

Chester Main Street Project Committee

Special Meeting, April 9, 2019

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1. Call to Order

The Main Street Project Committee held a Special Meeting on Tuesday, April 9, 2019, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Chairman Joplin called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

2. Seating of Members

In attendance were Michael Joplin, Chuck Mueller, John Schroeder, Ed Meehan, Leslie Strauss, Charlene Janecek and Jeremy Ziemann. Others in attendance were Selectman James Grzybowski, First Selectwoman Lauren Gister (arrived at 8:00 PM).

3. Review Brian Kent's redo of 2 alternatives, Options 2 and 3

4. Confirm date for public presentation of Main Street Plan

Chairman Joplin noted the big decision at this meeting is to select one of the two options. A public presentation is scheduled for May 14th at Town Hall at 7:00 PM. Both Brian Kent and Jeff Jacobson are operating with that in mind.

Joplin noted the flag pole area will be discussed at the next meeting. He noted the Committee has narrowed it down to two layouts. The only real difference is the material in the parking area for the six cars in front of the Chester Wall.

John Schroeder noted the Committee decided to go to public presentation with these two options and get public comments. Schroeder, Mueller and Ziemann were in favor of Option 2.

Leslie Strauss noted she liked Option 3. Option 2 has granite and concrete and Option 3 has Belgium Block and concrete. Why isn't Option 3 granite and concrete. Jeremy Ziemann noted he thought it had to do with the sidewalk tie-in. John Schroeder noted it coincided with the rest of the town. Leslie Strauss noted her reasoning for Option 3 was she envisioned bollards right to the edge of that area, the area shaped up nicely for gathering. She felt Option 2 had a whole lot of lines which didn't enhance the area. Chuck Mueller noted the change of material shows the area for parking of cars.

Selectman Grzybowski noted there is the Maple Street Parking Lot and the foundations under the sidewalk that has to be paid for. Chairman Joplin noted he was assuming they will get the State to pay for that. Chuck Mueller noted one never knows what you are going to get from the State.

Selectman Grzybowski noted he was still on the fence with Option 3. He indicated he spoke with about 15 different people, 3 liked Option 2 and the rest went with Option 3. Most of the time cars will be parked on top of that area. When the area is being used, the whole road is shut down. Selectman Grzybowski stated he was fine with pushing these two Options forward and getting public comments. He also noted there needs to be discussion regarding electrical at the center flag pole area and those foundations. There is only one month left to do this.

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Chairman Joplin noted we need to be at 70% by September. Selectman Grzybowski noted he was not in favor of the town taking ownership of those foundations. If \$80,000 won't cover the cost, the town needs to talk to the owners of those buildings. Jeremy Ziemann asked how much is the owner's responsibility. Chairman Joplin noted almost everything Selectman Grzybowski has said falls on the Selectmen. Its pretty clear the State money cannot be spent on private property. Every one of the owners have to make their building safe with fire and building codes.

Chairman Joplin noted in terms of the design, with the exception of the flag pole area, its almost at 70%.

Ed Meehan noted with regard to the Belgium Block, the area of the grout lines could cause issues in the rain or plowing that could be dangerous. He was in favor of taking these options to the public and receiving comments.

There was discussion regarding the difference between Belgium Block and granite. Meehan noted it's a matter of aesthetics. Schroeder noted it's a \$20,000 difference. He explained Option 2 is what the Master Plan called for. \$20 per square foot was put in the Master Plan so the difference is really \$20,000 not \$40,000. Meehan noted this is supposed to be a LOTCIP Project to address ADA, drainage, etc. and not aesthetics. The State will start and push back.

John Schroeder noted with regard to Maple and Spring Streets, the State will pay for whatever is necessary to tie those streets in as far as drainage, grade, etc. At the last meeting Jeff Jacobson was going to look into if there was an actual savings because the bridge project went a little further then when the Master Plan was done.

Chairman Joplin asked if these two options were going to be presented to the public on May 14th with or without comment. Or do we make a recommendation. Chuck Mueller noted Brian Kent should describe each one and get public comments. The Committee will then discuss and take comments under advisement and make a decision. First Selectwoman Gister noted she would like to put these drawings in the lobby and invite people to come in and look at them. Jeremy Ziemann suggested having Brian Kent do a short narrative to be put in the lobby next to each option.

With regard to the flag pole area, Brian Kent could provide the Committee with some graphics and then won't have to come to a meeting. Selectman Grzybowski noted in terms of the hydrant his preference would be on the opposite side of the street from where the businesses are located. Jeremy Ziemann asked if power was being added underground in the circle. First Selectwoman Gister asked if there was a reason why Belgium Block was around the circle. It was also noted someone needs to talk to Priscilla about the hydrant, electrical, the tree and the wall.

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Ed Meehan noted a letter should go to the property owners to come in to Town Hall, look at the plans and engage them in conversation. First Selectwoman Gister will compile a list of all property owners between the bridge and the cemetery parking lot and a little up Maple and Spring Streets. It was felt someone should be at Town Hall to assist people when they come in. Chairman Joplin noted there are 3 or 4 people who should be given more attention.

There was discussion regarding the electrical junction box that was going to go in front of Simon's. It was eventually approved for the cemetery. First Selectwoman Gister noted some of those buildings do not have adequate power. The only recourse is to put a box somewhere. Discussion ensued regarding the electrical box.

Jeremy Ziemann noted the Committee needs to find out what is the town's legal obligation and what is the property owners obligation.

There was discussion regarding what the State is willing to pay for. First Selectwoman Gister noted the State originally agreed to pay for Maple and Spring Streets but then backed off on that.

First Selectwoman Gister noted some questions from the public will be what is the design and what will it mean to me. Cost does not need to be discussed because it will be paid for 100% by the State. There was discussion regarding Spring Street – how far up will we go, 6" curb with drainage, etc. We need to be prepared to answer as many of these questions at the public meeting as possible.

First Selectwoman Gister noted the Selectmen are working on the Maple Street Parking Lot improvements, lighting, etc.

Other questions are - where will the contractor have the staging area, what is the start time, when will the Water Company be doing their work, etc. Laurel Hill Cemetery and North Quarter Park were staging areas for the other Main Street Project. First Selectman Gister noted start time is spring of next year, but a lot depends on conditions of the buildings. This will be a difficult time for the merchants.

Leslie Strauss noted we need to let the businesses know we can't answer all these questions right now. The merchants need to know at least a year ahead of time. That is an important business time for many of them. Also, the Farmer's Market will be far enough away that it won't help. We have to be sensitive to not totally cripple the merchants. They rely heavily on the Farmer's Market.

Leslie Strauss pointed out the Main Street Committee page on the town website hasn't been updated since 2012. She will do a new narrative for the website.

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It was reiterated a letter should go to all the stakeholders, building owners and tenants. Chairman Joplin noted there should be a preliminary discussion with each landlord or landowner in the project area. There will be 3 or 4 in a smaller group who will be affected more. This should occur before May 14th.

Chairman Joplin noted he spoke to Jeff Jacobson about having one traffic lane open or keeping the street open Thursday thru Monday. Those things can be written into the contract as well as say working on only 200' of sidewalk and finishing it before moving on to the next section. All these things should be discussed with the merchants.

It was agreed the more people that can answer questions, the better. Every Committee member knows at least some of the merchants. They all should be invited to a meeting as a group and then invite each of them to contact us individually to discuss their building. Joplin noted there should be an owners' meeting as soon as possible. One on one discussion can also be offered. The meeting with the owners should be April 23rd.

5. Discussion regarding following items, however, we may or may not have sufficient information to answer these questions at this time –

- Maple Street Parking Lot – reparations and funding
- Timeline for stakeholder discussions
- Construction equipment staging
- Street and sidewalk access during construction
- Estimate of the project time frame

These items were covered in the discussion above. Some questions cannot be answered at this time.

6. Other Business, if any – nothing further.

7. Bills for Payment – none.

8. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Schroeder, second by Strauss, to approve March 12, 2019, Minutes amended with the addition that “Charlene Janecek had asked Brian Kent about the flag pole area and there had been minor discussion regarding the side walk and lighting. It was also noted the flag pole area still needs to be discussed.” Approved with Meehan and Joplin abstaining.

9. Audience of Citizens

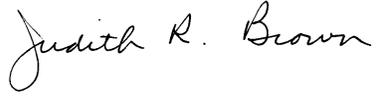
Peter Kehayias was present and commented briefly during the meeting.

10. Adjournment

Motion by Joplin, second by Meehan, to adjourn at 9:30 PM. Unanimously Approved.

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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