

1. Call to Order

The Chester Main Street Project Committee held a Special Meeting on Tuesday, December 15, 2015, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Chairman Joplin called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Seating of Members

In attendance were Michael Joplin, Steven Tiezzi, John Schroeder, Charlene Janecek and Leslie Strauss. Ed Meehan was also present.

3. Meeting with new Selectmen

It was noted Charlene Janecek would remain as a Committee member as well as the Board of Selectmen liaison.

Selectwoman Janecek noted the Board of Selectmen never received a letter from Chairman Joplin regarding committee membership. The Board did talk about the fact that until the bridge is done, there really isn't anything for the committee to do. It was noted Jacobson and Associates is doing the next phase of engineering. New committee membership was put on hold.

4. Closing out Phase 1, Report from Ed Meehan

Ed Meehan reviewed the closing out of Phase 1. He noted the contract price was \$857,622 and the final invoices totaled \$896,489. Reasons for the overage were structural problems in the trench, stonework at Laurel Hill Cemetery, additional granite curbing in front of Jacobson's office. There were some savings that offset some of these costs.

Meehan noted there is still \$6000 to \$7000 work that was done in November that has not been billed yet.

Meehan briefly reviewed the following =

- Issues with Eversource getting electrical energized in the Cemetery.
- Issues with Stadia who approved shop drawings without a photocell.
- Problems with conduit costs.

Steven Tiezzi asked about overall neighbor responses to the Phase 1. Ed Meehan noted all the drainage issues had been resolved. Heard good things about the parking lot. Had one complaint about a steep

driveway, but it had been put back just the way it was. Jacobson was happy with the project. Had good comments from abutters regarding the upper part of Main Street. Some problems with Chesterfield's driveway. Had to go back farther than wanted to in order to get the grade. New curb across from Chesterfield's, driver's keep driving over it.

Steven Tiezzi asked if Gary Giroux had commented on the rippling of the pavement. Mr. Giroux indicated it was according to standard.

Chesterfield's would like the crosswalk repainted in front of their building.

5. Report on D.O.T. Progress on Bridge Replacement, Expected Start Date

Ed Meehan noted there was a meeting yesterday with the Board of Selectwomen and the contractor team. Waiting on Frontier to finish and move pole in front of the Villager. Once the pole comes out the bridge can be closed. The Water Company came back and finished their work last week. There is offsite parking at Norma Terris Theatre. Bridge work starts on January 10th, Signage was reviewed based on the contractor's traffic management plan.

6. Discussion of Phase 2 from the Bridge to Laurel Hill Cemetery
Steven Tiezzi noted Jacobson has been brought on board, but is there a landscape architect. Selectwoman Janecek noted there isn't much to do right now. Next phase won't start for awhile. We should test the temperature of the business owners in town once the bridge is done to see if they want a break to bring business back to Chester. Tiezzi agreed, but felt the Committee had once agreed there should be a landscape architect as part of the team.

Ed Meehan noted funding sources had been discussed to fund the 2nd phase. He met with Jacobson on his availability and interest to doing Phase 2. Jacobson had already done some previous work for State funding. On November 10th, the Board of Selectmen authorized Ed Meehan to file a grant application for LOTCIP which is administered through the Council of Governments. LOTCIP has a much higher funding availability than STEAP or Main Street Investment Fund (STEAP and MSIF are \$200,000; LOTCIP \$1.2 million).

Ed Meehan reviewed the criteria for LOTCIP. The preliminary application is being prepared by Jacobson. It will be turned over to

the Board of Selectmen late January/early February and then submitted to the Council of Governments. All other towns are following this same process. Only two other towns so far are submitting applications (Durham and Haddam). The applications are then forwarded to D.O.T. If funding was available, the town would then be given approval to do a full application at which time would include design detail of Phase 2. The Committee would then look at the design team.

If LOTCIP did not work out, the work done by Jacobson would then be used to apply to STEAP and MSIF (Main Street Investment Fund). It probably would not be appropriate to bring a landscape architect on board until after we know about the LOTCIP grant which probably will be February or March.

John Schroeder noted he was hopeful this Committee would work in a more cooperative fashion. Somehow a new strategy has been orchestrated to move forward with Phase 2. Ed Meehan noted the new strategy is to go after funding. Schroeder noted at the last meeting there were two options - to either hire Jacobson or to do an RFQ - and we said we would investigate both options. Schroeder further noted the Committee was never involved in that decision.

Ed Meehan noted the Council of Governments was looking for application and that is why a decision was made by the Board of Selectmen to move forward.

John Schroeder noted there was a lot of discussion during the Election process about transparency. Meehan noted the bottom line is there is no design work to do until there is an application for funding, whether the bridge comes in on time, where this project falls in relation to other town projects and whether the businesses want to shut down for another year. Why wait when there is an opportunity to go after \$1 million or more. The BOS do not need permission from this Committee to go after grant money.

John Schroeder noted he has a problem with short circuiting the process. Meehan noted the process should not start again until next Spring. The committee should take time off, get the bridge project under way and look for funding. Once that is done, the BOS can reactivate the committee.

Schroeder noted for the record he has worked with Jacobson and they

are phenomenal and great to work with and have no problem with them. He was not clear about what their role is putting together a plan to get this money. Meehan noted they are using the Town Center Master Plan, Phase 2, Main Street West along with information developed by Jacobson back in 1994 and 2006. The BOS took the Master Plan to Town Meeting in 2013.

Steven Tiezzi agreed the Committee should have been informed following the last meeting that Jacobson was assigned to go ahead with the LOTCIP pre-application. At this point no one has been contracted for Phase 2. The Committee would still like to be involved in the process for selecting the final design team. There could be better communication.

Meehan noted Jacobson has not been contracted to do construction or bid documents, only pre-application. None of that happens until funding is available. The design professional will pick his team.

Leslie Strauss noted her recollection at the last meeting was that Jacobson had done all this previous work for generations of Selectmen and was thrilled they could do this. It never occurred to her that another discussion was needed, that the landscape architect had been eliminated and that LOTCIP, STEAP and MSIF grant applications would be submitted.

John Schroeder asked about criteria for LOTCIP. Meehan reviewed criteria in detail including such things as urban collector streets, average daily traffic count, multiple transportation activities on the street, pedestrian criteria, high accident counts, etc. He also reviewed some proposed upcoming projects in other towns.

Schroeder noted he had a concern that engineering designs might be made that are not compatible with town events/gatherings, historic emphasis, etc. Meehan noted the preliminary part of this is basically nuts and bolts. Schroeder noted he didn't want the town to get locked into some engineering situation. Meehan noted the only drawings to be submitted are those that have been approved by the Town as part of the Master Plan. There was a lengthy discussion on what is submitted with the pre-application and whether this documentation locks the town in with those plans.

Chairman Joplin asked if Jacobson's efforts could be used for other things. Meehan replied yes, but that is up to the BOS. He suggested

getting this before the Council of Governments and see what happens. This information can also be used to apply for STEAP and MSIF grants. LOTCIP should be applied for first, then STEAP and MSIF. Chairman Joplin confirmed the towns of Durham and Haddam will also be applying for LOTCIP. Meehan replied yes. Meehan further noted it probably will be 9 or 10 months before looking for a designer if Chester gets the LOTCIP money. The deadlines for STEAP and MSIF were reviewed.

Chairman Joplin noted real design work would start in the fall of 2016 and probably start construction maybe late spring of 2017. No work can be done on this phase until late summer or fall of 2016.

Selectwoman Janecek reviewed the sidewalk change on the bridge project. The reason for the change was the open area under the sidewalk will not support the sidewalk. D.O.T. recommended the next phase of the Main Street Project incur the cost of what's going to need to be done for part of the sidewalk. It will require engineering work to determine if it can support the sidewalk.

There was further discussion regarding STEAP and MSIF grants. Meehan noted these do not need a lot of engineering work to be done to submit. Tiezzi noted a lot of planning work has already been done. Meehan further noted local monies have been set aside for these projects.

7. Possible Alternative Timeline for Phase 2

There was further discussion regarding timing of Phase 2 and completion of the bridge replacement. Drainage and grading issues were reviewed. The Committee/BOS should also talk to the businesses. Tiezzi noted it will probably take a year to get this project through with public informational meetings, etc.

Leslie Strauss proposed starting construction in January 2017 of Phase 2. Meehan noted in order to start in January, bid documents and award of contract has to be done by August at the latest.

Chairman Joplin noted this whole discussion depends on the BOS allocating the money. Selectwoman Janecek noted the BOS are already getting flack from the merchants. Will they want to be closed down again after the bridge for another 6 months? Tiezzi noted the Committee has always talked about doing these phase one after another.

Selectwoman Janecek noted she will advise First Selectwoman Gister that the Committee met and wants to keep going and get design work done late spring/early summer of 2016.

Schroeder asked Leslie Strauss if the merchants want the project to continue or not. Strauss noted they haven't discussed Phase 2 at all. It was felt the merchants should be asked if they want a breather between phases.

John Schroeder reiterated transparency is so important and the more we survey and open up discussion, it will be better.

Leslie Strauss noted the merchants think this is all one project. They don't realize this is one Chester project and one State.

Selectwoman Janecek noted the BOS want to really work on communications with all the residents in town.

Chairman Joplin noted in conclusion -

- There are 3 or 4 sources of funding to be applied for.
- Jacobson will do the preliminary work to submit these applications.
- Outstanding questions -
 - when will Phase 2 begin
 - what is the appetite to start sooner than later
 - whether or not the Selectwomen are willing to allocate money to design Phase 2 between the bridge and the cemetery ahead of awarding grant money from the State.

8. Other Business, if any

It was noted Ed Meehan should be appointed as liaison to D.O.T. and Steven Tiezzi should be removed as D.O.T. liaison.

There was a brief discussion as to whether the gas main from Deep River will continue into Chester. It was noted the Water Company still has some work to be done fixing the water main.

9. Bills for Payment - none.

10. Approval of Minutes - October 27, 2015

Motion made and seconded to approve October 27, 2015 Minutes as written. Unanimously Approved.

11. Audience of Citizens

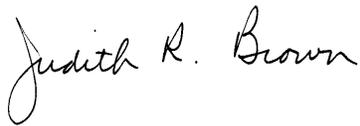
There was a brief discussion regarding some items that D.O.T. had cut from the bridge plans as well as some items from the Main Street Project. Chairman Joplin noted it is very difficult to balance what everyone wants. Some people don't want change, others do. A lot of things come down to a budgetary decision. It was not that the Committee didn't care.

Selectwoman Janecek noted D.O.T. advised the beam under the bridge will be galvanized, not painted black as requested. She also noted the bridge contractor has indicated any comments or complaints received will be forwarded to the Board of Selectwomen.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

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