

TOWN OF STOW
Lower Village Sub-Committee

Minutes of the October 24, 2007, Lower Village Sub-Committee Meeting.

Present: Committee Members: Don McPherson, Laura Spear, Russ Willis, Barbara Sipler,
Lucille King and Karen Kelleher
Associate Member: Phil Moseley
Selectman Steve Dungan
Highway Supt. Mike Clayton
Police Chief Mark Trefry

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

Reviewed Action Items

Fence Donation

Don McPherson spoke with Bill Roop to let him know about the error in the newspaper that stated Faxon Farm was donating a sidewalk. Don confirmed that the agreement was that they will install a fence required by the Decision for Faxon Farm, in a location elsewhere in Lower Village.

Fence Specifications

Don McPherson recommended that fence specifications be changed from 8' posts to 6' posts. Karen Kelleher noted at the last meeting members talked about a 7' post. Mike Clayton said that he and Bruce Fletcher spoke and looked at existing fences in the Lower Village and determined that a 7' fence post would be best. Laura Spear said the concern was how deep to bury the post. Mike Clayton and Bruce Fletcher thought 2' was too shallow and therefore they determined that the standard should be for a 7' post (3' buried and 4' exposed). It was agreed that members would take a look at other fences before formally changing the standard.

Reclaim Public Land in front of Shoemaker Property

Members reviewed a draft memo to the Board of Selectmen. Laura Spear reported that the Planning Board discussed the proposed plan for Town land in front of the Shoemaker property. The Planning Board suggested placing the fence in front of the house and the pathway on the other side of the drive/road. The Planning Board supports a public pathway but noted the abutters should continue to have access to their homes. The Planning Board recommended that the fence be placed along the property line and that the pathway be located on the other side of the existing drive.

Sidewalk Funds

Laura Spear reported that the Planning Board supports the idea of using sidewalk funds for construction of the pathways as well as a sidewalk along Pompositticut Street and Great Road to the Maynard Town Line, but Kathleen said she would not want to spend funds on areas to be taken up by the proposed roundabout. The Board is conceptually in favor of using sidewalk funds but needs more details as to length of sidewalk and cost.

Mike Clayton will check to see if he has a road layout for Pompositticut Street. He might have the survey that Linear Retail did.

A Pompositticut Street resident said he is concerned about there being sufficient room near the Shoemaker property and believes Linear Retail did a wetlands survey. Karen Kelleher will contact Linear Retail for a copy of the plan.

It was agreed that the Planning Board and Lower Village Committee should send a letter to the Board of Selectmen asking for support on sidewalk plans. Laura Spear said we still need additional info on the location, if easements are needed, cost and how they will be constructed.

Pedestrian Refuge Island

Superintendent of Streets Mike Clayton and Police Chief Trefry attended the meeting to voice concern about the proposed plan for a temporary refuge island.

Don McPherson said he is embarrassed that the Committee did not consult with the Police Department on its plans for the pedestrian refuge islands

Mike Clayton said he was planning to install the temporary pedestrian islands this week, but began to feel uncomfortable about using jersey barriers. He presented a copy of a letter to the Board of Selectmen asking the Board to reconsider the vote to install temporary pedestrian islands at this time. He said he is uncomfortable in placing jersey barriers within an area that people are so used to driving. This area is already very confusing with a mix of misaligned entrances and exits. He is concerned that adding the jersey barriers will compound the confusion. He feels we should change the curb cuts before making any change to the road. He also suggested the possibility of conducting a survey to reduce the speed limit. He feels that 35 mph is too much for such a busy area.

Chief Trefry asked that the Police Department be included in any discussions concerning the road. He feels that placing jersey barriers in the middle of the road is very dangerous, noting that they can't even put a pedestrian crossing sign in the middle of the road without it being driven over. He is concerned that the jersey barriers will cause more accidents and suggested there may be an alternative to jersey barriers such as some type of curbing.

Mike Clayton said they would also need to change the pavement markings to give drivers some direction.

Don McPherson said the Committee is trying to make the area safer. He noted the plan calls for curb cut re-alignments; however, the areas they chose to place the temporary refuge islands are curb cuts that are least likely to change.

Steve Dungan said maybe there is something less invasive, such as realigning curb cuts and reducing the speed limit, before putting anything in the street. Laura Spear said the philosophy behind the proposed curb cuts are that they would be privately done and it could be a long time before it is done. Mike Clayton said the Town should step up to the plate and get it done. Laura Spear said we might not have the right, noting that we discussed changing the curb cuts to the shopping center and Linear Retail opposed it. She said we could change the speed limit, but we also wanted to create a visual impact to slow down the traffic, such as installing the pedestrian refuge island and creating a perceived narrowing of the road. She is skeptical that just changing the speed limit will be effective.

Don McPherson suggested revisiting placement and materials to be used.

Karen Kelleher asked if we ever got a price on the temporary rubber curbing. Mike Clayton said he will get some prices.

Chief Trefry noted concern about bicyclists. Mike Clayton suggested stop signs for bicyclists. Chief Trefry noted that the Route 117 entrance to the Post Office was a problem area until the access from the Post Office to Samuel Prescott Drive was created. He also noted that the 4-way stop at the Fire Station intersection was very effective.

Jim Gray, Faxon Farm, said it appears the Committee is trying to avoid a traffic light and said you are slowing traffic down enough that you might as well stop it with a traffic light.

Laura Spear asked Mike Clayton if he would be willing to revisit the location and materials. Mike responded yes, he is not against pedestrian refuge islands but wants to be sure we have all the details in place before going forward. There is a need for pavement markings, flags, signs, etc. – most of which are available. He said anyone he has talked to think the jersey barriers are a bad idea.

Members agreed to meet at the common on Wednesday, October 31, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. to review placement and materials for the pedestrian refuge islands with the Police Chief, Safety Officer and Highway Superintendent.

Lower Village Permit/Happenings

Stow Shopping Center - Karen Kelleher reported that Linear Retail has plans for a 10,000 sq. ft. addition for Shaws Supermarket and the Liquor Store. They will be filing a request for modification to the existing Special Permit.

Mobil Station Site – The Gas Station site is cleaned up. When the property is sold, the new owner will need a permit. The Planning Board will encourage re-alignment of the curb cuts as part of the special permit.

196 Great Road – Next to Stow House of Pizza – Don McPherson reported that the owner of Stow House of Pizza is interested in the house at 196 Great Road so he can relocate his entrance. Russ Willis said the Town should buy it for affordable housing.

ROUNDBOUT

Jim Gray, Faxon Farm, noted concern about the proposed roundabout at Elm Ridge Road and how it will impact his property. Don McPherson said the Sub-Committee understands his position and will be sensitive to his concerns.

Jim Gray also reported that Daisy Dearborn recommended that the Sub-Committee create a 3-D model of its Plans.

Adjournment

The Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Kelleher
Member