

**RYE TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE  
MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020  
5:30 P.M. TOWN HALL**

**Members Present:** Chair Karen Stewart, Mae Bradshaw, John Loftus, Secretary Kaitlyn Coffey, Victor Azzi, and Selectman Phil Winslow

**I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Stewart called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance at 5:31 p.m.

**II. Public Input - None**

**III. Town Forest Bike Trail (Conservation Commission)**

Susan Shepcaro, member of the Conservation Commission, presented a map of the Town Forest to the Committee. The Conservation Commission is working to establish a bike trail through the Forest. She explained that they will be marking the bike trail with a paper bike icon. The trail will go from Rye Junior High, across the crosswalk at Lang Road, across the crosswalk to Parsons Field, and will start at the end of Parsons, continuing along to the cemetery and to the parking lots at the recreation area. The project will start in the spring.

The discussion included what the liability would be to the Town. Ms. Shepcaro will contact Administrator Bergeron to have the Town Attorney weigh in on it.

Ms. Shepcaro stated that Conservation will be hosting a Trail Gate event when the project is complete.

The Committee explained their proposed changes to the intersection at Lang Road. All agreed that having the kids cross over to Parsons before Lang Road will be a lot safer.

**IV. Schematic Review and Finalization**

As a follow up to the last meeting's questions; Chair Stewart contacted Phil Corbett. Based on the review of the draft schematic the committee had questions regarding the Lang Road intersection.

- The short sidewalk in front of Parsons Field is an ADA measure, due to having the two crosswalks across Washington Road. Because neither crosswalk connected directly to the entrance of the field, there had to be a connector.
  - An alternative to this would be to design some kind of a reception for the crosswalks that will be ADA compliant.
- The Committee had talked about eliminating one of the crosswalks across Washington Road.
  - Mr. Corbett felt that it made good sense to eliminate one of the crosswalks
- The Committee asked about changing the entrance to Parsons Field

- Mr. Corbett said that the entrance could be changed, but warned that Parsons Field is a historic parcel and that may cause some issues.
- The advantage to this would be that anyone coming from the school could cross only one crosswalk and enter directly into the field.

Member Bradshaw suggested that unless there is some reason for a change in the design stage, the Committee should just leave the entrance as is.

Member Azzi agreed. He noted that these details will be worked out in the design phase.

Selectman Winslow stated that when this was presented to the Budget Committee, they immediately wanted more detail. He added that there were two people that voted against it because they wanted to see the whole plan.

The Committee agreed that educating the public will be key to this project.

Chair Stewart pointed out that there are two priority messages that need to be put out at the deliberative session.

1. This plan will not move forward without the vote.
2. This wouldn't move forward without the TAP Grant.
3. This wouldn't go anywhere without public input.

Selectman Winslow cautioned that if the plan is too open, it will appear that the Committee really does not have a formal plan. He suggested that they present their plan. There may be some minor modifications and public input will be sought; however, this is the plan that the Committee is moving forward.

Member Bradshaw asked about the survey.

Mr. Verra is working on it but it has not been completed, as of yet.

- The Committee had asked about the lighting at the Lang Road intersection.
  - Mr. Corbett stated that yes; there were three historic designed lights there and a cobra head light that may or may not be removed.
  - The current cobra head lights will not be replaced.

Member Bradshaw pointed out the TAP will not pay for the historic designed lights; however, she felt that the Committee had decided to have the infrastructure in place and then start fund raising for the extra lights. She suggested that the lights be included in the plan, but explain that it will not be covered by TAP and the funding will be coming from private and public partnership.

Selectman Winslow stated that the historic lighting fixtures were \$8,400 per light.

Other questions to Mr. Corbett regarding the lighting were:

1. Could the Committee get information on down lighting, for protection against light pollution?
2. Could there be some kind of timing control on the lights to protect neighboring homes?
  - Mr. Corbett didn't know of any other town that used timing devices. He would look into it.
  - The lights that the Committee selected are not 100% "Dark Sky" compliant, but they are downcast.
3. Discussion regarding the trees, particularly at the Lang Road intersection. (Member Coffey had expressed concern at the prior meeting that she had removed the trees from that area because they interfered with traffic sight line).
  - Mr. Corbett explained that the trees in the schematic are native trees with a high canopy. They create vertical elements that help calm traffic. They will not obstruct drivers' views.
  - Mr. Corbett stated that if this is a concern, they could be removed from the plan.
4. If the TD Bank should remain in private ownership, in regards to the crossing from the Junior High to the TD Bank, what would be the status of that crosswalk? What would CMA recommend to provide access from the Rye Junior High to the Town Forest and Parsons Field?
  - Mr. Corbett stated that there were a number of ways to get the access and he wasn't concerned about this at all.
5. Member Loftus had asked at the prior meeting about the budget. The Committee had taken out \$84,000 by taking out the two raised crosswalks, but did not add anything back in to compensate for other traffic calming elements. Was this an oversight? Does the Committee need to budget for this and other traffic calming measures to make up for the removal of the raised crosswalks? Ripple strips were particularly mentioned and the committee asked for additional recommendations.
  - Mr. Corbett stated that the rumble strips are hotly debated and controversial. The DOT has revised their standards related to rumble strips. They create a lot of noise. In communities that have them, there are big issues with the neighbors.
  - There are other options. Many of which are a low investment and would not require adding to the budget, provided that they don't change for high-in materials.
  - The raised crosswalks are the most severe and most effective at traffic calming, but they could use paver crosswalks that are concrete and therefore ADA complaint.
  - There are a lot of other solutions to be considered.

Further discussion lead to the idea of placing a planter in the center of the crosswalk, in the center of the road, similar to what they do at UNH, in Durham. It could be removed during the winter months for plowing. Chair Stewart will ask Mr. Corbett about this idea.

Chair Stewart summarized the discussion:

1. The two trees at Lang Road should be removed.
2. There is also a tree at the crosswalk in front of the library, which is a concern.
3. There was discussion regarding taking out the right turning lane on Lang Road.

## **V. Deliberative Session Presentation**

Chair Stewart announced that she has been pulling together some talking points, but is not in a place to give a draft presentation.

Selectman Winslow stated that he will be doing the introduction to the article. It is Article 10, so it will be up towards the beginning of the deliberative session.

Chair Stewart stated that she is prepared to talk about the TAP Grant. She also stressed that it is really important that the public be educated to the facts of this project; bicycling, walking, connectivity. Also there needs to be some history, as to where this concept came from. It should start with the charette. Chair Stewart added that she is planning to share the Committee's vision for the Town Center and the guiding principles that the Committee is working by. She summed up by stating the goals that came out of the Plan NH findings:

1. Increased safe and accessible with multi-mobile travel in the Town Center.
2. Retain the quintessential historic nature of the Town Center.
3. Maintain a multi-generational focus in all planning:
  - a. Social engagements
  - b. Employment
  - c. Sports and physical activities
  - d. Gathering spaces
4. Reimage existing Town owned buildings as efficient and functional spaces.

She added that this outline tells people where the Committee and the plan is heading.

Selectman Winslow recommended that they stay as focused on the current plan as possible. However, if they don't get the TAP Grant, this will not cost the tax payers any money.

Member Bradshaw stressed that in order to get the TAP Grant the Town has to show the tax payers are in support of it.

Selectman Winslow stated that there might be a question regarding why the Committee is recommending putting in more than the 80/20 split. He recommended being prepared to answer that question, by explaining that by adding additional funds from the Town, they are reinforcing their position on the grant and have a much better chance of getting it.

Chair Stewart recognized that not only would that demonstrate a commitment by the Town, it will also increase the Town's viability, because Rye is a "well resourced" town. It was suggested finding out what percentage New Castle used with their TAP Grant.

Selectman Winslow recommended keeping the presentation 5 to 10 minutes.

## **VI. Other Business - None**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Karen Stewart to adjourn at 6:53 p.m. Seconded by John Loftus. All in Favor.**

Respectfully Submitted.  
Dyana F. Ledger