

FINAL

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING

FEBRUARY 14, 2000

7:30 P.M. - MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING - HANOVER, NH

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by the Chairman, Brian Walsh. Present were: Brian Walsh, Chairman; Marilyn Black, Vice Chairman; Katherine S. Connolly; John Manchester; Julia Griffin, Town Manager; and members of the public.

Mr. Walsh announced that this meeting was being taped by CATV 6 and that hearing enhancement equipment was available for anyone who wished to use it.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT.

Bob Norman commented that he would like to see the Town of Hanover join the other 71 communities who have so far pledged their support for putting an item on the warrant for Town Meeting dealing with the Land Community Heritage Investment Program. He feels that this represents an important opportunity for New Hampshire to add to its protection of community, conservation and historic places in the State.

Mr. Walsh indicated that this item will be put on the agenda when the Board is discussing the Planning and Zoning and Conservation Commission budgets.

2. INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH BIKEPATH COMMITTEE REGARDING IN-TOWN BICYCLE ROUTE OPTIONS.

Mary Ann Rankin, Chair of the Bikepath Committee, distributed information to the Board depicting the in-town bicycle route options.

Ms. Rankin presented an overview of the Committee's discussions regarding the in-town bicycle route, and oriented the Board to a map of the routes which she displayed. The eastbound route is proposed to come up Main Street and along West Wheelock where there is already a bike lane. It would then turn onto West Street and onto Maple Street; the route would continue, across Main Street and going along East South Street, crossing in front of Howe Library. The Committee proposes to put in a bicycle ramp at this location. It would then come up Sargent Place, turn right onto Lebanon Street, and follow Lebanon Street out to the Co-Op corner.

Explaining the westbound route, Ms. Rankin noted that there are various options. A bicyclist could come back along Lebanon Street from the Co-Op corner, turn right onto Crosby Street, and make a left-hand turn on East Wheelock Street, continuing to West Wheelock Street. Another option would be to go straight on South Park Street, turn left on Summer Street, continue along Crosby Street and out to East Wheelock Street and West Wheelock Street. A third option would be to go straight on South Park Street heading north, make a left-hand westerly turn onto East Wheelock and continue on to West Wheelock.

Mr. Walsh asked what route the Committee preferred. Ms. Rankin answered that they would like to use them all.

Ms. Connolly commented that she understands the State will be building a bicycle lane right up to School Street as part of the Ledyard Bridge Project, and wondered if the route should therefore go up School Street.

Charlie Sullivan stated that members of the Committee rode both of the routes together to get a sense of what they were like, and found that coming up West Street had two advantages. One advantage was that it was a little less steep, and the other was that it was a little wider than School Street.

Scot Drysdale pointed out that the Selectmen had suggested the Committee find multiple routes rather than just concentrate on a single route. As far as treatments go, he noted that there is already a painted line going up West Wheelock, and although there are no bike markings, there is a lane that could be marked for bicycles. At the intersection of West Street and West Wheelock Street, the Committee would suggest a sign with two arrows - one arrow pointing to the right if a bicyclist is going through Town to try to keep people off Main Street, and another pointing straight if a bicyclist was going to the College or the Inn, etc. Mr. Drysdale commented that riding on School Street feels claustrophobic with the parked cars, the narrowness of the street, and the fact that it is fairly busily traveled. He stated that West Street is basically bucolic by comparison as well as not as steep. The Committee felt that there was no need to stripe the pavement at this area or do anything other than indicate that this is the recommended route as it is so lightly traveled. As a bicyclist approaches Maple Street, the Committee suggests that a sign be placed indicating they should take a left turn. Mr. Drysdale pointed out that the Committee's conclusion was that there is no ideal route through Town.

Mr. Norman explained that on South Street the route would continue eastbound. At Currier Place where there is now a stop sign, the Committee felt that a small sign should be attached to that stop sign which indicates that the bicycle route is straight ahead. The Committee feels it is important to try to make sure that the signs for the bicycle route are not large, obtrusive new signs, and wherever possible small signs should be used in conjunction with existing signs. Opposite Sargent Place it was felt that perhaps a new sign or some other imaginative way was needed to make sure that the recommended route turns left at that point; beside the sidewalk there should be a new bicycle lane built which will connect from South Street to Sargent Place. A sign should be located on the stop sign at Lebanon Street to indicate that a right-hand turn is required. The route would then continue on Lebanon Street to Park Street. At the location just beyond Sanborn Lane and Crosby Street, the road is wide enough to have a bicycle lane which is 4 1/2 ft. wide which should be striped and labeled with a bicycle route symbol. The Committee feels that Lebanon Street is wide enough to sustain parking on both sides with a bicycle lane beside the parked cars and two traveled lanes. Mr. Norman pointed out that there are some minor problems near the southeastern end of that street where the high school property comes to an end. The road at this location is a little narrower, and the Committee suggests that the

traveled lane be narrowed to 11 ft. or 10 1/2 ft. to be sure that there is a wide enough bicycle lane beside the parked cars. He added that the Committee recognizes that there is future construction planned in this area.

Mr. Norman noted that Wheelock Street from Park Street all the way to College Street is wide enough to allow for two bicycle lanes and parking on one side. Continuing from this location to the Green the Committee suggested that striped lanes be made which would be wide enough to have a bicycle route symbol on them. In front of the Hopkins Center and the Green the Committee felt that the street is so wide there will probably just be a merger of bicycles and cars. From Main Street heading down the hill there is no bike lane on the north side of the street westbound at the present time, and there are parked cars. The Committee feels that this 50 ft. wide road is sufficiently wide to allow for a bicycle lane beside the parked cars.

Mr. Walsh asked if it would be safer to have a bicycle lane on that hill going down toward the Ledyard Bridge or whether it would be safer not to. He noted that he has gone down that hill many times on a bicycle as well as following bicyclists in his car; he feels that it may be safer if the two are together in traffic rather than the person in the car passing the bicyclist.

Mr. Norman answered that he is more comfortable riding in a lane beside the traffic.

Ms. Rankin noted that the safety standard is that a bicycle lane should be included if there is room on the street, and she feels that it is best to have one.

Mr. Manchester that cars parked in the area between Sargent Place and Lebanon Street make visibility for bicyclists and automobiles worse, and he suggested perhaps removing that one parking spot.

Mr. Norman stated that Crosby Street is about 32 ft. wide for most of the street, and at the present time there is some temporary parking. When the parking garage is utilized the Committee would like to see that temporary parking removed so that bicyclists have a better chance of getting through that area.

Mr. Drysdale explained that the Committee was presenting the various options at the Co-Op corner because that corner has been a problem for bicyclists. An experienced bicyclist coming down from Sand Hill heading toward the Inn and the Green will merge with traffic about halfway down that hill, eventually get over in the left-hand lane and take a left turn at the Co-Op corner as if they were a car. The Committee feels that a less experienced bicyclist would not be skilled or confident enough to do this, and since this route may be used for biking to school, it is not something that the Committee would want to recommend for bicyclists who do not feel comfortable merging with traffic and traveling 25 to 30 mph down a hill with cars in front and behind of them. An option would be to have the bicyclists stop, get off their bike, push the pedestrian button, wait for the pedestrian light to go on and walk across the street, continuing on

Lebanon Street. This is the recommended route for school children, particularly keeping in mind that there will be a crossing guard at that location at the beginning and end of the day.

Mr. Drysdale added that the Committee realized that many people heading toward the Medical School area and the north end of campus will go straight on South Park Street onto North Park. He noted one reason the Committee avoided So. Park Street before is that it is really fairly narrow. He pointed out on the map that along most of the route there is a dirt and gravel shoulder; the Committee questioned if it would be possible to widen the section of South Park Street from Summer Street on up to make it 4 ft. wider with the hope that the center line of the road could be moved over a couple of feet. This would allow a 3 ft. section of paved shoulder on both sides of the road which would be much safer than what is there now. It is the Committee's recommendation to do whatever can be done and to use some of the money that is available to improve the in-town routes.

Ms. Black asked if the Committee would recommend striping the pavement on South Park Street. Mr. Drysdale answered that they would not suggest a bike lane stripe, but rather a stripe that would mark the edge of the road. They basically would like South Park Street to look like North Park Street.

Mr. Sullivan noted that in a number of places, particularly along Crosby and Wheelock Streets, there are drainage grates that are sunk a few inches below the pavement creating a real hazard to bicyclists. The Committee would recommend that all drainage grates be improved to be flush with the pavement. He noted that in places where drainage grates are to be improved or replaced, there is an improved option available which is a drainage grate that goes under a curb rather than being in the surface of the road. This type of grate prevents having to go back each time a street is repaved to adjust the grates properly, and also provides better drainage while being less susceptible to clogging. The downside of these grates is that they do not work very well on steep grades.

Mr. Sullivan referred to a marking from the State of New Hampshire that is used to warn bicyclists of an upcoming grate, and noted that the Committee would recommend these markings.

Mr. Sullivan indicated that another consideration in several areas is traffic lights that change based on detecting the presence of a vehicle. He noted that this can be a problem for bicyclists if the light does not change based on the presence of a bicycle. He pointed out that fortunately most of the detectors in Hanover are the so-called quadruple type which are sensitive to bicycles, but only if the bicycle is exactly in the right spot which is the center line. The Committee recommends that where these types of detectors are located that the pavement be marked with a standard marking which would inform the bicyclist to line their wheels up to trip the traffic light.

For areas where a bicyclist would not want to go out to the center of the lane and block traffic to trip the light, the Committee would recommend putting another loop in the pavement, at a cost of approximately \$3,000

each.

Ms. Rankin noted that additional loops would be required only for routes on which the traffic lights do not automatically turn to green. She added that probably less than 5 traffic lights would be involved.

Mr. Sullivan stated that the Committee's plan involving signage is to utilize small signs to avoid visual clutter. Where possible, existing posts would be used and signs would be posted only to identify where a bicyclist may be unsure of the direction of the route, or where they could continue in two directions.

Regarding pavement markings, Mr. Sullivan indicated that where there is a lane wide enough to be an official bike lane, that is a minimum of 4 ft. but preferably 5 ft., the Committee would recommend putting a bicycle symbol in the lane. Where this is not possible, for example on South Park Street, they would recommend just putting stripes in but not indicating it as a bike lane.

Mr. Walsh stated that his perception of the dangers on South Park Street are the potholes, the grates and the leaves in the fall. He feels that increasing the width will not help these problems, but asked if the Committee wishes to make sure that the surface is a bicycle friendly surface. Ms. Rankin answered that they would really like to push for the gravel being paved and to get the extra width.

Ms. Black suggested that the Selectmen re-open the Park Street design discussions. She noted that the esplanade has never held grass, and suggested that perhaps the curb could be moved back and the esplanade be discontinued to allow for the extra width.

Ms. Griffin recommended having Bill Desch take a look at the situation of the location of the pine trees on South Park Street with regard to putting in more gravel base and paving the shoulder.

Mr. Sullivan agreed with Mr. Walsh about the dangers of the potholes, the drainage grates and the leaves, but he feels that South Park Street currently is too narrow to feel comfortable to bicyclists.

Ms. Black commented that if South Park Street is going to be torn up anyway, now would be the time to add the width and make the other improvements suggested. Ms. Griffin noted that beefing up the gravel shoulder and paving it could be done anytime, not necessarily in conjunction with the work to be done on the street.

Mr. Walsh stated that he feels South Park Street is very important for bicyclists. He added that there are two routes out of town; one is the Ledyard Bridge and the other is Route 10. All Route 10 traffic goes up South Park Street and out onto Route 10.

Hugh Mellert stated that the Committee is aware that there may be some redesign work at the end of Park Street in conjunction with the new housing that Dartmouth College hopes to build. The Committee would urge

the Board to be sure that bicycle friendly changes are made at that corner as that process goes forward.

Ms. Griffin explained that the Town is just about to bring on a traffic engineer to help with the design, and one of the things indicated by the Town is that this engineer will need to be able to focus on bicycle additions at the intersections as well as pedestrian additions.

Mr. Walsh questioned whether the Committee would do better to eliminate the Lebanon Street/Crosby Street route and concentrate on South Park Street, Summer Street and Wheelock Street, defining a set of bicycle friendly routes rather than multiple options.

Ms. Rankin answered that the reason the Committee included Lebanon Street is that bike lanes are possible on both sides of the street. The Committee was attempting to come up with more than one option because people will go more than one way. She feels that there can be more than one bike lane through Town.

Ms. Griffin noted that DOT will probably take one route and stripe it as part of the connection from downtown to the Medical Center. She is not sure if they can be convinced to do all of the pieces; much will depend on when they go out to bid and what kind of prices they get.

Mr. Mellert stated that Mr. Sullivan had discussions with Don Lyford of DOT regarding general improvements through Town. Mr. Lyford had indicated that as long as the improvements were part of the project from Ledyard Bridge to DHMC they would be allowed. It is really just a matter of budget and the bids that are received.

Mr. Walsh recalled that when the Board approved the route from the Co-Op corner to DHMC \$260,000 was to be spent out of \$280,000 leaving \$20,000 for improvements to the route through Town. Ms. Griffin will provide a summary to the Board of the amounts available to spend for the Town match and Federal money.

Ms. Griffin stated that if the Board agrees with the Committee's proposal, some items may have to be prioritized depending on what the bids come in at. She noted that unfortunately at the present time bids are coming in on the high end because of the economy. She estimated that the improvements discussed including the signal loop detectors, paving the additional shoulder width on South Park Street, new pavement markings and signage would cost approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000. Mr. Norman stated that the Committee would appreciate having a chance to comment the priorities once the bid figures were received.

Ms. Griffin indicated that there is nothing in the proposed budget to do any of this work that would still meet the zero percent tax rate target. She added that \$40,000 to \$60,000 would represent a 1 1/2% tax rate increase.

Ms. Rankin suggested that one other way to squeeze out some money would be to move the two off-road bike lanes to the Hospital back onto Medical Center Drive. This would save approximately \$70,000.

Ms. Griffin noted that the downside to moving the off-road portion of the bikepath back onto Medical Center Drive is that DOT has already done all of the survey for the off-road plan that was recommended by the Committee to the Board. She added that it would be necessary to sit down with the Hospital with regard to this change. Ms. Griffin indicated that the Hospital preferred the off-road option, viewing it as more of a pedestrian friendly alternative as opposed to simply a bicycle friendly alternative.

Ms. Griffin suggested that a possible way to proceed might be to let DOT know that there are some enhancements that the Committee would like to add to the in-town piece of the bicycle route, and ask them to work up estimated costs. It could then be determined how much could fit into the current proposal that has the off-road segments on Medical Center Drive, and then look at what money is still needed and talk with DOT about what possibilities exist. She indicated that it may be possible to pull some of the pieces into the paving budget, such as South Park Street for example, and beef up the pavement marking budget by \$4,000 or \$5,000 to try to accommodate the additional pavement markings, or possibly phase it over two years. She added that pavement markings are updated annually, so it would not be difficult to add in the bicycle stencil.

Mr. Walsh asked for a discussion of priorities of the bicycle route. Ms. Rankin stated that the Committee had placed South Park Street improvements on the bottom of the list only because they were not sure how the Board would feel about widening the road and moving the center line, etc. As she recalled, the Committee felt that the priorities would be coming along West Street and Maple Street, the ramp in front of the library, Sargent Street, and the striping along Lebanon Street.

Mr. Walsh stated that from a public safety point of view, he feels that South Park Street would be the number one priority. He feels it is the least safe of all the routes proposed.

Ms. Griffin stated that beefing up the shoulder and paving the west side of South Park Street would be something that could be done by the Town's labor force. This would allow the center line to be moved a little to the west allowing more width on the east side of South Park Street. While this would not allow a true bicycle lane, it would feel safer to bicyclists as well as provide a demarcated area.

Ms. Black added that the storm drains are the worst on the east side of South Park Street, and should be factored into the cost.

Mr. Walsh stated that he would love to see Bill Desch, Peter Kulbacki and Keith Southworth work with the Committee to develop a much safer south to north route on South Park Street without spending a lot of money; if this requires conversations with the neighbors on that street, he feels that this option should be considered.

3. COALITION COMMUNITIES UPDATE.

Ms. Griffin updated the Board on the financial condition of the coalition communities. The amount of \$160,000 has now been received, and she would estimate that this amount will increase after March town meetings. Portsmouth has indicated that they would love to have Hanover send a letter to the coalition members simply urging them to consider sending funding.

Mr. Walsh stated that he is not against Hanover sending a letter to every city and town in the state, but has trouble sending it just to the coalition communities. He feels that this is an issue for every town in the State; he does not wish to focus on just those communities who are now in the coalition or donor group.

Ms. Connolly pointed out that the communities that are not contributing to this pool have a great interest in continuing not to contribute. Mr. Walsh answered that it is important to get the view out that the current system is a debt system, and that ultimately all communities will end up sending money to the State.

Ms. Griffin explained that originally the invitation to join the coalition was just sent to donor communities, but several communities joined that were not donors. However, most of them were on the edge and felt if the statewide property tax went up at all they would be shifted into the donor category.

Ms. Black indicated that she feels Hanover should join the bill of interpleader because she likes the idea of putting the money in escrow. This will make the deficit much bigger, which means the legislature will have to act much sooner. She noted that waiting for the litigation could take ten years. Ms. Griffin explained that the motion is already drafted and will be filed by the attorneys. The cost to Hanover would probably be no more than \$1,000.

Ms. Black stated that she would be willing to fund the bill of interpleader in the amount of \$5,000. She pointed out that the current lawsuit does not say that the State does not want a property tax; it simply says the assessment is wrong.

Ms. Griffin explained that the interpleader is a motion that essentially asks the Rockingham Superior Court to escrow the donor payments pending resolution of the class action suit. It is the legal alternative to not sending the money to the State.

Ms. Black noted that in the meantime if the State does not receive the anticipated funds, they will be unable to fund what they said they were going to fund. She feels that this is a very important step to take.

Mr. Manchester asked if the State would simply float a bond. Ms. Griffin answered that they could float State money, tighten expenditures, or use surplus. The State Treasurer would have to advise the legislature and the executive branch as to what their alternatives would be if the money was set aside.

Ms. Connolly noted that at the meetings she attended with Mr. Walsh and Ms. Griffin it appeared as if there would be a six month period to deal with Superior Court and perhaps two years to deal with the Supreme Court, rather than the 10 years that has been mentioned. Ms. Black indicated that no one knows how quickly the case will move through the court system.

Ms. Griffin stated that if the Board were to direct her to send Hanover's money to the court for escrow under this process it would come out of the legal budget and not require an appropriation.

Mr. Manchester expressed concerns about the necessity to hire more people to lead this effort. Ms. Griffin explained that she does not believe that a staff person would need to be hired. She added that the interpleader motion would have to be answered fairly quickly by the courts because the deadline to send checks to the State is March 15th.

Ms. Black MADE THE MOTION that the Town of Hanover join the bill of interpleader. Mr. Manchester SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO JOIN THE BILL OF INTERPLEADER.

It was the consensus of the Board, unless something else happens, to not take any more action in this matter until the bill of interpleader is taken care of.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS.

Ms. Griffin reported that she is putting the finishing touches on the text of the budget, and will have a copy available for the Board's review shortly. She noted that the Finance Committee has been invited to attend the Selectmen's meeting on February 28th.

Ms. Griffin added that she would like to set up a tour for Board members at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. There are a number of capital improvements being recommended for that facility, and she feels they are significant enough that the Board needs to see the plant in its current condition and look at specific areas where improvements are being recommended.

5. SELECTMEN'S REPORTS.

Ms. Connolly

Ms. Connolly reported that the Planning Board is working on a couple of non-Dartmouth College subdivisions as well as zoning amendments.

She also reported that the Transportation Advisory Committee will meet at the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Council on Tuesday, February 15th. This meeting will be attended by Bob Norman.

Ms. Connolly also reported that she had been attending meetings of the parking group and the Downtown Visioning Committee. She noted that both committees are very interesting and lively, and a fair amount of progress has been made by both groups.

Ms. Black

Ms. Black reported that the new parking pay station is in action at the Marshall Lot.

She also reported that the Pond Party was extremely well attended, and that Bill Young and his wife deserve a lot of credit for a wonderful event.

Mr. Manchester

Mr. Manchester reported that the Planning Board will be hearing an application regarding Dartmouth College's request to modify chillers and lights.

Mr. Manchester also reported on a recent Howe Library meeting that dealt with non-resident fees. At that meeting it was agreed to leave non-resident fees as they currently are. He also indicated that Stan Brown will be at the Howe Library on March 5th discussing rare books and determining the value of any books which people may wish to bring in.

Mr. Manchester indicated that Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky will be at Bentley Theater on April 9th at 4:00.

Mr. Walsh

Mr. Walsh reported that the recent League of Women Voters forum regarding Town matters went well. He also reported that the Finance Committee of both Hanover and Dresden met with the School Board. He added that Selectmen have received information regarding the actions of the Finance Committee relative to the school budgets.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: JANUARY 31, 2000

Ms. Black MADE THE MOTION to approve the minutes of January 31, 2000, as amended. Ms. Connolly SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 31, 2000, AS AMENDED.

7. OTHER BUSINESS.

Ms. Griffin displayed samples of other towns' annual reports. She noted that Mary Munter, a volunteer from the League of Women Voters, has been interested in how best to communicate information in a Town report. She came up with a revised format in terms of organizing sections of the

report. Ms. Munter also suggested changing the size of the annual report to 8 1/2" x 11". This larger size would allow more to be done with page setup and make it nice to read from the standpoint of the visual impact of the document. Ms. Griffin stated that there would not be an appreciable difference in cost to the Town with this larger size.

Ms. Griffin stated that she has talked with the Municipal Association, and the bulk of Town reports today are 8 1/2" x 11".

Mr. Walsh noted that the question is which size is more likely to be read, and he feels that the 8 1/2" x 11" with larger type is more likely to be read than what is currently published.

Ms. Griffin noted that Ms. Munter's recommendation was that the larger size, especially if it uses color photographs, stands out when it comes in the mail. Her goal is to create a document that people actually read.

It was the consensus of the Board to have the Town Report published this year in the larger size, 8 1/2" x 11".

8. ADJOURNMENT.

Ms. Black MADE THE MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Connolly SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

Ms. Black MADE THE MOTION to go to non-public session to discuss a matter which may affect the reputation of an individual. Ms. Connolly SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO GO TO NON-PUBLIC SESSION TO DISCUSS A MATTER WHICH MAY AFFECT THE REPUTATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL.

SUMMARY

- 1. Ms. Black MADE THE MOTION that the Town of Hanover join the bill of interpleader. Mr. Manchester SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO JOIN THE BILL OF INTERPLEADER.**
- 2. Ms. Black MADE THE MOTION to approve the minutes of January 31, 2000, as amended. Ms. Connolly SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 31, 2000, AS AMENDED.**
- 3. Ms. Black MADE THE MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Connolly SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
- 4. Ms. Black MADE THE MOTION to go to non-public session to discuss a matter which may affect the reputation of an individual. Ms. Connolly SECONDED THE MOTION and the Board of Selectmen VOTED UNANIMOUSLY TO GO TO NON-PUBLIC SESSION TO DISCUSS A MATTER WHICH MAY AFFECT THE REPUTATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL.**

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The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


John Colligan, Secretary

These minutes were taken and transcribed by Nancy A. Richards.