

WESTMINSTER WAYFARING SIGNAGE WORKSHOP SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS



Saturday June 9th, 2018 at 10:00 AM to Noon **Selectmen's Meeting Room in Town Hall**

Approximately ten people attended this forum, the goal of which was to gain citizen input on the Westminster Economic Development Committee (EDC) plans to embark on a wayfaring signage program for the Town. The purpose of wayfaring signage is help visitors and new residents find their way to our municipal buildings, iconic land marks and other points of interest.

Citizen input was received on the following questions:

- What should we advertise as part of our wayfaring signage program?
- Where should the signs be located?
- What should the signs look like?

Question #1: What should we advertise as part of our wayfaring signage program?

The Town Planner explained that the first phase of the Town's wayfaring signage program will be a modest one, resulting in no more than ten to twelve signs. It was further explained that the effort will most likely be partially funded through a State grant. As such, the Planner recommended that the first phase of the program *not* be used to advertise specific businesses, just public facilities and points of interest. The Planner's guidance echoes that of Town Counsel, which said that if we were to advertise public businesses, we would need to make the program available to *all*

businesses in Town. The Public Works Commissioners was very clear that they *do not* want to see the Town cluttered with off-premise signs advertising local businesses. Thus, it was agreed that a wayfaring signage program for local businesses would be explored at a later date.

Forum participants were encouraged to list the buildings and places they would like to see advertised as part of the Town's wayfaring signage program. Once the suggestions were exhausted, each participant was given three red dots and instructed to place a dot on the three places they thought were most deserving of being included in the wayfaring signage program. If a participant felt very strongly about a particular place, they were allowed to place all three of their dots on that place.

The results of this dot-preference exercise are as follows:

<u>Suggested Place to Advertise</u>	<u>Number of Dots Received</u>
Academy Hill	6
Fire/Police Facility	4
Historical Society	2
Village Center	2
Cemeteries	2
Town Hall	2
Department of Public Works Facility	2
Oakmont High School/Overlook Middle School	2
Meetinghouse School/Elementary School	1
Historic Cracker Factory	1
Post Office	1
Wachusett Station (MBTA)	1
Senior Center	1
Wachusett Mountain	1
Mid-State Trail	0
Spite Wall	0
Library	0
High Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary	0
Ballfields	0

After some discussion, it was decided to remove the cemeteries (because there are three of them) and Wachusett Station (because it's located in Fitchburg).

Question #2: Where should the signs be located?

The next step was determining where the signs should be located and what each sign location should advertise. Six locations were chosen:

- Exit 25 off Route 2
Three sign locations: coming from Route 2-East, Route 2-West, and Route 140 North.
Items to advertise at this location:
 - Village Center
 - Academy Hill
 - Historic Cracker Factory
 - Wachusett Mountain

- Exit 24 off Route 2
Two sign locations: coming from Route 2 East & West.
Items to advertise at this location:
 - Village Center
 - Academy Hill
 - Historic Cracker Factory
 - Senior Center

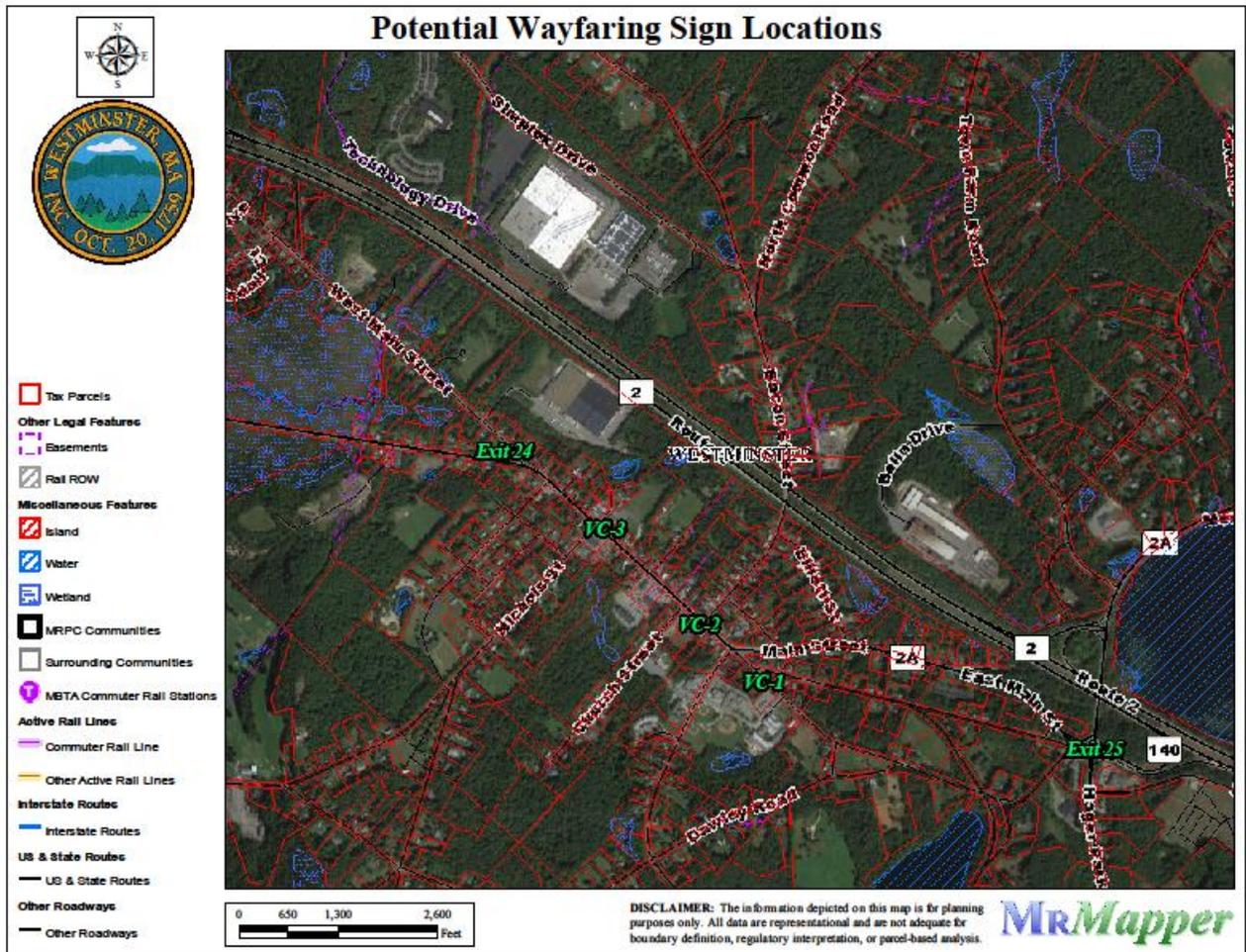
- Intersection of Main Street/Academy Hill/South Street (denoted on Map as VC1)
Two sign locations: facing east and west and Main Street.
Items to advertise at this location:
 - Town Hall
 - Fire/Police Facility
 - Academy Hill
 - Meetinghouse School/Elementary School
 - Post Office
 - Historical Society
 - Library

- Corner of Main Street & Bacon Street (denoted on Map as VC 2)
Two sign locations: facing east and west and Main Street.
Items to advertise at this location:
 - Post Office
 - Public Woks Headquarters
 - Senior Center

- Intersection of Main Street, Eaton Street & Nichols Street (denoted on Map as VC3)
Two sign locations: facing east and west and Main Street.
Items to advertise at this location:
 - Post Office
 - Senior Center
 - Town Hall

- Intersection of Oakmont Avenue & South Ashburnham Road (not pictured on map)
This sign will direct the driver to Oakmont High School/Overlook Middle School.

The Town Planner noted that the final decision on exactly where the signs would be located would rest in the hands of the Public Works Commissioners for Town roads and the MA Department of Transportation for State roads.



Question #3: What should the signs look like?

Generally speaking, the participants expressed a desire for signs that are:

- Simple and easy to read
- Provide clear direction
- Good contrast in colors
- Clean
- Easy to maintain
- Allows for the insertion of additional sign panels

Three sign designs were suggested by the participants:

Option #1: Rectangular shape, barn red trim, circle in the center with a white background, black lettering within the circle.

Option #2: Rectangular shape, barn red trim, square in the center with a white background, black lettering within the square.

Option #3: A sign based on the example below, but having a barn red background with reverse white lettering.

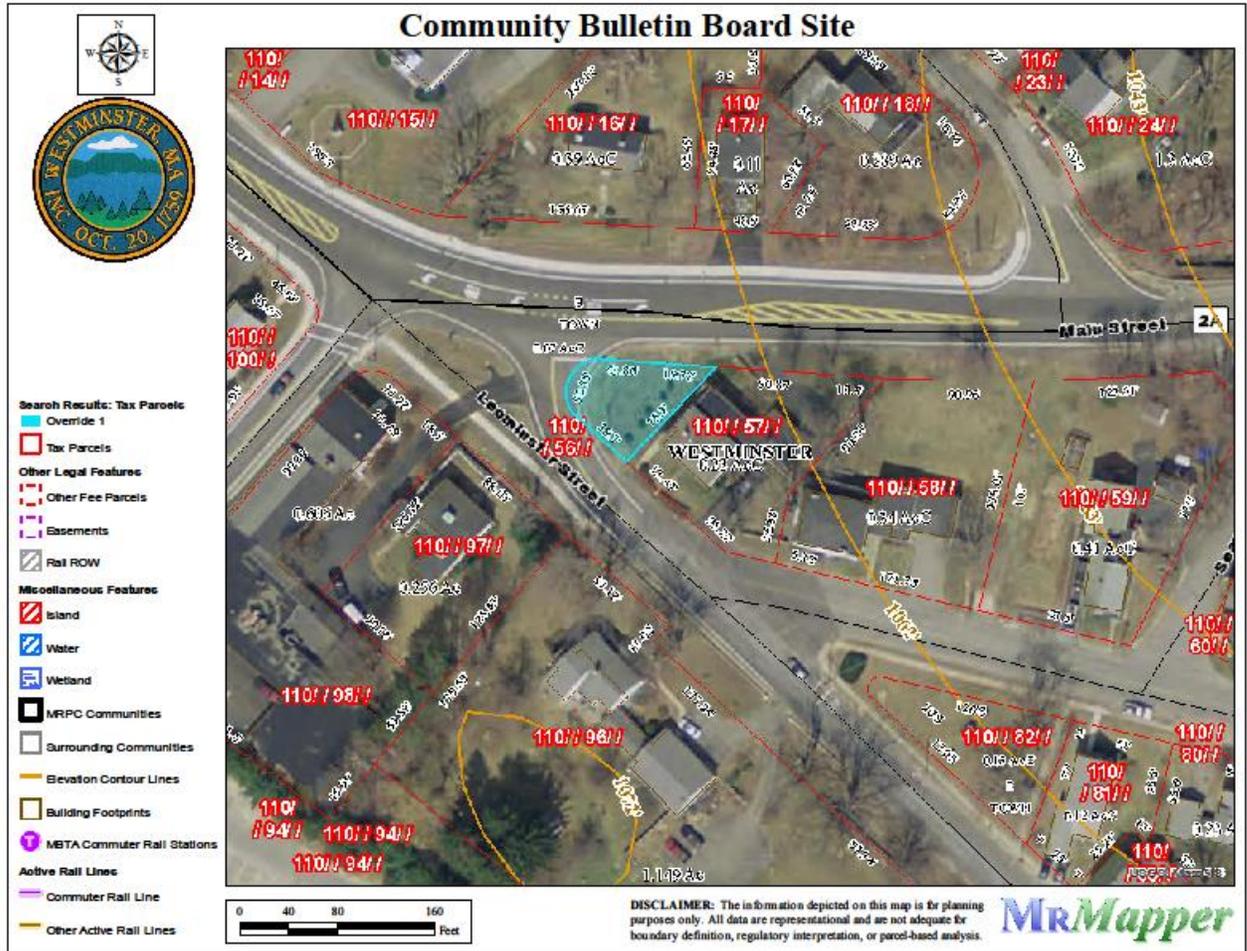


Next Steps:

- 1) The EDC has retained the services of a sign maker who will prepare three design options based on the descriptions above. These designs will be ready by the end of July.
- 2) The EDC will meet on Wednesday night August 1st to review and discuss the three sign options.
- 3) The EDC will meet with the Board of Selectmen to present the sign options either in late August or early September.
- 4) The EDC will meet with the Department of Public Works and MA Highway Department to nail down the exact locations for the signs sometime in September.
- 5) The Town Planner will apply for grants to partially cover the cost of the signs in late September/early October.

One Last Thing.....

The last item on the forum agenda was walking over to the small piece of Town-owned property at the intersection of South Street, Main Street and Academy Hill Road to discuss the possibility of placing a community bulletin board on the property (see property map on the following page) and discussing what it should look like.



By this time, only five forum participants remained to take part in this exercise. The preference was for a ground-mounted monument bulletin board on granite posts (as opposed to wood posts), similar to the "Welcome to Westminster" sign that greets drivers as they enter Town from Exit 25, but larger in size. In the middle of the sign would be a screen with white lettering on a black background where the text could be changed periodically from a remote computer.

A community bulletin board at this location could not be internally illuminated as this is not allowed in the Village Center zoning district. It must be noted that, by law, all signs within a zoning district must be treated the same, and the Town cannot exempt itself for the purpose of posting municipal signage. The technology exists to create a sign that would be readable without internal illumination, but the Town will need to conduct more research on this option and be very specific in its design so that the sign will conform to the sign regulations of the Village Center zoning district.

For now, the Town will move forward with preparing grants for the wayfaring signage program and will hold off on the community bulletin board until the research is complete and the details are finalized.