



TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
MASSACHUSETTS

GREAT BARRINGTON HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes from September 20, 2012

Town Hall

6:30 p.m.

Present:

James Mercer, Chairman
Dan Bailly
Craig Okerstrom-Lang
Barbara Syer
Holly Troiano

Meeting called to order by Chairman Mercer

Continue public hearing on Main St project:

Motion by Dan Bailey
Second: Mr. Mercer
All in favor

Joe Sokul, DPW Chief and Chris Rembold, Town Planner in attendance representing Town of GB for this project.

Lights for cross walks to be "Williamsville Globe" with the "Washington Pole"; all black color. These lights will have neighbor friendly shields. These will be at each crosswalk on each side of Main Street and at some of the side streets such as Church Street. Pole is 10' tall and the luminaire is 2' tall for a total height of 12'. 21 decorative lights total in project.

Project is \$5.2 million which has most everything in it except for electrical.

If additional funding there will be outlets at various lamp posts to operate at least holiday lights and special event lights.

Focus of HDC is on the lighting and traffic signal supports.

Jenny Clark and Sharon Gregory from the audience said that when there are a cobra head and a decorative light right next to each other seems too much clutter. This occurs at the corner of Church and Main and maybe at another intersection.



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Lighting plan developed by the Design Team to illuminate the roadway and the crosswalks. National Grid is also reviewing these plans. Cobra Head lights will be 35' tall with brushed aluminum poles

The public hearing on the Main St lighting was closed.

Motion to approve the proposed lighting

Motion by Mr. Mercer

Seconded by Mr. Bailey

All in favor

Reopen the public hearing to discuss the Main St Project traffic pole standards and massing:

Mr. Sokul presented the traffic signal poles shown on the 75% design plans. Each mast arm has traffic sensor cameras which control the traffic signals. They will be mounted on top of the metal horizontal traffic signal arm on metal arms. This replaces the detective loops that are usually built into the pavement. Per Mr. Sokul these tend to fail quite a bit.

If cable poles are used they need to be taller to keep cables above truck traffic. Poles are wider with a deeper footing. There is a span wire required on the both the top and bottom of the traffic signals. Video sensor equipment above ground is not possible and this system must be buried in ground if cabling is used.

Posts and arms are black color. Color chosen to blend in better. Ms. Gregory: what choices do we have with color? They are ugly as black.

Original design had only two poles per intersection. These diagonal poles and mast arms were rejected by the Federal Highway. They want a traffic signal over each intersection.



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Current Main Street design shows:

- St James Place: Three poles (3), two with mast arms
- Castle & Bridge St: Four(4), four traffic poles with mast arms
- Elm Street: Three poles (3), two with mast arm
- Cottage Street: Three poles (3), two with mast arms

Mr. Mercer shared photographs of two intersections in GB at Kmart and the new Big Y on Rt 102 in Lee which have cable systems. Ms. Clark submitted a rendering showing what the how the proposed black mast arms would appear at the intersection of Main and Castle Streets. The black poles and arms are from the streetscape design on North Street in Pittsfield, MA. The rendering submitted to the Town by the Design Team in spring 2012 did not show these black mast arms.

The HDC notified the Town in April 2011 that the design needed to be presented to the HDC and we would have had comments about the traffic signals at that time. No one ever approached or responded to the HDC's request. Because the project is federal and state funded it requires HDC approval.

Mr. Bailey stated that the wires are an older period of traffic lights and that the black mast arms reflect a more current or modern approach and design. The black colors will make the signals easier to see at each intersection.

Ms Troiano disagreed with Mr. Bailey and thinks the black poles are heavy and clunky in that color.

Mr. Mercer felt that with the trees being removed these traffic poles will be very visible and disturbing in their appearance. They will detract from the historical context of the Main Street architecture.

Mr. Okerstrom-Lang agreed with these comments with Ms Triano and Mr. Mercer.

Mr. Sokul: the Town is responsible for the maintenance of the traffic signals within the Town Road boundaries. The metal arm systems are easier to maintain and are state of the art. With the cable system he is concerned about how to maintain them.

Public hearing closed and opened for public comment:



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Ms. Clark: If the signals hang from the wires, where are the traffic sensors? She is very concerned with these very large-wide black metal poles and arm. This feels like a slap in the face to our historic downtown. The signal poles and arms are glaring and heavy looking. This is a clunky versus elegant approach.

Ms Gregory: This is so upsetting; it is an embarrassing solution. This is a 50 year solution that we have to live with. For our special historic downtown we should have the sensors underground. Fuss & O'Niel has ignored the HDC and communicating the design. They should absorb any costs in design changes that may be required. The Town should not have to pay for this. This will be a 50 year mistake. We need to make this design more welcoming. This in not NYC or Pittsfield.

Mr. Rembold: to make any changes to the traffic signal design will cost money that the project right now does not have.

Mr. Mercer: he spoke with the traffic engineer, Steve Savaria, PE, Fuss & O'Niel and the footings have not been designed yet. Seems like changes could still be made.

Mr. Okerstrom-Lang: What electrical meter and box is required for each light? This will add to further clutter on the sidewalks. Mr. Sokul: one box and meter per intersection.

Ms. Clark: Between May and July 2012 there were major design decisions made concerning the traffic signal design that obviously the public was not made aware of.

Mr. Rembold: HDC needs to make their comments very soon to MA Highway; direct your written comments to:

Frank A. Tramontozzi, PE
Chief Engineer
Mass DOT Highway Division
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
Attn: Jeffrey Shrimpton



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Motion to close the public hearing and public comment on the traffic poles and signals

Motion by Mr. Mercer

Second by Holly Troiano

Unanimous

Motion by Mr. Okerstrom-Lang:

We approve all the traffic signal designs for the intersections of St. James and Cottage Streets (with the exception of Castle/Bridge intersection). All poles would be unfinished galvanized poles and yellow traffic signals.

We reject the traffic signal design for the intersections of Castle/Bridge and Elm Street intersections because:

1. It is incongruent with the historic landscape of the Town.
2. They obstruct the historic vista of the Town Hall and surrounding historic properties.

The ideal design would be cable poles with traffic lights suspended from side poles at these two intersections. This would have the least impact on the surrounding historic properties.

Second: Ms Syer

Vote 4-1 in favor

Mr. Mercer, yes

Ms Troiano, yes

Ms Syer, yes

Mr. Okerstrom-Lang, yes

Mr. Bailey, no

Motion to close the public hearing Dan Bailey

Second Ms Troiano

All in favor

NEXT MEETING: October 18, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.