

# TOWN OF HARVARD

---

## MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE



**Meeting Minutes** – 20 January 2011, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM, Town Hall Meeting Room

### Attendees

Marie Sobalvarro, Pete Jackson, Lucy Wallace, Willie Wickman, Ron Ostberg (chair); Bill Johnson, Ron Ricci, and members of COA Board (visitors); Tim Bragan

1. Update on meetings with FinCom Capital Planning and Investment Committee (CPIC).  
Next CPIC meeting will be on 1/27 before ours. Ron and Marie will attend.
2. Ron gave an update on his meeting with the Park and Recreation Commission.
3. Bill Johnson was invited to present his proposal re moving the senior center to the Old Library, including facility and site limitations and possible methods to correct.
  - To limit through traffic on Fairbank St (thereby making it safer for senior parking) suggested making it one-way and extending Littleton Rd to Ayer Rd (across the Library common).
  - Elevator and drop off could be located in front of building.
  - As need for space increases, seniors could relocate to Hildreth House; in the meantime it would be available to seniors for “secondary or summer use”.
  - Also commented that he did not believe a cultural center would be viable in the Old Library.
4. Questions and comments were taken from the MBC members and audience.
  - No compelling reason to use Old Library for senior center, especially as cost to renovate for seniors would be more expensive than cost of renovating and adding onto Hildreth House;
  - Can't support recommendation that is only a 6-8 year fix
  - Continuity of space for seniors is very important. Hildreth House answers most needs and could be expanded in the future (which Old Library can't be) should the need for more space arise.
5. Pete made a motion that no further action be taken on Bill's proposal. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.
6. Ron reviewed the proposed site work/road redesign around the Town Hall to accommodate an addition and provide a public way to Hildreth House.
7. Committee discussed proposed funding request to take to CPIC and ATM in April.
8. Committee discussed schedule for completing report to deliver to BOS at February 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Attachments: GPR memo of January 18; e-mail from Bill Johnson of January 12



Goldsmith, Prest & Ringwall, Inc.



Goldsmith, Prest & Ringwall, Inc.

Memorandum

To: Ron Ostberg
From: Matthew Bombaci, PE
Date: January 18, 2011
Subject: Littleton Road Extension to Ayer Road
Copy: GPR File# 101068

Executive Summary:

GPR has examined the possibility of an extension of Littleton Road to the west to intersect directly with Ayer Road at the Harvard Town Common. Due to problems meeting the MassHighway and Town of Harvard requirements for alignment, grading and potentially with sight distance, we do not believe, in our professional judgment, that such an extension is advisable.

Below are details on some of the identified constraints associated with extending Littleton Road to Ayer Road. Note, there may be other constraints as well; GPR has not done an exhaustive investigation of this idea.

Intersection Grading:

MassHighway regulations require a maximum 5% grade for 60 feet (from the intersection) to the end point of any vertical curve. The effective length of the 5% grade would actually be the 60 feet plus half the distance of the vertical curve, making the effective length somewhat over 100 feet from the intersection with Ayer Road.

The Harvard Subdivision Rules & Regulations require that the intersection have a maximum 3% grade for a minimum of 75' from the intersection. This would be the standard that we would be held to by the Planning Board, assuming approval would be required under the Subdivision Control Law.

judgment, given the volume of traffic on Ayer Road, and the location of this intersection on the Town Common.

In both cases, the criteria require raising the road by placement of fill at the end of Littleton Road prior to the intersection with Ayer Road, and significant re-grading and reconstruction of Littleton Road for a distance of several hundred feet.

Intersection Separation and Sight Distance:

The Harvard Subdivision Rules & Regulations also require that intersections on the same side of the street be separated by 550 feet (centerline-to-centerline). It would not be possible to meet this requirement with the Ayer Road/Still River Road intersection.

MassHighway requires the distance between intersections to be 200 feet, and defines this distance as the distance from sideline-to-sideline (of the right-of-ways) as opposed to centerline-to-centerline. This would require a somewhat significant change in the alignment of Littleton Road, pushing it some 30' uphill (north), which would require using land of #3 Fairbanks Street.

We also have a concern that an intersection at this point on Ayer Road may not meet sight distance requirements, but have not explored that possibility. However, the Harvard Rules & Regulations require "corner sight distance at intersections" of "streets with through traffic" to be 500', which is unlikely at this location looking to the north on Ayer Road.

Attached Sketch:

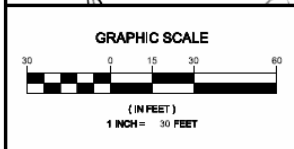
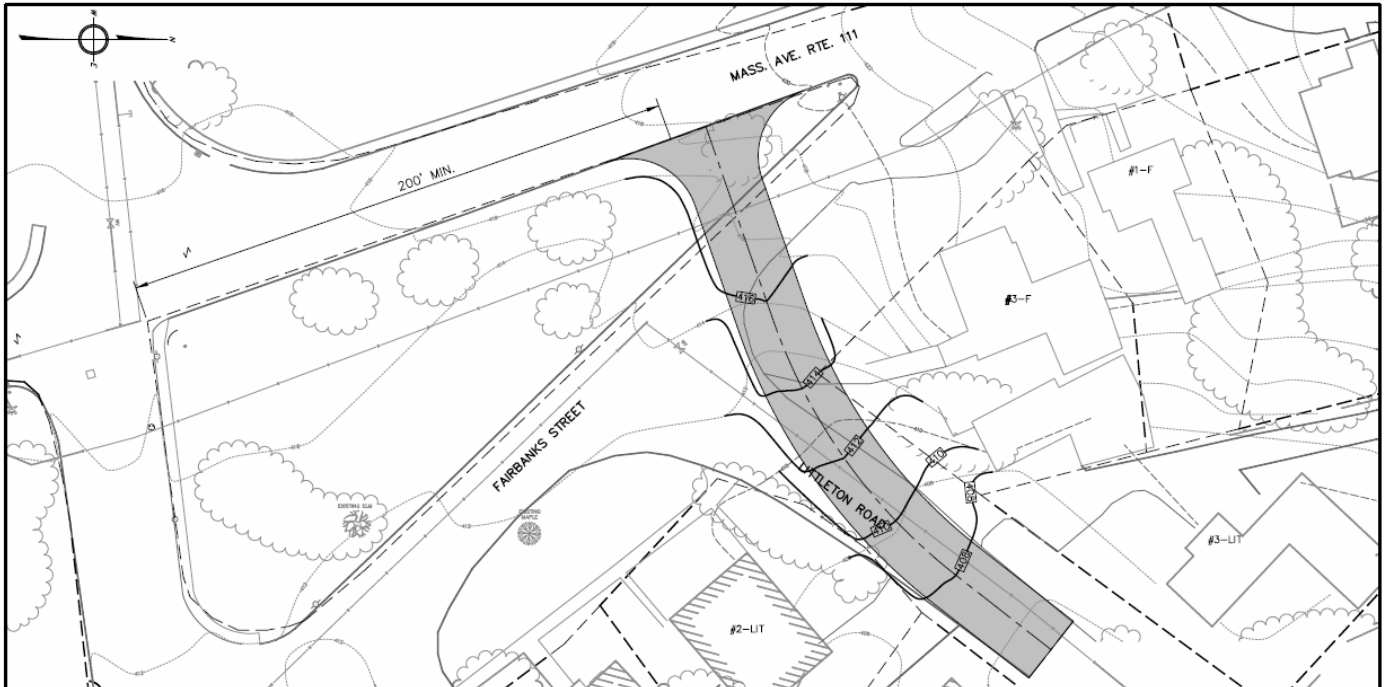
The attached sketch shows a conceptual extension of Littleton Road to meet the MassHighway 200 foot separation distance from the existing intersection of Ayer Road and Still River Road to the south. To meet this requirement, the road needs to be realigned with a horizontal curve. The realignment requires that the road extend onto the property of #3 Fairbanks Street, as shown.

The sketch also shows site grading to meet the Harvard Subdivision Rules & Regulations intersection grading requirement of 3% for the first 75 feet. This would necessitate 2± of fill 75' from the proposed intersection. The amount of required fill would taper down to no fill 215 feet from the proposed intersection - as the roadway grade is increased to 6.8%± over this section. Fill would also be required on either side of Littleton Road to raise the surrounding grades to the new Littleton Road elevation.

It should also be noted that with the intersection location proposed, the grades of Ayer Road immediately to the north are between 6% and 7%. These grades would not comply with the MassHighway requirement that a maximum 5% grade be held for 60' on the major street as well. Again, the profile of Ayer Road would need to be re-graded to meet this requirement.

CIVIL & STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING - LAND PLANNING - LAND SURVEYING
39 Main Street, Suite 301, Ayer, MA 01432 - Phone (978) 772-1590 - Fax (978) 772-1591
info@gpr-inc.com www.gpr-inc.com

CIVIL & STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING - LAND PLANNING - LAND SURVEYING
39 Main Street, Suite 301, Ayer, MA 01432 - Phone (978) 772-1590 - Fax (978) 772-1591
info@gpr-inc.com www.gpr-inc.com



GPR logo and contact information for Goldsmith, Prest & Ringwall, Inc. including address, phone, fax, and website.

Prepared for: Town of Harvard, 13 Ayer Road, Harvard, MA 01451. Described by: MKB, Checked by: CRG. Date: January 18, 2011.

Project: Littleton Road Extension Sketch, Town Center Harvard, MA. Project number: 101068, page 1 of 1.

FILE: \\V01068\GPR\CONCEPT\LITTLETON ROAD SKETCH.dwg 01-20-11 9:30:48 AM - LAYOUT 1001

You forwarded this message on 1/12/2011 8:18 PM.

From: Bill Johnson [bill.johnson@harvardmass.net]  
To: Ron Ostberg  
Cc: Marie Sobalvarro; Peter Jackson; Peter Warren; Lucy Wallace; Doug Coots; wille widman; Maggie Green; Tim Clark; Tim Bragan; Ron Ricci; George McKenna; Bob Thurston; Bill Johnson  
Subject: Re: An Alternative Proposal

Sent: Wed 1/12/2011 6:20 PM

Thanks, Ron, for summarizing our discussion. Let me take the opportunity to clarify a few points before you meet tomorrow to discuss the idea:

- (1) Giving the COA *immediate* and accessible space relief for the next 6-8 years, and (2) addressing the accessibility and deferred maintenance issues at Town Hall are the two highest priorities for the Town and "*immediate must haves*". Expanding Town Hall is the next priority, and I am personally ambivalent as to whether this is combined with the fixes to the current Town Hall in a single construction project, or spread out into two distinct projects. Restoring the 2nd floor of Town Hall is clearly a "*want to have*", but I believe a clear commitment to grants and fundraising to do this restoration makes it reasonably "saleable" to the Town.
- As to the cost differences for housing the COA in the library vs. Hildreth House, I have no data, only an intuition. It seems to me that the site work at the library is far simpler (adding a small amount of pavement to the existing Fairbank Road and altering the curb cuts for Littleton Road) than at Hildreth (building a new entrance road and grading/paving parking lots from scratch). And the much smaller footprint 2-story addition to the existing library (1/10 the size of the proposed Hildreth addition footprint) should more than compensate for the stick frame vs. masonry construction. What I don't know is what internal retrofit is needed compared to that of Hildreth House (and clearly renovation is more expensive than new construction). My gut tells me that the work at the old library is cheaper, but I am willing to let the construction estimators tell us the real numbers. The more important perspective is that *we have to make the accessibility and parking investments in the old library anyway no matter what its future use, because it is useless the way it is now*. Once those investments are made, let's put our highest priority use in first -- the COA.
- Since we would be deferring further investment in Hildreth House for 6-8 years, its only marginal cost to the Town is insurance and the cost of utilities for when it is used. This low cost is worth bearing to preserve the building to:
  - Provide a transitional overlap for seniors that have strong emotional ties to HH to continue to have a weekly social meeting as the core COA program is transferred and expanded within the old library.
  - Provide space for some cultural/community activities
  - Preserve the option for a new and enhanced COA center as the size and needs are better understood 6-8 years from now.
- The money we would save on doing 2 building investments vs. 3 over the next 6-8 years gives us the opportunity to provide additional operating funding to the COA so that we don't make them "building rich" and "program poor". They need instructors/coaches, not more space, to expand activities, since small group sizes are actually more preferable. We could also use some of this money to fund more work opportunities for seniors to reduce their property taxes (a hot issue for the seniors right now).
- When the COA realizes the growth in programs and participants that they are predicting, there will be a compelling argument to build a future center that meets their needs for the next 10-20 years. And then we can offer the library as a Community Center to the Town, with all the necessary parking, accessibility, and upgrades in place, and justified by the original (and far more compelling) COA need.

I don't agree with Ron's suggestion to wait a year and "see what happens", because nurturing cultural programs with an expansive space while choking the COA programs with a restrictive space seems inappropriate given what I believe are our civic and moral imperatives. We know the COA can productively use the library space now with the programs they have, and need such additional space "yesterday". And the Town has waited long enough for a recommendation/decision....

The bottom line -- my goal is not to impede the *what* of a wonderful overall vision for both our Town services and our buildings, but rather to suggest a *how* that will present it in "swallowable" pieces to the Town. We still get a Community Center, but after we serve our more immediate needs for the COA and Town Hall services. In the meantime, we have **LOTS** of available space in our churches, schools, and even HH to foster an expanded set of cultural and community activities.

Good luck with your discussion tomorrow!