

Route 109 Redesign Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 6, 2011 – 7:00 PM

Medway Senior Center

76 Oakland Street

Present: Paul Yorkis, Chairman, Route 109 Redesign Committee; Susy Affleck-Childs, Planning and Economic Development Coordinator; David D’Amico, Assistant Director, Department of Public Services; Selectman Andrew Espinosa, Town Administrator Suzanne Kennedy; Other Committee Members: Matt Buckley, Peter Cooper, Dan Hooper, Chan Rogers, and Anne Sherry. Pam Benjamin was absent due to illness.

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

At 7:00 PM Chairman Paul Yorkis called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes:

Committee members had received meeting minutes of March 2, 2011 by email. The committee took time to review them, and several corrections were made. Mr. Hooper moved the committee approve the minutes as revised; seconded by Mr. Rogers. No further discussion. Motion carried. Ms. Galliardt agreed to email the revised minutes to committee members, minus the line numbers.

Status Report on Agreement between the Town and GPI:

Mr. Howie stated everything is in place, and that the contract had been accepted by the Board of Selectmen.

Mission Statement: Mr. D’Amico highlighted the revisions he made since the last meeting. After giving the committee time to read the statement, **Mr. D’Amico moved that the committee accept the Mission Statement as revised; Ms. Sherry seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.**

Update – Status of Federal Funding:

Mr. Yorkis updated the committee on progress. He stated that a letter has been submitted to Mass DOT that Medway has done everything it needs to do with regard to contract with GPI. At a future Board of Selectmen meeting there will be a letter to David Mueller, Executive Director, Mass DOT, asking that the project be put on the TIP list. Once done, similar letters from Spilka, Dykema and vallee will be sent in support.

Public Kick-Off Meeting:

Regarding April 27th public meeting, Mr. Howie stated they [GPI] are not as far along as they would like and asked if the meeting could be moved out by a couple of weeks. Discussion followed, and a revised meeting date of Wednesday, May 11, was suggested. Mr. Howie expressed concern that there are lots

of little things to finish up and didn't want to miss anything. Mr. Rogers agreed, stating it should not be rushed as this is a critical point in preparation. Discussion followed on when Boston MPO will meet [maybe August], federal funding, reaching the 25% point, other target dates. Selectman Espinosa cautioned that residents will feel pressured if they do not have adequate time to process the project. Ms. Sherry, speaking as a business person, stated some business owners are very interested in this project while others have no idea it is happening. Mr. Diaz stated GPI will go to the public meeting with one or two conceptual plans, simply to get input from residents and business owners. Mr. Yorkis stated there will be small meetings with some business owners this week. Mr. Howie stated he had put together a preliminary schedule of how meetings would progress, and feels August is a very aggressive target time to reach the 25% point. Selectman Espinosa suggested staying with the original meeting date in order to get input in a timely fashion, as the plans would no doubt continue to evolve. Town Administrator Kennedy asked what drives amendments to the TIP list, and what would the basic procedure be? Mr. Howie responded that amendments happen periodically due to funding changes, project cost updates, etc.

Responding to a question from Selectman Espinosa, Mr. Howie stated GPI was essentially working without a contract until last Monday, and GPI did not feel it could not give as much time to the project that might be required without confirmation of being awarded the work. Mr. Yorkis stated he had felt uncomfortable asking GPI to meet with property owners without a signed contract in place. Mr. Buckley suggested this particular discussion be suspended until after the committee looked at the plans. Mr. Howie stated the plans feature general updates on the three-lane area, responding to comments submitted at the last meeting.

Mr. Yorkis stated he met with Charles River Bank, Medway Shopping Center, Dry Goods Shopping Center, and some Plaza shopowners, all along one side of Route 109. There was a positive response, and all are willing to work with the committee.

Responding to a question from Mr. D'Amico, Mr. Diaz stated they will try to get the traffic counts done in the next couple of weeks. He anticipated that the shopping center would be difficult to count, so will do Highland, Main, Holliston and Winthrop. The Shaws/Walgreens area is important as that may be where the signals will be coordinated. Existing data is from 2008-9, but Mass Highway does not allow data more than two years old.

At this time, the committee looked over the updated plans.

Regarding the Intersection of Highland/Main/109, Mr. Howie asked why Highland was proposed as a one-way. Selectman Espinosa stated this is the kind of public input that is very helpful prior to design decisions. Mr. Diaz stated two versions can be presented. Discussion followed on left turns, traffic bottleneck, possibility of traffic light to streamline cars, and elimination of the proposed island. Mr. Howie stated they have placed sidewalk along both sides for the entire length of project. The landscape firm will work on amenities such as trees at a later date. Mr. Howie reviewed the changes at the intersection. Mr. Buckley stated creation of two lanes will encourage folks to attempt speeding to get around slower traffic. Discussion followed regarding width of lanes and shoulders, maintaining heart of historic town center, library, church, etc.

Regarding the Choate Park area, Mr. Yorkis stated the owner of the old mill is very interested in this project. The owner plans to further develop the property for both business and residential uses, and did not want changes that would be impacted or derailed by the road project, i.e., new signage might be

impacted by new sidewalks, other change decreases square footage of area for signage, plus driveway concerns. Mr. Buckley stated the speed of drivers coming down the road to turn left into the park can be dicey. Mr. Howie stated GPI would like to realign entrance for safer access, though they were not planning a left turn lane. Mr. Diaz stated they did not want it to become cut-through so traffic restrictions may be necessary, and suggested there may not be enough left-turn traffic to warrant a special lane. Special events could have police detail which would alleviate congestion.

There was brief discussion of lowering the grade on the road from Lincoln to Winthrop. Abutters may have concerns but they do not have sufficient information or expertise to understand particulars of such a change. Mr. Cooper stated that a change in the road grade may affect utilities, which will impact residents in the area.

Regarding the Winthrop Street intersection, Mr. Yorkis stated there are no sidewalks on Winthrop Street leading to Cassidy Fields. Mr. Howie stated that area is not part of this project, but certainly something the Town could do at a later date. It is a length of about 150 yards. Responding to a question from Ms. Sherry, Mr. Howie stated traffic counts, number and frequency of accidents, etc., determine where traffic lights be placed. Mr. Diaz stated the underground work such as conduits can be done while the road project is underway, which saves having to open the road again later. The equipment cost would be approximately \$200,000-300,000 for the equipment. He believes the traffic count will support the need.

Mr. Diaz reviewed changes to Main Street with sidewalk on both sides, three traffic lanes, and possible traffic signal at mall. He suggested two signals might be better, one at the end of mall near the coffee shop and restaurant, and the other signal down by gas station, servicing The Rugged Bear, Papa Gino's, and egress from gas station. It was suggested that modification of driveways to dentist and hair shop across street to create centralized drives that would coincide with traffic signals. The undeveloped parcel by Papa Gino's can use small drive (right turn only in and out) as well as signaled entrance. Mr. Howie stated DOT needs to be in the loop soon if we are proposing two signals. Discussion followed. Location of driver-accessible post office box could be across the street from the post office. Mr. Hooper stated that the Pond Street intersection is not overly troublesome now, but residents can expect it to get worse in time.

Regarding plantings, property owners already spoken with are amenable to those, but most likely don't want to lose any parking in order to accommodate plantings. Mr. Yorkis stated he made owners aware that increased business development is a good thing as it increases taxes paid to the Town, which trickles down to residents in the form of services. He also stressed that more commercial enterprises may help spread out the tax burden.

Ms. Sherry, as property owner, Charles River Bank, expressed concern for losing trees at the Holliston Street intersection. Mr. Howie responded that easements will be necessary along the side, about 10 feet in width. Mr. Yorkis expressed concern for the Chinese restaurant and the limited parking already there, and did not want to penalize their business by amending road. Discussion followed on the tree canopy over the walkway, proximity of new roadway possibly too close to wetlands, ADA compliance for sidewalk at Chinese restaurant. Mr. Diaz reminded the committee the landscape architect will take a look at all those factors. He noted decisions also depend on discussion with DOT regarding capacity of the intersection.

At this time the committee returned to discussion on changing the date for the public meeting. Mr. Diaz suggested waiting to choose a date until the meetings with DOT on Tuesday, April 12. Ms. Affleck-Childs reminded the committee that at least three weeks are necessary to publicize it to residents. Discussion followed. Public meeting set for Wed. May 4.

Mr. Diaz requested square footage information for all businesses along both sides of the road, particularly in the shopping areas. Ms. Affleck-Childs agreed to send it to him.

Ms. Sherry stated the Economic Development Committee will be meeting on April 13. Mr. Yorkis suggested inviting as many business owners as possible. Ms. Sherry stated the EDC will actively reach out to everyone in area, providing an opportunity for business owners to look at the plans with more of business perspective. Ms. Affleck-Childs will send out a hard copy of the meeting notice to business owners on Thursday, April 7. Ms. Sherry stated she will make phone calls to alert them of the opportunity. Ms. Sherry continued, stating the EDC does not necessarily have representation from this particular area so having owners in is crucial. She stated the meeting will be held at Medway High school, Room 138. The meeting will be recorded as part of the information required as to public outreach.

Mr. Yorkis stated if the meeting is successful with Mass DOT, the public meeting should be on Wednesday, May 4. If the meeting is not successful, with huge obstacles, he would prefer to regroup with committee.

After discussion, the next committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, April 27, noting that the meeting could change subject to the result of the May 13 meeting with DOT. Ms. Affleck-Childs agreed to reserve the Senior Center for the 27th, and Mr. Yorkis will cancel the April 27 booking with the high school and reschedule it for May 4.

Action items: Ms. Affleck-Childs will send out an electronic copy of the Economic Development Committee notice to committee members. Mr. Howie will send out updated plans electronically, specifically, the as-is version with today's date.

At 10:15 PM Mr. Hooper moved to adjourn; Mr. Buckley seconded. No discussion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Galliardt
Night Board Secretary