

Town Center Committee
Minutes for the Meeting of February 9, 2024

This meeting was held at 12:00 pm in the Matthew Thornton Meeting Room in the Merrimack Town Hall:

Present: Nelson Disco (chairman), Dawn Tuomala, Nicholas Lavallee, Bill Wilkes, Karen Freed, Karen Contos, and Finlay Rothhaus (at 12:20 p.m.)

Absent: Matthew Shevenell

Minute Taker: Karen Contos

Approval of November 17, 2023, Minutes

MOTION: Bill made a motion to approve the minutes and Karen C. seconded it. Approve as revised, typo fixed.

Vote: 3-0-3, Dawn, Nick and Karen F. abstained.

OLD BUSINESS

Schedule and Status of Souhegan River Trail

Dawn reported that many issues have surfaced that were unexpected and require more money and time to fix. The project has been extended for eight weeks and is expected to be complete in June. The trail is dangerous, no one should go down there; it is a construction project after all. The project is moving forward.

Bill asked if the gravel placed during construction will be removed? Dawn replied yes, the gravel on the Watson Park side of the trail will be removed (the East side). The other side (the West side) by the Fire Station will remain for emergency access.

Bill mentioned that the Rotary Club has been talking about perhaps adding benches or plants to make the entrance to the trail attractive.

Dawn told him that there are three placards that will be posted. She will bring them to the next meeting for our perusal.

Nelson commented that the Rotary Club will need to wait until the trail is complete to beautify the entrance.

He also asked Nick if any photos had been taken. Grace took some photos, but they haven't been posted yet on social media. Nick also mentioned that the Historical Society has been working on their video regarding the historical bridge.

Review of Town Center Priority List Plans

Nelson mentioned that the one project not yet funded was the Twin Bridge apartments sidewalk to Twin Bridge Park. However, Karen C. contacted him and mentioned a potential new funding source that she became aware of.

Karen C. mentioned she went to a Town Council meeting the night before and learned of a grant of \$480,000 from the InvestNH Municipal per Unit Grant Program. This grant was awarded to the Town as the Twin Bridge apartment project is a lower-income housing development.

Finlay confirmed the award of the grant and mentioned that the funds can be used for anything except for property tax reduction.

Bill brought up our discussion from the last meeting regarding the idea that the contractor of the new Twin Bridge apartments could extend the sidewalk that was planned for the units and that this may be the cheapest option. Bill said that we should revisit checking with the contractor.

Nelson said the amount budgeted for the project is \$100,000. He spoke to Paul Micali about contacting the contractor. Paul agreed to take this request under advisement

Nelson asked the committee what we wanted to do.

MOTION: Bill made a motion to 1) send a letter to the Town Council to earmark funds from the Invest NH grant for 300 feet of sidewalk, and 2) solicit the contractor for a bid to construct the sidewalk. Karen C. seconded the motion.

Vote: 7-0-0. All in favor.

School Master Plan Status

Matt was absent so no update was delivered.

Status of TCC Facebook and Town Center Videotaping

Nick reported that there have been no pictures posted since the Souhegan Trail groundbreaking event. It's Happening in Merrimack had an episode of the Souhegan Trail and the Town Center Committee.

Status of Route 3/Wire Road & Baboosic Brook Bridge

Dawn reported that the FEET Wire Road and Baboosic Brook Bridges have been going through preliminary design, refining the project. The cost of the total project has increased to \$12 million; the Town's share is 20%. There will be sidewalks on both sides of the new Baboosic Lake Road bridge. Dawn will be attending a Town Council meeting as soon as it can be put on the agenda, to tell them about the necessity of closing Church Street to be able to put a sidewalk from the Library to Wire Road.

Dawn also reported that on February 13th, there will be a Department of Transportation open house at 6 p.m. and presentation regarding the two Merrimack bridges that go over the Everett Turnpike.

NEW BUSINESS –

Winter Carnival Support

Per Nelson, the Town's Winter Carnival will be happening on Saturday, February 24th. He wanted to know if we wanted to have an outdoor table at the event, as this is a good time to publicize the committee and speak with residents.

Bill proposed that we tentatively decide to do this, weather permitting, with Nelson, Karen C. and Karen F. attending as well. We will email the day before the event and decide if the weather looks promising. If so, Bill will bring a table and the Media department will bring a tent. Nelson will bring Souhegan River Trail tri-fold brochures and the large map of the Town Center.

Public Comments- NONE

Next Meeting- Next regular TCC Meeting will be on March 29, 2024.

Adjournment –MOTION: Bill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Karen seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-0-0.** Dawn left early for a meeting.