

### Call to Order

The Main Street Project Committee held its regular meeting on Tuesday, August 28, 2018, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Chairman Joplin called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### Seating of Members

In attendance were Michael Joplin, Leslie Strauss, John Schroeder, Jeremy Zeimann, Chuck Mueller, Charlene Janecek and Steven Tiezzi. Ed Meehan arrived shortly after the meeting began. Brian Kent and Jeff Jacobson were also present.

### Discussion

Chairman Joplin noted LOTCIP has been reinstated, but will probably get off to a slow start. The Town of Cromwell is well ahead of us and Haddam is behind us. Selectwoman Janecek noted Chester is waiting for a letter of commitment. Jeff Jacobson noted the October construction documents should be ready after the first quarter of 2019. In 7 months we should have construction documents and at that point Chester will retain the second position on the list. Mr. Jacobson reviewed some of the questions D.O.T. had previously asked and there may be more to come.

Chairman Joplin noted the Committee should make a decision on the “Wall” and get whatever information he needs by October.

John Schroeder suggested approving prior minutes at this time to facilitate further discussion.

### Approval of Minutes – June 19, July 17 and August 7

June 19, 2018 Minutes – John Schroeder suggested amending as follows:

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet under Discussion should be changed to read, “the majority of people had safety concerns regarding the proposed “Chester Wall” parking area.”
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph under Discussion should be changed to read, “John Schroeder commented he is very much in favor of this design. It offers many important advantages. He acknowledged the proposed layout was cozy but very appropriate for our quaint small scale Main Street. He expressed concern about the natural human tendency to resist change and asked the Committee and the public to keep an open mind realizing there is a unique opportunity here to maximize this space for pedestrian oriented use rather than automobile and truck traffic. He took exception to the recently publicized statement that

this design is unworkable. He stated that as a design professional (architect) it is on the contrary very workable and in fact desirable. He stated that we are working with two design professionals, Kent & Frost (landscape architects) and NLJA (civil engineers) who do exactly this type of work all with great success. Mr. Schroeder asked both Mr. Kent and Mr. Jacobson, both design professionals, if this design was workable. They both replied yes.”

- Add to last paragraph before Adjournment, “A vote was taken to install cameras to study the situation further. All voted in favor except John Schroeder who voted against the measure because he didn't feel it would further understanding of the situation. In order to be effective, they would have to conduct a before and after. This would only defer the project and the logistics cannot be resolved easily (example – who supplies, buys or rents cameras, how much will it cost, where will it be located, who will operate the cameras, who will edit the film, how will we do the filming, etc.).”

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#### July 17, 2018 Minutes -

- Add to 8<sup>th</sup> paragraph under Review of Parking Design, “John Schroeder abstained. Steven Tiezzi noted we will review it at the site walk and if felt it could be easily removed, it will be removed.”
- Replace 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence of 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph under Other Business with, “John Schroeder stated that we discussed this at length and we cannot worry about if or when we will get funding. We have already missed previous opportunities because we were not prepared. There was consensus we need to work as quickly as possible to be shovel ready if and when funding becomes available.”
- Add to 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph under Audience of Citizens, “John Schroeder agreed wholeheartedly that proper wayfinding signage needs to be incorporated as part of this project and we should address previous projects as well.”

#### August 7, 2018 Minutes -

- Add to 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph under Review of Parking Design, “No official vote was taken. Chuck Mueller noted he left before any discussion on a vote.”

As some members didn't have a chance to review the previous minutes or these amendments, the Minutes will be tabled until the next meeting.

Chairman Joplin noted the Committee has 4 versions of the parking area of the Chester Wall.

Chuck Mueller noted the original design with the green lines was perfectly workable, safe and desirable. He also noted he had agreed at a subsequent meeting that it might be worth looking at a shift of a few feet. The white lines were shifted between 4 and 7 feet further towards the buildings and away from the road. It was consistent with what's in front of 6 Main. There is a clarity and consistency about that. This is a tremendous benefit to add pedestrian space. It will add vitality and value to the town.

Jeff Jacobson noted there really isn't any more they could add to this discussion at this time as this has been discussed numerous times in the past. The decision as to which plan is to be used is up to the Committee.

Brian Kent noted the input from residents to the Master Plan was that they wanted more public space in that part of downtown to improve events. It also gave that side of Main Street more public space as it was currently non-existent. They responded to that and the Master Plan was accepted and endorsed. Much of that discussion was "can we have an event space without closing down the street." The goal was to create space that could accommodate events and also the casual everyday activities without closing down the street or parking spaces. He felt both the green and white versions meet that objective.

Ed Meehan felt the idea of a plaza in the first 2 versions was too aggressive because its not safe. People are backing out into a travel way. He endorsed the idea of a public space and that can be achieved for large events by closing down the street. He was not in favor of creating public space for abutting property owners to set up tables and have dinners. That's not the committee's goal. The Committee's goal is to achieve a plan to address ADA requirements, to maintain parking without losing space and not change the character. The last version provides a landing area for the steps, makes a little larger public area, it achieves a 4' sidewalk and there is still the private property abutting that. There also needs to be utility access available 360 degrees around it. If we want a public event, we close the area down. To have an area with people milling around and cars backing out is not safe. There was discussion regarding the 4" curb.

Chuck Mueller asked Mr. Jacobson if he would design a parking lot where 2 cars could back directly into each other. Jeff responded yes, that's a common layout. Mr. Mueller felt that was dangerous.

Steven Tiezzi noted he was a huge proponent of the original plaza design but after seeing the painted lines on the roadway he doesn't care for it, not because of safety but this is a significant change to what is there and what's there works and is Chester. Functions are held there and the street is closed down. He was for leaving it as close to what it is as its proven successful. Why would we change that. He was in favor of the version with the blue sidewalk. It works and we are making a few improvements.

There was discussion regarding handicap spots. It was noted there are no handicap spaces on that side of the street. There is a handicap space in front of the Pattaconk crosswalk.

John Schroeder noted, in all due respect, Ed Meehan talked about people milling about and getting in the way of cars. That's what is there now. The proposed pedestrian space would be just that pedestrian space with clearly defined parking. It gives pedestrians a space to gather without closing the road. He felt the current situation was dangerous. The layout in the Master Plan is predictable with well vetted parking in use across the globe. We should want to accentuate the good things about Chester. This is a great little corner. We are going to have an informational Kiosk and people will congregate around it.

Chuck Mueller noted it provides another space which is a phenomenal opportunity.

Charlene Janecek felt the area should stay the way it is. The street will be closed for functions. There is a milling spot for people. More expanded sidewalk. Change for the sake of change isn't necessarily good. It works the way it is and should be left the way it is. There was discussion regarding delivery trucks.

Leslie Strauss noted she had been in that corner for 5 years and watched the people and traffic. She comes from the prospective of being a merchant and also someone who sold a lot of houses to people who love to be here. Her thought for this project was to fix what was broken and make it ADA compliant and as safe as we it could be. She never understood the plaza. The merchants rely on every parking space they can get. Its old New England and has to evolve to accommodate today's needs. This is the snow area and you can't pile snow on top of a bench. She liked the roundedness that Chester has. Somewhere there has to be a middle to accommodate today's use of a town. She didn't think parking should be taken away. It looks artificial. She also didn't get the cobblestone.

Ed Meehan asked if some parking spaces could be put on an angle to accommodate a handicap spot.

Jeremy Ziemann asked if the townspeople get to weigh in or in this strictly a Committee decision. He noted as a local he would like a better layout. What is another month to make the real parking function. Why can't we make the road work the way we are proposing. At this point we should look to the town's opinion on the real design in a better way and have a full scale mock up addressing concerns about 1 or 2 spaces. He felt it should be redrawn and let the town in on why this is being done. Current lines should be blacked out and redrawn.

John Schroeder noted one thing discussed and agreed was getting more space around the steps. Now that's been taken away. In the last hour, we're changing our mind and rethinking the whole thing. He agreed he missed a couple site walks, but did his due diligence reviewing what was proposed.

Steve Tiezzi didn't feel the change being proposed was a better change than what was there now.

Chuck Mueller noted the merchants lose revenue every time the street is closed as evidenced by Kyle Monroe at the last meeting.

Ed Meehan made suggestions for angle parking and a wider sidewalk. He also noted once this Committee decides on something it has to be approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Leslie Strauss noted the whole Committee and town residents will never all agree, but there needs to be compromise and flexibility.

The sidewalk area in front of the Brewery and the Hen was discussed as was the backing out of cars.

John Schroeder noted he liked the fact we are preserving pedestrian space on an every day basis. There was discussion on how to mock up the plan as proposed.

Susan Wright suggested doing a mock up plan to get a visual for the residents. Ed

Meehan suggested this be done in full scale and the Selectmen should review it. Steve Tiezzi noted the Committee cannot design for delivery trucks. They will continue to park wherever. John Schroeder asked Brian Kent if he could do a 3D model.

Lilliam Bella noted if it ain't broke, don't fix it. The businesses should be allowed to continue to function, what do the businesses think about giving up the parking spaces, what do they think about making it different for delivery trucks, what will we use a new space for gathering for (it will be wasted space). She didn't see making all these changes was of benefit to the current businesses in town. We need the businesses support. How many people drive compact cars, not very many. These changes will not be beneficial to the current businesses in town.

Chairman Joplin noted when the parking is full, the pedestrian space will be invisible. How does the public use this space? Much discussion regarding triangle parking.

There was discussion regarding whose responsibility it would be for tables and chairs in this space. Ed Meehan noted it would probably have to be a license agreement and the BOS should check with the town attorney.

There was much discussion regarding the public space and the parking area.

Jeremy Ziemann felt a full scale model would be helpful.

Lestlie Strauss inquired about the planter. It was decided to remove it as it was encroaching and deteriorating.

Steve Tiezzi noted what is there now is a wonderful space. Chuck Mueller noted he did not see that as a wonderful space. Charlene Janecek noted it was quirky and unusual and it works.

Brian Kent noted the scheme could be modified to accommodate 6 parking spaces and getting rid of the planter. Discussion ensued.

Chairman Joplin noted Brian Kent will redo the 2 versions being considered according to the suggestions. Steve Tiezzi noted he would like public input before approving a change to what's there. It's too big a change and too big an area to not

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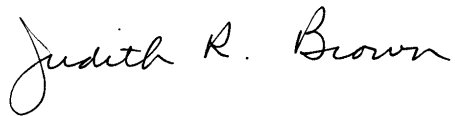
have public input. Chuck Mueller agreed.  
Brian Kent noted he could provide plans in a week but renderings would take longer.

Next Meeting – September 11, 2018 @ 7:00 PM. Chairman Joplin asked what the next step would be. Jeff Jacobson noted discussion regarding aesthetics of the plan.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned approximately 9:40 PM.

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