

Chester Main Street Project Committee
Regular Meeting, March 25, 2014
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1. Call to Order

The Chester Main Street Project Committee held its regular meeting on Tuesday, March 25, 2014, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Chairman Joplin called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

2. Seating of Members

Member in attendance were Michael Joplin, Steven Tiezzi, Chuck Mueller, Leslie Strauss, Charlene Janecek and John Schroeder. First Selectman Ed Meehan was also present.

3. Review of DOT response to Town's request that the correct layout of the Main Street Bridge in terms of the Master Plan approved by Town Meeting be incorporated into the DOT plans

First Selectman Meehan noted the DOT has agreed to revise the plans to address discrepancies and to widen the sidewalk along Main Street on the East side. He noted Rich Armstrong, Division Head, has responded and copied Dave Stahnke who is working on this matter.

Steven Tiezzi noted it would be important for them to verify this in a two dimensional layout to be sure this is what the Town of Chester approved.

First Selectman Meehan also noted two engineers from Stahnke's staff revisited Helene Johnson's basement last Friday to take photographs and measurements. Ms. Johnson was concerned about the structural impact to her building. They assured her it will be better than what is there now. She is waiting to see what comes out of that and how they are going to fill that area in and have solid ground underneath.

First Selectman Meehan further noted the two engineers also looked at Sarah Jansen's area in the front and the whole section under the Villager that is very problematical. Under Simon's there is a concrete block wall. They wanted to verify that and see what they can do with it. He hoped they don't try to short change the project area and step back from the Villager to address that problem.

The area of the property lines was reviewed. There also was discussion regarding the work on the sidewalks.

Steven Tiezzi asked if DOT would be amenable to having the Town of Chester review the plan somehow. First Selectman Meehan reiterated Rich Armstrong indicated he wants to cooperate with the Town. Meehan will recontact them to see if Mr. Tiezzi can review the plans and the curb line and let Steven know.

Chairman Joplin asked First Selectman Meehan what the status was of the materials list. Meehan stated he received a proposal from Brian Kent which needs

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to be approved by the Board of Selectmen and which will be funded by the STEAP Grant.

4. Continued review of Phase 1 of Main Street Project Municipal Improvements from Laurel Hill Cemetery to Route 154

Chairman Joplin noted the Committee recently made its recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. At a BOS meeting last week, the Board decided to not take a vote because of public comments that were contrary to the Committee's recommendation.

First Selectman Meehan explained there were a couple of issues. The first one was the Petition submitted to the Board. He indicate the form and reason for the Petition didn't hold any legal weight. It didn't request a Town Meeting, but was an expression of concern regarding 131 Main Street and removal of the trees. The Petition was signed by about 40 people. The BOS had a concern that if that many people were protesting than it was time to stop and figure out what that would do to an approval at a Town Meeting. He noted it would be unwise to have plans 90 to 95% almost in bid form and have residents with focused emotional issues regarding the trees vote it down. Six months worth of work and a lot of the budget would be gone.

First Selectman Meehan noted the other issue was the impact of the driveways. Gary Giroux had submitted a profile drawings showing the increased height over the culvert and impact to surrounding properties. The Town Engineer has been asked to take a look at this. He also noted the drawings do not show any additional catch basins, but that was probably just an oversight. Meehan indicated Giroux had noted the only way to solve the issue is to extend the driveways to soften the grade.

First Selectman Meehan noted Giroux had also looked at staying in compliance with Corps issues. There are different requirements for squash pipes and culverts and he's trying to balance all of this. Giroux is still intending to move the road to the Jacobson side to maintain parking.

Meehan noted an Inland Wetlands Agency site walk had been scheduled but was changed at the last minute. Giroux could not make the rescheduled date but noted the plans haven't changed.

There was discussion regarding the Petition. Leslie Strauss questioned the legality and validity of the Petition. First Selectman Meehan noted 60% of the names on the Petition are from the Main Street area. He further noted his is an important project to fix the majority of Main Street in Phase 1 and would hate to see the effort of this Committee working on a Master Plan go down the drain.

There was further discussion regarding removal of the trees and grading. Both John

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Schroeder and First Selectman Meehan felt there was a differential in the grading.

Leslie Strauss asked if the Committee has done a good job of bringing these issues to the entire populous of the Town and people who don't live right in that area. This is an important corridor of the Town and the Selectmen are seeing a very small sampling of residents. Strauss noted the Committee has an obligation to make sure the Town's population is informed.

There was much discussion as to how get the support of the entire Board of Selectmen as well as Towns people. Chairman Joplin noted there are two choices – one being to make a public presentation of what was recommended to the Selectmen and the second is to make a presentation to the Board of Selectmen. The Committee should probably do both.

First Selectman Meehan noted there is also a Section 8-24 requirement for Municipal Improvements before the Planning & Zoning Commission. If Planning & Zoning had a negative vote, it would have to be overridden by a Town Meeting vote. Joplin noted this would also effect STEAP Grant money.

There was discussion regarding the North Quarter Park Committee. First Selectman Meehan noted an RFP has been drafted for someone to do a NQP Master Plan. There is already a lot of information available as soon as someone is on board to do the Plan. The Library Board wants to get schematics done to make their Grant deadline in September. The Library Board of Trustees has recognized this is a site worth looking at. Chuck Mueller asked if this Committee should slow down a little while waiting for the NQP Committee to act. Meehan noted there might be some reason to tie the two together. He further noted the Library Board of Trustees is anxious to move this along and asked for money to do the Master Plan. It was noted 85% of the NQP property is either wetlands or wetlands buffer. Meehan indicated the first meeting of the NQP Committee will probably be the first week of April.

There was discussion regarding timing of this project. Chairman Joplin noted this project probably would not start before next year if approved so a delay of say 3 months to see if the plan of NQP becomes more articulated or a more recognizable idea doesn't necessarily delay the start date of this project. Chuck Mueller agreed. It was noted the next phase after Phase 1 would be the Replacement of the Main Street Bridge which is scheduled for January 2016. Phase 2 of this project would not start until after the Bridge Replacement.

There was questions as to whether a delay in design and document preparation would incur more costs with Kent & Frost. First Selectman Meehan noted there are two points at which the project could be stopped. One is if there isn't enough money to go to bid. The second is when bids are back there isn't enough money to do project administration. Perhaps at some point Kent & Frost should be told to stop.

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Chairman Joplin noted if this is put on the shelf for a time period, it would have to restart in July in order to get this done in the Spring of 2015.

First Selectman Meehan noted the Committee needs to get together with the Town Engineer to understand the impacts on those properties outside the right-of-way. The property owners have to understand what the impacts to their properties will be (fences, vegetation, etc.).

It was suggested doing the project from School Lane down to the center and revisit the north side when there are better plans for North Quarter Park. Meehan reiterated the privet hedge will come down no matter what happens. Strauss asked where funding would come from if the Committee went with that plan. Meehan noted it would be part of Town funds.

Steven Tiezzi noted it is the intent to provide long term planning and safe travel. Things should be kept as much as possible the way they are and improve on what is there. He felt the Committee should rebuild what is already there and people will be surprised to see what it is. John Schroeder noted for the record he disagreed.

It was noted the sidewalk should be comfortable to have two people walking side by side.

First Selectman Meehan noted there should be a public meeting with the Board of Selectmen in attendance. Joplin noted the public presentation would be articulating the recommendation sent to the Selectmen and voted on at the March 11th meeting. Everyone agreed Brian Kent should make this presentation, but it was probably not necessary to have Gary Giroux at that presentation. Timing for the public presentation was discussed. The Public Informational Meeting was scheduled for April 22, 2014 at 7:00 PM at the Chester Town Hall.

There was a brief discussion regarding signage for this project. It was noted each phase has some degree of signage. John Schroeder noted signage is important and the Committee should talk about it. He also noted the Committee has not talked about lighting or the streetscape. The only discussion about lighting so far has been at the Cemetery Parking Lot.

There was a brief discussion regarding what still needs to be done with the materials list from the DOT. It was decided the materials list will be reviewed at the April 8th Committee meeting. Discussion followed regarding appointing a liaison to the DOT. At one time it was suggested Brian Kent be the DOT liaison. First Selectman Meehan reviewed Brian Kent's contract. Leslie Strauss noted Kent seems like the logical person. Steven Tiezzi agreed this person should be a paid professional.

First Selectman Meehan noted Brian Curtis from Jacobson's office will be

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representing WPCA at the utilities meeting tomorrow. John King will be there representing the Water Company.

Steven Tiezzi noted it is important that the DOT starting point is in front of Simon's and not another point that would make a problem in the future. Another concern is the curb line going to be in the right place and what will it look like visually.

Once the liaison is appointed, First Selectman Meehan noted he will contact Andy Fesenmeyer and let him know who that person is.

5. Approval of Minutes – February 25, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes
Motion by Strauss, second by Janecek, to approve March 11, 2014 Minutes amended as follows -

- **Correct the name of Deborah Bilcheck to Deborah Vilcheck.**
- **Under 3.(b), add to 11th paragraph, "John Schroeder noted to have a vote tonight would not sit well with Messrs. Lloyd and Bisacky since it was requested this meeting be delayed. He therefore requested delay of this vote."**

**Voting in favor – Strauss, Janecek, Mueller, Tiezzi, Schroeder, Joplin.
Opposed – none. Motion Carried.**

6. Approval of Bills – none.

7. Other Business of the Committee – none.

8. Next Meeting – April 8, 2014

It was noted the next meeting on April 8, 2014 will be to review the materials list and to prepare for the April 22, 2014 Public Informational Meeting. Brian Kent should be at both meetings for April 8th and 22nd.

9. Audience of Citizens

Henry Krempel, Prospect Street, noted he had mentioned having the south side developed as a real sidewalk and having a gravel informal path on the north side and asked if that had ever been discussed. Krempel further noted that would make a path on the north side for children to take and a sidewalk on the south side for wheelchairs. John Schroeder noted that had not been discussed. First Selectman Meehan stated there is some liability encouraging people to walk on an uneven area 1 1/2 to 2 feet above the roadway. Chuck Mueller added he worried that would decrease safety by encouraging more foot traffic.

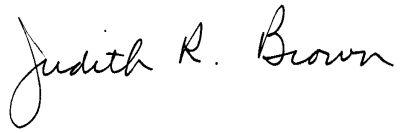
10. Adjournment

Motion by Mueller, second by Janecek, to adjourn at 8:45 PM. Voting in favor – Mueller, Janecek, Strauss, Tiezzi, Schroeder, Joplin. Opposed –

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none. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith R. Brown". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Respectfully submitted,".

Judith R. Brown, Recording Secretary