

Chester Main Street Project Committee

Regular Meeting, March 26, 2019

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1. Call to Order

The Chester Main Street Project Committee held its regular meeting on Tuesday, March 26, 2019, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Chuck Mueller (in the absence of Chairman Michael Joplin) called the meeting to order at 7:20 PM.

2. Seating of Members

Members in attendance were Chuck Mueller, Charlene Janecek, John Schroeder, Jeremy Ziemann and Leslie Strauss (arrived at 7:30 PM). Others present included Jeff Jacobson, Brian Kent, Aaron Mortensen, First Selectwoman Lauren Gister (arrived at 7:40 PM), Selectman James Grzybowski, Karin Badger, Susan Wright, Lillian Bella and 2 or 3 other residents.

3. Discussion of parking details at Chester wall, discussion of area around flagpole
Brian Kent reviewed the 10 or 11 bollards at the Chester wall area. He indicated in consultation with Public Works Foreman John Divis, that in order to facilitate snow removal everything should be on one level. Divis wanted removable bollards to be restored at the end of snow season. The bollards will also delineate the parking area. These will be heavy duty bollards about 40" high. They attach to an assembly driven into the concrete through a handhole with a bolt. They weigh about 75 pounds and can be removed and stored.

Selectman Grzybowski noted he preferred bollards than anything else. Brian Kent reviewed the installation and removal process for the bollards in detail. Selectman Grzybowski noted there should be a cap on the area where the bollard is removed so it doesn't get backfilled.

Mr. Kent reviewed the costs of Options 2 and 3. Option 2, Triangle Parking/Plaza Entire Area – total was \$95,971.00. Triangle Parking Area Only – total was \$53,634.00. Option 3, Triangle Parking/Plaza Entire Area – total was \$52,546.00. Triangle Parking Area Only – total was \$13,855.00.

Mr. Kent noted the parking area was discussed at the last meeting as well as listing these areas on Google. He has since listed the parking areas on Google as "parking in Chester."

With regard to signage, Mr. Kent noted Michael Joplin spoke to Peter Good who designed the signs. Mr. Good as the author of the signs noted he would like to give final approval.

There was discussion if the Grant would cover the whole project. Mr. Jacobson noted it was based on the Master Plan. Mr. Kent noted the Master Plan covered pavers in the parking area. It was noted money will be needed for improvements to Maple and Spring Streets and the parking area if not covered by the Grant.

Mr. Kent noted this meeting was to consider the merits of the 2 options for the ultimate design of the parking area. It was noted in the Master Plan the entire area should be designed as one coherent space of the same material. The Master Plan indicated pavers. The budgeting of the Grant was drawn from the Master Plan which called for pavers at \$20 per square foot.

Mr. Kent again reviewed the pricing for Options 2 and 3 on the sheets distributed.

It was noted in Option 3 the area was sloped for water to drain out. Snow is plowed into the corner and then loaded into dump trucks for removal. The bollards can be removed if necessary. The primary difference between Options 2 and 3 is the look of the parking spaces. The concern for Option 2 was its durability for chemicals and deicing. Mr. Kent noted there were two sites that have concrete with pavers if anyone wished to look at them – Ocean House in Watch Hill, RI and Bowden College in Brunswick, Maine. It was noted Option 2 has a 20 year roadway life. The parking area is permanent. First Selectwoman Gister noted the more edges, the more shifting over time.

Karin Badger noted the line in Option 2 flows better. Mr. Kent noted the bands align with the parking spaces to guide you in to the space. Aaron Mortenson noted the roadway is actually lowered by 6”.

There was discussion regarding ADA compliant. John Schroeder, First Selectwoman Gister and Selectman Grzybowski all noted this is an Historic Town Wall.

Cost of the two options was again reviewed.

John Schroeder asked how much cost was in the Master Plan for the bridge project. Jeff Jacobson noted that wasn't included in their estimate but he will go back and look. Mr. Schroeder asked if there was a savings.

There was discussion regarding the use of the old trolley tracks and the voids under the sidewalk. Chuck Mueller noted there are still a lot of unknowns that may pose a huge

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issue. Jeff Jacobson noted \$80,000 came from the original D.O.T. estimate for the bridge project. The Grant will not pay for the foundation walls but will pay for backfilling once the walls are installed (Kyles, Simons, Warners Studio). Selectman Grzybowski noted it hasn't been decided yet if this is going to be town funded or private funded.

John Schroeder noted he liked Option 2 aesthetically. Its memorable, creates a sense of place, captures our soul and hearts and makes us feel good. Option 2 feels very cohesive, there are examples of durability lasting forever. He didn't like to geometry of Option 3. Its chopped up and he was very uncomfortable with it.

Leslie Strauss noted she was very much in favor of Option 3. She noted her business was long enough in that corner to know that cars parked right up against the sidewalk. Now there is a line of demarcation and cars don't come up to the buildings any more. The Belgium Block and concrete look very nice. Option 2 has the stripes for parking spaces marked with paint. A lot of lines from a visual standpoint. Ms. Strauss noted she was happy with the bollards, the plaza and the cars.

Jeremy Ziemann noted he liked the plaza in Option 2. He was happy to stay with granite. He felt when the bollards were out, there was a sense of open space as opposed to parking. He liked granite better than anything synthetic.

Charlene Janecek noted she would abstain but did like Option 3 better. Option 2 was too busy when the bollards were out and it was not in keeping with a New England town.

First Selectwoman Gister noted she was concerned about how Chester would feel about Option 2. There are a lot of people who don't understand why we are doing this. She agreed with Selectwoman Janecek that it should be kept simple and more in line with town sentiment. She was concerned we should be conscious of the "keep it simple" rule. She was also concerned about additional cost and not having the impression of changing Chester as opposed to improving infrastructure.

Chuck Mueller noted everyone acknowledges there is a tendency to resist change. There will always be a certain number of people who don't want to spend money doing this. He disagreed that Chester is viewed as a progressive artistic community. We seem to give so much over to cars. This gives us an open area for pedestrians, less asphalt.

Selectman Grzybowski noted he looks at the numbers, however, aesthetics does play a role. He went down and visualized both options. In his opinion Option 2 was too busy. Looking at the character of the town, this is more of an artsy town. He believed enhancements and improvements were being made in Option 3. He visited people in the center of town and also in the west end of town with the maps and plans. The general consensus of people living here within 10 years and those of 60 years, was Option 3. They all said it is the town that makes the charm. Based on this consensus, he was in favor of Option 3. Option 2 had too many stripes and too much in that area.

There was discussion regarding the types of materials. Selectman Grzybowski noted the only time you will see those spaces is when the roadway is shut down for events.

John Schroeder noted he mentioned at the last meeting the tragedy of graphics trying to illustrate concept of plan. Option 2 looks more busy in the plan than in reality. He felt Option 2 was simpler.

First Selectwoman Gister noted we have to be concerned about how we make our choices and we need to be respectful.

There was further discussion regarding type of materials, the parking spaces and will people pull all the way in and if the bollards are removed for snow plowing will people pull all the way up.

John Schroeder was concerned about the "old guard". Why is asphalt acceptable and granite is not. It's not the material, it's the stripes.

Karin Badger noted there is no aesthetics or continuity.

4. Preliminary discussion about scheduling public presentation of Main Street Plan and any other relevant details in the project area

Susan Wright asked when the Committee was planning on putting this out to the public. It all comes down to what the townspeople want. First Selectwoman Gister noted she has had discussions with the merchants of the scheduling of the balance of the project. Chairman Joplin has suggested holding a public meeting before June 15th before school gets out and people go on vacation.

Chuck Mueller and Charlene Janecek noted these are all public meetings and rarely does anyone attend.

First Selectwoman Gister noted the area of the flagpole still needs to be discussed.

Chuck Mueller noted the Committee should set a date for the public meeting. It was decided the public presentation should be held on Tuesday, May 14, 2019, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, CT at 7:00 PM. Gister noted the infrastructure is not changing, only the aesthetics. Brian Kent will work on the graphics.

5. Other Business, if any – none.

6. Bills for Payment – none.

7. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Janecek, second by Strauss, to approve March 12, 2019 Minutes amended as follows:

- Under 4. Discussion to follow presentation-
- Paragraph 2, first and second sentences to read, **“Mr. Jacobson noted how much of the improvements on Maple and Spring Streets they will cover is still in question. It depends on how much they deem is directly related to the Main Street Improvements.”**
- Under 4, Paragraph 3, first sentence should read, **“It was noted the Grant can’t be used for local street improvements, such as Maple and Spring (except as noted before).**
- Under 4, Paragraph 8, third and fourth sentences should read, **“John Schroeder noted that LED lighting technology has come a long way since we last explored the lighting details. He noted we could simply screw low-wattage (40 watt), 2300K, clear, vintage LED bulbs into the standard medium base sockets, keep the solid hood for dark sky compliance, but eliminate the LED panel and fake, frosted hurricane cover.”**
- Under 4, Paragraph 9, add last sentence, **“John Schroeder stated that aesthetic consistency and proper, thoughtful placement of signage is paramount and that way-finding signage to parking areas including within the Phase 1 project area was critical.”**
- Under 4, Paragraph 10, 13th and 14th sentence should read, **“John Schroeder asked what were the biggest concerns of the Selectmen. It was noted durability and cost.”**
- Under 4, Paragraph 11, add last two sentences, **“John Schroeder noted the committee did not vote to eliminate the so-called ‘walkway’/buffer. On the contrary, the committee voted unani&8mously as part of the motion to approve the design to explore paving materials other than asphalt for the overall area.”**

- Under 4, Paragraph 12, add to fourth sentence, “It was the consensus that lighting was okay (except as previously noted), ...”
- Under 4, Paragraph 13, add to last sentence, “...along the frontage of the buildings for a variety of reasons including tripping hazards, plowing issues, etc.”

Unanimously Approved.

Motion by Schroeder, second by Janecek, to approve October 24, 2018 Minutes as written. Approved with Strauss abstaining.

8. Audience of Citizens

Citizens voiced their concerns and comments throughout the meeting.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Janecek, second by Schroeder, to adjourn at 9:42 PM. Unanimously Approved.

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