

TOWN OF STOW
Lower Village Sub-Committee

Minutes of the May 13, 2006, Lower Village Sub-Committee Meeting.

Present: Committee Members: Don McPherson, Bruce Fletcher, Russ Willis, Karen Kelleher and Barbara Sipler

Associate Member: Phil Moseley

Also Present – Approximately 30 residents were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM.

At 10:30 AM, Don McPherson opened the meeting with thanks to:

- Linda DiStafano, CK Realty Investments for providing the space (Faxon Professional Building) and refreshments for this meeting.
- Jim Basford of Family Federal Savings Bank for providing refreshments and organizing the Lower Village Merchants in participating in the Lower Village Spring Festival.
- Stow Garden Club for allowing us the opportunity to piggyback onto their annual Plant Sale event for the Lower Village Festival.
- Members of the Stow Planning Board
- Members of the Lower Village Sub-Committee Members

Traffic Study Presentation

Gary Hebert of Fay Spofford and Thorndike (FST) presented an update on the Lower Village Traffic Study, which is based on input from the Planning Board and the Lower Village Sub-Committee. At the end of the presentation, Gary Hebert played a short video showing how a modern roundabout operates.

Comments and questions from the public:

Question – (Rich Presti) During the presentation, Gary Hebert mentioned that a modern roundabout is feasible for peak traffic up to 1800 vehicles. What is the current peak traffic?

Answer – (Gary Hebert) Peak traffic is now between 1,100 and 1,200, and 400 to 500 during off peak hours. It is projected that 15 years out, Lower Village will still be below 1,800. It will work better during the day to allow for side traffic to get onto Route 117.

Question – How long will it take to construct the modern roundabout?

Answer – (Gary Hebert) Approximately 6 months. Traffic flow can be maintained during construction.

Question – Has any consideration been given to cyclists?

Answer - (Gary Hebert) There is no plan for a bike lane. Cyclists would share the road. If the Town wants to create a bike lane, it would have to add width to the road. Barbara Sipler noted that the Lower Village Sub-Committee is concerned about maintaining the Common. It is important to recognize the Common as a Heritage landscape. It identifies the village. She also noted that three of the original homes are still in the Lower Village.

Comment– Bill Roop said he is a strong supporter of slowing traffic down through a business area and supports the efforts for creating a village and historic presence.

Question – (Bill Roop) Are there any statistics on people seeking alternative routes to avoid a roundabout?

Answer – (Gary Hebert) – A decent alternative would have to exist. In this case, there are not a lot of options.

Comment – I am impressed with the presentation on how to alleviate the traffic conditions. I am unimpressed with the study as far as the issue of bike traffic.

Question – Has any thought been given to sidewalks along Pompositticut Street connecting to the sidewalks in Maynard?

Answer – Don McPherson responded that Pompositticut Street is beyond the charge of the Lower Village Sub-Committee. He will look into it.

Question – Why is the Lower Village Sub-Committee not charged with looking at sidewalks?

Answer – Don McPherson responded that the Lower Village Sub-Committee and Planning Board have been instrumental in the creation of pathways and a standard streetscape in the Lower Village by working with developers and property owners. For example:

1. A pathway was created from Meeting House to the Shopping Center.
2. The Planning Board and Lower Village Sub-Committee worked closely with the developers of Faxon Farm on the streetscape including sidewalks.
3. The Planning Board and Lower Village Sub-Committee worked closely with the owner of the Stow House of Pizza for construction of a new sidewalk along Route 117, as well as relocating the access drive.
4. The Planning Board and Lower Village Sub-Committee worked closely with the developer for the Lanes End Subdivision for construction of a trail from Lane's End to Route 117.
5. The Lower Village Sub-Committee's plan is for a standard streetscape with sidewalks on both sides of Route 117, as well as pedestrian refuge islands.

Comment – Sidewalks are not suitable for cyclists.

Comment – Speed on Pompositticut Street is bad. Sidewalks would encourage additional business from Maynard to the Lower Village.

Question – Request that the Committee's charge be expanded to include sidewalks along Pompositticut Street.

Answer – Planning Board Member Ernie Dodd noted that the Planning Board has a fund for construction of sidewalks and are looking for volunteers to help create a plan. Karen Kelleher, Planning Coordinator asked those that are interested to provide their email address on the sign-up sheet.

Question - What is the cost for improvements shown in the presentation?

Answer – Gary Hebert said he estimates the cost at approximately \$1.4 million to \$1.6 million. Construction of a bike way would be approximately an additional \$200,000.00 to \$250,000.00.

Don McPherson said that the Lower Village Sub-Committee discussed the possibility of bringing an implementation plan to a fall town meeting, but have not discussed it with the Planning Board yet.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Kelleher
Member