

1. Call to Order

The Chester Main Street Project Committee held its regular meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2014, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Chairman Joplin called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

2. Seating of Members

In attendance were Michael Joplin, Steven Tiezzi, John Schroeder, John King, Chuck Mueller and Leslie Strauss. Brian Kent, Gary Giroux and Scot Mills (Tree Warden) were also present.

3. Approval of Minutes – January 14, 2014

Minutes were tabled until the next regular meeting.

4. Final review of public presentation on January 29th for Phase 1 of Main Street Project improvements from Laurel Hill Cemetery to Route 154. Improvements include sidewalks, curbs, drainage, road improvements, cemetery parking lot improvements, trees and lighting

Chairman Joplin noted this meeting was in preparation for tomorrow night's Public Information Meeting. It was agreed Brian Kent would run the meeting and make the public presentation. Chairman Joplin would introduce Mr. Kent and give a quick overview. The presentation should take about 15 minutes and the public should hold questions and/or comments until the end of the presentation.

Chairman Joplin will note at the beginning of the meeting if there are serious issues unresolved at the end of the Public Information Meeting, then another public meeting will be held a week later. There will not be another public presentation if a second meeting is held.

Chuck Mueller noted it should be stated the project is at 30% design and development and now is the time to make comments or suggestions. There is still a lot of work to be done. Joplin noted reasons should be given why this is good planning and design.

First Selectman Meehan noted there are a few people who have their own particular issues about their property and it should be offered that they can come in and discuss those issues on a one to one basis.

Chairman Joplin reiterated that the Committee will decide if there should be a second meeting at a special meeting of the Committee immediately following the Public Information Meeting.

Scot Mills, Tree Warden, was also present. He was asked to review the status of existing trees along Main Street and evaluate the tree plan. Mr. Mills noted the overall tree plan looks pretty good. He gave a detailed review of his evaluation of

existing trees and new trees to be planted from Route 154 down Main Street to Laurel Hill Cemetery. Mr. Mills reviewed in detail the diseased trees that should be removed. He also reviewed new trees that would be replanted in locations where trees were to be removed. First Selectman Meehan noted any trees not within the Town right-of-way would not be touched. There was discussion regarding the trees and sidewalk in front of 131 Main Street. Grading of that area was reviewed. First Selectman Meehan noted, in response to a question from Chairman Joplin, that any improvements to mitigate with fences, hedges, etc. would be paid for by the Town. Mr. Mills noted the only way to save some of the older mature trees is to adjust the location of the sidewalk. Discussion ensued regarding the 5' sidewalk width and removal of the grass strip. Mills noted the Ash tree in front of #89 Main in the Town right-of-way is in bad shape and needs to be removed.

First Selectman Meehan noted he liked the plan from School Lane east but down the hill things should be done a little more carefully. If the road and sidewalk are not moved, then the trees do not have to come down.

Mr. Mills noted in his opinion there were failing trees on Main Street and replanting is a must. If you have a street tree planting plan, the trees all go in at the same time, grow together and complement each other.

Steven Tiezzi noted as planners this needs to be looked at for 20, 40, 60 years in the future and what's good for the Town. Mr. Mills agreed noting if the Town plans now, there will be trees for the next three generations. Chuck Mueller noted this is an opportunity to do things that make sense.

John Schroeder noted if there is a substantial change in the streetscape afterwards, people will be upset and this could impact the next phase of this project.

Brian Kent next gave a sample presentation to Committee members of what he had prepared for tomorrow night's public presentation. He reviewed the history of the project noting this was part of a larger overall improvement plan which included Main Street, Water Street, West Main Street, North Main Street, the downtown center and both the Maple, Water Street and Laurel Hill Cemetery Parking Lots. He noted the overall project had been broken down into 4 phases, this being Phase 1. Overall, Mr. Kent reviewed existing conditions, improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, roadway (including alignment of the roadway between Laurel Hill Cemetery and the Post Office), trees, Laurel Hill Cemetery parking lot.

The question was asked about the parking lot at North Quarter Park. First Selectman Meehan noted nothing is planned for that parking lot at this time as it may end up being a lay down area for this project.

The area at the intersection of Main Street and Middlesex Avenue was reviewed for

location of a wayfinding sign.

Steven Tiezzi noted existing trees and new trees need to be identified on the drawing, as well as the road and gate at Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Chairman Joplin noted there were about 4 major points that needed to be decided. Are we going to maintain the green strip or bring the sidewalk out to the curb and save a couple trees? Are we going to change the horizontal alignment of the road between the entrance of the Cemetery and the Post Office (issue of 2 trees and 2 utility poles have to be moved).

Steven Tiezzi noted one of the biggest charges of this project was to fix the drainage. First Selectman Meehan noted he would like to know why the drainage can't be fixed without moving the road. Gary Giroux noted not moving the road would mean the flat grade would stay. Mr. Giroux further noted they used standard criteria to lay out the alignment of the road. If the Town wants to hold the north curb line, it will have to direct them to do that and use substandard design. Giroux reiterated they would need some kind of documentation from the Town directing them to do that. First Selectman Meehan noted the road works the way it is except for drainage. He further noted the grass strip will make the road look wider and that means faster traffic. Mr. Kent noted parked cars have a general traffic calming effect. Meehan noted the whole area will be wider and more opened up. Chuck Mueller noted he disagreed and that a few feet will be of benefit to the 2 or 3 houses closest to the road.

There was much discussion regarding the drainage issue, the alignment of the road and the relocation of utility poles. Mr. Giroux noted the flatter the road, the harder it will be for the contractor to build the road.

First Selectman Meehan noted this was too drastic a change in this area. Tiezzi noted the big issue is the utility poles. He further noted the whole project needs to be coordinated and CL&P needs to be aware of this project soon.

Chairman Joplin noted this Committee must give Messrs. Kent and Giroux some direction for tomorrow night's presentation. The issues are the alignment of the road, the grass strip and the continuous sidewalk from Laurel Hill Cemetery to Route 154.

Motion by Tiezzi, second by Mueller, that the Committee recommend to the Selectmen the current plan on the south side of the street in this area (Main Street East, Phase 1) to change alignment of the street between Laurel Hill Cemetery and the Post Office as shown on the latest engineering plan from Stadia Engineering to facilitate drainage. Voting in favor – Tiezzi, Mueller, Strauss, Schroeder, King, Joplin. Opposed –

none. Motion Carried.

Motion by Tiezzi, second by Strauss, to eliminate the 12 to 18" grass strip in order to allow the sidewalk to move to the curb to save as many trees as possible. Voting in favor – Tiezzi, Strauss, King, Mueller, Schroeder, Joplin. Opposed – none. Motion Carried.

Motion by Strauss, second by Tiezzi, to have a continuous sidewalk on the north side of Main Street from Laurel Hill Cemetery up to Route 154. Voting in favor – Strauss, Tiezzi, Mueller, Joplin. Opposed – King, Schroeder. Motion Carried.

Chairman Joplin asked Messrs. King and Schroeder why they were opposed to the sidewalk on the north side of the street. John King noted he was opposed because of the impact to the property owner. John Schroeder noted from a design point of view, to continue the sidewalk was good design and would be safer, but he had a concern about property owner's rights.

There was further discussion regarding the Gates property. Chuck Mueller noted the hedge is 100% in the Town right-of-way and the Town has offered to mitigate the situation and maintain privacy to this property.

It was also pointed out that earlier in the meeting, First Selectman Meehan had indicated the property owner at the corner of School Lane understood the reasoning behind the continuous sidewalk and that even though 3 large trees will come down, they will be replaced with 4 new trees. The regrading in that area will also allow them to have an ADA accessible walkway from their house to the sidewalk.

Gary Giroux noted one remaining issue is the retaining wall in front of Chesterfield's. He reviewed the first 150 feet basically from the driveway up to the hydrant. He reviewed the slope and the undermining of the wall. He noted not knowing the make up of the wall, the stability of the wall would be compromised if the lower wall was removed. Steven Tiezzi noted he would recommend the wall stay in that area whether it be a new wall or an existing wall. It represents some of the quirks of the Town and should stay. John Schroeder noted the condition of that wall should be looked at closer. Chairman Joplin noted he agreed with Tiezzi in that he would like to see those walls repaired rather than removed. He felt 95% of the people that frequent the Village would agree. It was agreed the wall would stay at least for the meeting tomorrow night and pending further investigation.

The sidewalk and crosswalk materials were briefly reviewed.

Gary Giroux noted they are at 30% design and planning to submit to the Inland Wetlands Agency next week. It was agreed to go forward with that submission.

5. Approval of Bills – none.

6. Other Business – none.

7. Next Regular Meeting – February 11, 2014

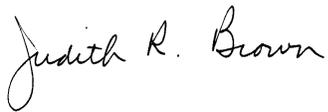
8. Audience of Citizens

There were two citizens in the audience that left at 7:45 PM. They did not offer any public comment.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Tiezzi, second by Strauss, to adjourn at 9:45 PM. Voting in favor – Tiezzi, Strauss, King, Schroeder, Mueller, Joplin. Opposed – none. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith R. Brown".

Judith R. Brown, Recording Secretary