A strategic vision/plan/a long-term economic infrastructure goal for each Special Business District will be incorporated into that overall plan; Commissions will be included in developing that vision. In addition, a process was put in place to funnel recommendations and funding requests from Boards and Commissions to City Council; it will be resent to Members.

**Concrete Park Loss of Use** – Members would prefer some part of the area known as the Concrete Park returned to a usable state. Its conversion to natural plantings has rendered it unusable for events. In case that is not possible, a discussion ensued identifying possible other quasi centrally-located locations in the District that could support event use, such as a live band under a pop-up tent during an event. Several ideas were bandied about; however none were of a permanent nature: Regions Bank offered the use of their driveway entrance, possibly the concrete area next to the sidewalk by 220 West Lockwood was put forth, shut down the Lockwood entrance to the parking deck was suggested, and blocking off two parking spaces on Lockwood in front of McCaughen & Burr and the Concrete Park (barricades would be needed to protect from vehicle traffic however).

**Decorative Holiday Lighting** – There are six lampposts on Rock Hill Road between Lockwood and Kirkham that have electricity access. Two of those poles reside within District boundaries and could support a holiday lighting fixture. Commission Members were asked if they would be interested in pursuing holiday lighting options. If so, the District would fund the two within the boundaries and the City would fund the remaining four. It could be seen as an entrance to the District much as the Sculpture Park on at Kirkham and Gore is an entrance to the District. Members will peruse the options online at <https://holidayoutdoordecor.com/traditional-series/> and discuss further at the next meeting.

**Permit Parking** – Straub's may submit a request to turn five of the 2-hour parking spots along the east side of the Reliable Life Building into permit parking; the area in question is City property as it was formerly a road (McClure Avenue) and currently consists of permit parking and 2-hour parking spots. If a request is submitted, the Commission will be given an opportunity for input on the matter. If City Council were to decide to convert the spots to permit parking the additional spots would go into the parking permit pool which is allocated on a first-come first-serve basis.

**Next Meeting** – July 25 at 8:00 AM.

**Adjournment** – Meeting adjourned at 8:59 AM.