

Route 109 Design Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 2, 2011 – 6:00 PM

Medway Senior Center

76 Oakland Street

Present: Paul Yorkis, Chairman, Route 109 Design Committee; Suzy Affleck-Childs, Planning and Economic Development Coordinator; Tom Holder, Director, Department of Public Services; David D’Amico, Assistant Director, Department of Public Services; Selectman Andrew Espinosa, Town Administrator Suzanne Kennedy; Other Committee Members: Pam Benjamin, Matt Buckley, Dan Hooper, Ann Sherry, and Peter Cooper.

Also present: Representatives from Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. -- Geoffrey Howie, John Diaz and Sean Sanger.

At 6:00 PM Chairman Paul Yorkis called the meeting to order.

Status Report of Agreement Between the Town and GPI:

The contract has been reviewed by Town Counsel. Final details are being addressed and the contract should be ready for the Board of Selectmen’s approval soon.

Approval of Committee Mission Statement:

Discussion regarding the mission statement and duration of the committee took place with general agreement that a mission statement will be revised and presented at the next meeting.

Update on Federal Funding:

Congressman McGovern and his chief of staff Chris Philbin are arranging a meeting with federal and state transportation officials to figure out a way around the current impasse. Congressman McGovern is absolutely committed to this project.

Environmental Permitting From Medway Conservation Commission:

Because of MASSDOT regulations it will be necessary to file a notice of intent (NOI) with the Medway Conservation Commission relating to the Chicken Brook stream crossing. It was agreed that the commission will given an update on the project even before the filing of the NOI.

Round table discussion:

Discussion topics included number and placement of curb cuts, ADA-compliant curb cuts, curbing peninsula, improvement of island next to gas station, etc. as each committee member shared their thoughts. It was noted that improvement to islands may not be part of the overall project. Regarding

audible signals to accommodate blind child, Mr. Diaz stated that once such signals are activated, they cannot be turned off. In the past, residents and businesses close to those intersections complain about noise. Mass Highway will install them, but won't handle the complaints about them.

Concern was expressed for communication with area families regarding Franklin/Highland/Milford intersection concerns. An additional traffic light was suggested for the Milford/Highland connection, leaving the 200-foot stretch empty, allowing large trucks to come through. Regarding Highland Street, some residents think the street should be one way as it is too narrow, especially with snow banks. Also concern for heavy traffic at school start and end times as well as on Sunday after church dismissal (police detail already present).

Regarding amendment of the grade on the crest of Winthrop Street, it was noted that Chicken Brook would have to be raised in order to elevate the grade appropriately. Discussion followed on truck exclusions at that Highland Street intersection. Mr. Howie suggested that alternate intersections will need to be investigated in order to plan a truck route separate from Highland Street. Mr. Cooper expressed concern for pedestrian safety as well, as there have been injuries along that street closer to Lincoln Street.

Mr. Yorkis suggested catch basin "markers" that alert people to their location so that foreign items do not enter the water mains, such as a stencil on the pavement cautioning that things can enter the Charles River Basin. It could be a small cost to prevent pollution.

Discussion followed on street lights and trees along the street. The type of use will differ along the length of the project, possibly fewer trees in residential areas, more in business district, but consider public safety and use when determining placement. Both street lighting and pedestrian path lighting can be effectively used and specific to purpose. Mr. Yorkis suggested a contrast of pavement color to define the street edge, where the asphalt changes to concrete. Solar lighting was suggested as well.

There was general discussion on sidewalks in the area, including as many as possible. Ms. Affleck-Childs confirmed that historic roads can have sidewalks installed. School children could walk, alleviating need for bussing close to school. Regarding the frontage area at the gas station, there may be no room for sidewalks. Space for sidewalks in some spots may be minimal.

Regarding signage, it was suggested that signage needs to be increased for the benefit of non-Medway travelers or visitors to town. Medway High School has a lot of functions, yet signage is sparse. Library signage should be on both sides of the street.

The Oak Street intersection should not be a 90 degree turn, instead, create a left hand turn lane on eastbound Main Street so traffic flow is not stopped. It was also suggested that a new entry to Highland from Oak is a good spot for increased landscaping, and perhaps the entry to park could be shifted for safer traffic flow. Park benches and solar powered trash receptacles would be appropriate for such an area. There was discussion on a possible pocket park at the intersection of Pond and Main, as well as one at Cottage Street on the north side of Main.

Mr. Yorkis specified that he and his wife own property at 159 Main Street and support the project, even if it involves eminent domain procurement. He suggested further that property owners in the area from Evergreen to the Medway Mill need to be contacted as those properties will be significantly impacted.

The intersection of Winthrop, Main, and Evergreen is considered incredibly dangerous by residents with a number of accidents occurring there. The signalization (if doable) and intersection need to be pedestrian-friendly, as it is in close proximity to baseball fields. Are there other ways to navigate through town to avoid this intersection, and if so, those need to be identified via signage.

Mr. Diaz asked Ms. Affleck-Childs to give them a list of any proposed developments for area along Route 109 as those will have to be considered and included in the concept. He also asked if any traffic studies have already been done in connection with those projects.

Mr. Howie stated right-of-way research will define ownership in affected areas.

Mr. Holder suggested doing some kind of loop connecting with the restaurant and loop it back around. Mr. Diaz stated the restaurant may be difficult to work around, as one parking space already practically on the road. Mr. Yorkis stated the restaurant should not be harmed by reducing parking spaces for sake of sidewalk, though it may be possible that sidewalk access may help their business.

Mr. Howie suggested getting a conceptual layout started and then soliciting feedback. The conceptual plan would come back to the committee before sharing with public. Selectman Espinosa stated the project's overall timeline would be set after review by public. Mr. Howie anticipated it would take 3-4 weeks to prepare the plan.

Mr. Yorkis suggested a meeting with businesses before meeting with the public as that perspective may have different perspectives from those of residents. He stressed the importance of being able to answer all questions when meeting with the public. Mr. D'Amico stated that unanswered questions still mean the project is moving forward. Mr. Yorkis emphasized that the whole committee see the concept, review and comment, before the public sees it. Ms. Affleck-Childs suggested that a number of meetings could be later held, including targeted discussions with specific groups. Mr. Yorkis stated the people are generally concerned with how it will look, how does it benefit the community, and how will it affect me?

Regarding funds appropriation, Mr. Yorkis stated the language to secure funds must be specific to ensure being able to include all aspects of the project. Concern was expressed that some of the nice things might be perceived as definite to the project, and it would be a shame if those were excluded because of funding. We have to be honest with the residents.

After discussion, the next meeting was scheduled for 7:00 PM on Wednesday, April 6, at the Senior Center. April 27 was suggested as a date for the public meeting.

Discussion followed on environmental permitting and wetlands protection, and beginning a dialogue with the Conservation Commission so everyone is prepared for the public meeting. Ms. Affleck-Childs agreed to contact the Conservation Coordinator.

Regarding the committee's Mission statement, Mr. Yorkis stated the top part of the document is the mission statement, and the bottom consists of goals and objectives. Discussion followed regarding clear separation and identification of those parts, who are the stakeholders, and when does the committee disband. Another draft will be worked on for review.

Regarding the minutes of the February 9, 2011 meeting, Mr. Cooper moved that the committee accept the minutes distributed this evening; Selectman Espinosa seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

There was discussion regarding funding, support from legislators, 100% federal funding, but lack of state or local funds match, etc. Mr. D'Amico cautioned against promising too much to residents and business owners.

Ms. Affleck-Childs complimented Mr. Yorkis on his involvement and dedication to keeping this project moving forward. The committee concurred.

At 8:50 PM Ms. Affleck-Childs moved to adjourn; Mr. Holder seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Galliardt
Night Board Secretary