

**Town Center Committee
Minutes for the Meeting of April 28, 2023**

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 Lavalee, Karen Contos and Michael Drouin

Absent: Finlay Rothhaus, Michael Redding, Bill Wilkes, Matt Shevenell

Minute Taker: Karen Contos

Announcements: Michael Drouin, a new Library Trustee, is our new Library Representative to the committee. Nelson welcomed Michael to the committee.

March 17, 2023 Minutes

MOTION: Approve as presented by Nicholas Lavalee and seconded by Karen Contos

Vote: 3-0-2, abstaining Dawn Tuomala and Michael Drouin

OLD BUSINESS

Souhegan River Trail

Dawn reported that this project is now in the construction phase. All plans have been signed by involved parties and are expected to be signed by the State soon. A Preconstruction meeting is scheduled for the following week. The construction will begin in the fall as the contractors want the ground to be frozen. The project has been in the works since 2014. Federal funds provided 80% of the project's costs.

To commemorate the extensive process and timeline of this project, Nelson wants a groundbreaking ceremony. Dawn mentioned that either late summer or early fall would work. This trail would be accessible from Watson Park, Wildcat Falls, the high school, and the town hall.

Nelson asked the committee if we still want to send a letter addressed to NH Department of Transportation notifying them of the trail's requirement for space underneath the Chamberlain bridge, which is on the DOT's ten-year plan for construction. As the Souhegan Trail will begin this year and the Chamberlain bridge isn't expected to be constructed before 2034, Dawn didn't think there would be a problem but sending the letter for the files is a good idea.

High School Master Plan Status

Matt was unable to attend so he sent Nelson an update by email. Even though Keach Engineering had provided a traffic review, the school board chose another consultant, VHB, to perform another master plan. The goal is to make a more pleasing entrance at the front of the school and to ease traffic congestion before and after school. Tearing down the red building has been approved.

Town Center Committee Facebook Page and Town Center Video

Nick reported that he is excited for Spring and Summer to be able to post more content on our Facebook page. He is in touch with the Library and Parks and Rec departments for events. The summer music series is always popular. Nick hopes to video the tearing down of the red building as well as the Children's Business Fair in June which features young entrepreneurs. If you have an idea for videotaping, please feel free to email him.

Dawn mentioned that Public Works week is May 21st through May 27th. On May 24th, the transfer station is closing so the Public Works staff can attend training from the fire department on safety. The staff luncheon is also on this day and an Employee of the Year will be celebrated.

Status of Route 3 / Wire Road & Baboosic Brook Bridge:

Dawn summarized the two merged projects; planning so far is at 30%. She reiterated that there was a public meeting regarding the Wire Road intersection. It toward better synchronizing the traffic lights. The Police Department is involved in testing the intersection. Quantum is constructing the bridge and Beta Group will oversee the constructing.

Nelson asked about the coordination with Route 3 Everett Turnpike widening project. Per Dawn, the State will be working on both the Wire Road and Baboosic bridge crossings at the same time beginning 2024. Our Wire Road/Baboosic Brook Bridge project will begin in 2025. Dawn stated that a temporary two-lane bridge over Baboosic Brook will be built to accommodate the 16000 daily vehicle traffic on Daniel Webster Highway.

NRPC (Nashua Regional Planning Committee) help with Sidewalk Funding. Prioritize Segments.

Nelson reported on the meeting with the NRPC to go over a funding sources spreadsheet they had given the committee. The Town Council has been reticent to provide funds for sidewalks. They have recently done so only once. Nelson and

Karen met with Emma Rearick, an NRPC planner. Ultimately, the committee needs to prioritize the remaining sidewalk projects.

Karen reported that Emma mentioned that the NRPC is looking into the federal grant program, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4ALL). Once they have looked at the grant and the planning priorities of all jurisdictions, Merrimack may be able to apply for the grant funds. She also mentioned that TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program) funds are a possible source of funds for sidewalk projects.

Dawn noted that she needed to bring us up to date on the sidewalks that have already been funded. The Route 3 Wire Road & Baboosic Brook Bridge project includes sidewalk builds on both sides of the street from Wire Road to Baboosic Lake Road. She also reported that the Everett Turnpike project will build sidewalks from the turnpike to the Library on the North side. The town has also applied for funding for sidewalks from the Chamberlain bridge to the 360 mall via a TAP grant.

Dawn also mentioned a new Twin Bridge development that might include sidewalks, but Nelson said that the needed sidewalks on Twin Bridge Road will not be provided by the developer.

As the TAP funding process is highly competitive, Dawn would need a couple of months before the filing date to prepare the application. The grant requires projects to meet requirements, so detail is important. She'd need an updated map and list of priorities. Nelson will send her the updated map.

Nelson mentioned that he and Karen will review the remaining sidewalk pieces to complete and draft a list to bring to the committee for discussion.

NEW BUSINESS --We ran out of time to discuss either of the two agenda items. (Strategy to advance & FEET widening)

Public Comments-None, although we did have a visitor to the meeting, Debra Covell, a member of the Library Board of Trustees.

Next Meeting- Next regular TCC Meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 11, 2023, at noon in the Matthew Thornton Meeting Room.

****Subsequent change:** Nelson later arranged a meeting for June 30, 2023, to discuss the Fourth of July parade event.

Adjournment –MOTION: Dawn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Karen seconded the motion. **Vote: 5-0-0**