



Town Center Committee Minutes for the Meeting of November 18, 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 Cummings, Finlay Rothhaus, Kyle Fox, Nicholas Lavallee, Matt Shevenell, Karen Freed, Karen Contos, Michael Redding and Bill Wilkes

Absent: None

Minute Taker: Michael Redding

September 30, 2022 Minutes

The Minutes of the TCC meeting of September 30th, were presented and reviewed by the TCC. Kyle remarked that Souhegan Trail bid open was 11/10 not the 15th. Karen Contos asked that the minutes for items 5b through 5d be listed and also separated from the message from Karen Freed about the library.

MOTION: No motion was made, Nelson will revise the minutes and present at the December meeting for review and acceptance.

Discussion of High School Traffic Plan

A presentation was made by Matt Shevenell (Assistant Superintendent) and Steve Keach (Professional Civil Engineer with Keach-Nordstrom Associates, Inc. Matt opened the presentation with an introduction of the conceptual plan that outlines changes to the traffic flow patterns, parking lot locations and configuration, landscaping, sidewalks and safety. Matt noted that the plan includes removal of the blue, green and red buildings and the construction of a new SAU building at the skate park, which will need to be relocated by the Town of Merrimack. Matt emphasized the importance of using this opportunity to improve the appearance the High School campus, which will include relocating overhead electrical lines underground. He referenced how the middle school has no overhead wires and how impactful that is on the campus appearance. This plan needs to be reviewed by the School Building committee then get approval from the School Board before planning for any construction. The construction will be challenging due to the short non-use window of the school. There is roughly a 10 week timeframe that construction can take place.

Steve Keach shared two plans titled Schematic Campus Master dated April 25, 2022. Steve reviewed the new sidewalks along O’Gara Drive. Steve spent a majority of the presentation detailing the changes to the parking lots and the new traffic flow patterns. Changes that will reduce conflicts with pedestrians. The existing student parking along the western property boundary, which borders the Everett Turnpike, will be moved to the west to allow for widening of O’Gara drive for sidewalks and landscaping. These parking lots will have two entrances one on the north and one in the center, aligned with the proposed extended Woodbury St. This configuration will funnel cars into the parking lots on the north (at the emergency access to the Everett Turnpike) and allow them to travel between lots rather than along O’Gara Drive. Currently, utility poles and its associated curbed islands prevent this travel pattern.

The pick up and drop off area in front of the school will be widened and improved with two lanes. The widened travelway will allow for parents to park along the curb without impeding traffic. The bus route will remain the same. Matt noted that he estimates that there are approximately 400 cars on campus daily. This plan will improve the traffic flow on campus but will not address the off-campus issues of entering McElwain St in the morning and exiting O’Gara Drive in the afternoon. The busses leave the middle school in 2 waves of 18 buses which creates a convoy that restricts traffic flow. Kyle noted that NHDOT plans to rebuild the Baboosic Lake Rd bridge may result in a left turning lane on O’Gara drive.

Comments from the committee ensued which included discussion on preventing speeding within the parking lots now that they are connected, signage and wayfinding improvements, and reduction in pavement and impervious surfaces. Steve emphasized how the new design keeps the same number of parking spaces but reduces the amount of pavement, which is an indicator of the inefficiencies of the current layout.

Matt and Steve closed the presentation with details on the next steps with School Board approval and construction planning and sequencing.

Old Business Discussions:

Due to the High School traffic plan presentation the board decided to table the remaining agenda to the next meeting, except for a quick update on the Souhegan River Trail.

Motion: Bill Wilkes advance the motion and Mike seconded it. Vote was unanimous.

- a. Results of TCC Annual Presentation to Town Council – Nelson **TABLED**
- b. Status of TCC maps recently completed by NRPC – Nelson **TABLED**
- c. Status of Souhegan River Trail – Kyle Fox

Kyle reported that the bid opening was disappointing. Of the 6 contractors who took out plans only 1 submitted a bid. This bidder was not a NHDOT approved bridge contractor. Furthermore, this contractor's bid was 65% over the engineering estimate. Kyle reported that feedback from the contractors who did not bid were that the timeframe for completion was too short and they had commitments through mid-2023. Kyle considering re-bidding with changes to the contract that may allow for the other bidders to submit bids. There was a general discussion about how contractors are extremely busy now (certainly the good ones) and costs tend to be higher when contractors bid on work during these times.

- d. Results of High School Master Plan/Safe Routes to School – Matt Shevenell
Presented at Start of Meeting
- e. Status of TCC Facebook – Bill Wilkes/Nicholas **TABLED**
- f. Town Center Video Taping by Media Center – Nicholas **TABLED**
- g. Status of Route 3/ Wire Road intersection– Kyle Fox **TABLED**

h. Status of Baboosic Brook bridge – Kyle Fox **TABLED**

6. New Business

a. Discussion of FEET widening effects - Mike Redding **TABLED**

b. Strategy to advance Town Center plans **TABLED**

Public Comments - There were no public comments received.

Next Meeting – Next regular TCC Meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 6, 2023, at noon in the Matthew Thornton Meeting Room. **MOTION:** Bill W, 2nd Mike, **all voted in favor.**

Adjournment – **MOTION:** Bill W made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mike second the motion. **All voted in favor.**