

Approved: June 24, 2022



**Town Center Committee
Minutes for the Meeting of May 13, 2022**

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

Present: Nelson Disco (chairman), Bill Wilkes, Matt Shevenell, Karen Freed, Karen Contos, Nicholas Lavalley, Kyle Fox and Michael Redding

Absent: Bill Cummings and Finlay Rothhaus

Minute Taker: Michael Redding

April 22, 2022 Minutes

The Minutes of the TCC meeting of April 22nd were presented and reviewed by the TCC.

MOTION: Kyle Fox made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Mike second motion. **Motion passed 8-0-0.**

New Member

The chairman announced that Michael Redding was recently appointed to the Town Center Committee (TCC) by the Town Council and welcomed him to the committee.

Old Business Discussions:

5a Souhegan River Trail

Kyle reported that the wetland permitting application for the raised boardwalk was accepted by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and is now under review. Additionally, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) permit application was sent to NHDOT for review. NEPA requires federal agencies (or those funded under federal programs) to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions. Kyle plans to meet with the Town Council on May 26, 2022 to review increases in project cost and to update them on the current design.

5b. High School Master Plan – Matt shared two concept plans showing the new parking configuration, traffic flow patterns, removal and relocation of the central offices, the removal of Brentwood Drive and the creation of Woodbury Extension. The plans were recently shared with the School Board Building Committee to start a conversation about the need for the improvements and to understand what is feasible. An additional intention of the improvements is to make a more aesthetically appealing corridor with the addition of sidewalks, ornate light posts,

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and the burying of overhead utilities. The building-out for the plan is in a 5-year time frame.

5c. Status of TCC Facebook

Nicholas reported a continued interest in the TCC Facebook page with a growth of 20 new “followers” since last month. The page is approaching 500 followers and encouraged us to get the word out to gain additional followers.

5d. Route3/ Baboosic Brook Bridge.

Kyle reported that the project recently requested funding through a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation program. There is a \$2 million shortfall in funding that will fall on the Town if additional funding sources are not obtained. The FEMA funding would resolve this gap. The project is a good candidate for the funding because the FE Everett Turnpike corridor would be greatly impacted by the 100-year storm event. The new bridge will result in widening of the Baboosic Brook channel which will allow for passage of the storm flows.

A NEPA permit is required as part of the FEMA funding application. As part of the NEPA application input from stakeholders are requested to gain comments in favor or in opposition to the project. A letter was received from Craig Rainey of Quantum Construction Consultants requesting input from the TCC. The TCC reviewed the letter and the plan that shows a temporary bridge to be placed south of the current bridge. The temporary bridge and roadway will require a temporary easement on the MYA parcel as well as a private resident. The TCC discussed the plan and offered input and comments.

MOTION: Mike made a motion that the TCC prepare a letter in favor of the project acknowledging that the project will have many benefits but most importantly will mitigate the flood hazards as well as the hazards to pedestrians. Karen C second the motion. **The motion passed 7-0-1**, with Kyle abstaining. Nelson agreed to prepare the letter and share with the TCC before sending to Quantum.

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New Business

6a. Trail Map

Nelson reported that he met with the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) about updating the trail map to show the improvements that have been made to-date. NRPC agreed to update the map. There will be no direct cost to the Town or TCC for this work by NRPC.

MOTION: Mike made a motion to have Nelson work with NRPC to update the map to show what has been accomplished. Bill W second the motion. **The motion passed 8-0-0.**

6b. Town Center Video

Nicholas reported that he is still planning for the Town Center Video to help define the Town Center for residents and demonstrating that it's an active and distinct section of Merrimack. He is planning to film the Town Center with activities taking place at the various Center activities over the next several weeks. Video of the new sidewalk on Woodbury Street will be included. He also wants to show the connection between the recreational activities (eg. Watson Park) to the municipal and commercial aspects.

6c. Fourth of July Events

Nelson invoked discussion about the TCC participating in the Town of Merrimack July 4th events to promote the TCC. He noted that historically the TCC has used a booth at the midway and handed out maps and brochures to get the word out. Residents have responded positively to that in the past. Bill W reported that the midway is not part of the current events and suggested that the booth get moved to the Rotary breakfast event. The Rotary breakfast is at the High School which allows us to have a table without worry for weather or other outdoor challenges. The TCC agreed that this would be the best place to participate. Nelson will contact the Rotary to arrange to have a table at the breakfast event.

6d. FE Everett Turnpike (FEET) Widening

Nelson invoked a discussion about the widening of the turnpike and its potential impact to the Town Center, especially with the RT3/Baboosic Brook Bridge occurring at the same time. The TCC discussed the concerns of traffic inundating the Town Center and that we should be advocating some how to minimize this impact. Many members expressed how RT3 and the Town Center gets congested when there is an accident on the FEET. It is assumed that once the south bound construction begins RT3 through Merrimack will be used more to avoid the

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construction delays. Kyle reported that the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) is in control of the project and the traffic impact mitigation. Wendy Johnson is the project manager for NHDOT and is someone we can reach out to with our concerns and comments. Kyle also reported that the bridge project should be completed just prior to the start of the southbound widening. Mike volunteered to look into this more and report back to the TCC. The TCC also considered writing a letter to NHDOT which can be discussed at a future meeting.

6e. Strategy to Advance Town Center Plans

MOTION: Bill W made a motion to table this topic to the next meeting due to time constraints. Kyle second the motion. **The motion passed 8-0-0.**

Public Comments - There were no public comments received.

Next Meeting – Next regular TCC Meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 24, 2022, in the Matthew Thornton Meeting Room.

Adjournment – **MOTION:** Bill W made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kyle second the motion. **The motion passed 8-0-0.**