

**RYE TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE
MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2019
5:30 P.M. TOWN HALL**

Members Present: Chair Karen Stewart, Vice-Chair Nina Parrott, Secretary Kaitlyn Coffey, John Loftus, Victor Azzi, Mae Bradshaw, John Mitchell, Selectmen's Rep; Phil Winslow.

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Stewart called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance at 5:32 p.m.

Selectman Winslow explained that as a result of having Rockingham Planning Commission at the last meeting, the Committee is planning on applying for a Federal Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant for streetscapes and sidewalk projects. The grant will not cover the round-a-bout or the T-intersection. He noted that Mr. Bogle, from Rockingham Planning, stated there is a minimum project size of \$400,000. Selectman Winslow talked to Craig Musselman and he felt that the project would be over \$400,000.

Selectman Winslow pointed out that there is a timing issue. There has to be a warrant asking for 20% of the costs. CMA is willing to come in with a project proposal and maybe work with Rockingham County to come up with a cost, in order to write the warrant article to move forward.

Philip Corbett, Project Manager from CMA engineering, spoke to the Committee regarding CMA's experience with TAP and what would be involved in the application process. He stated that they have done a lot of these. They probably have about 4 or 5 under design at this time and a couple under construction. As Selectman Winslow mentioned, it is a \$400,000 to \$1 million grant application and the more that you can apply for the better, because meeting the federal requirements is a bit of a process. There is a lot of engineering and administration that goes along with getting the grant permitting. Still, if the Town can get an 80% match it is worth it. As mentioned, it does not include any vehicular issues, such as the Central/Washington Road and Wallis/Washington Road intersections. The application would be a great candidate and certainly rate highly, given the proximity to the school, Town Hall and other connections. Having information on the bike volume would be of great value, in order to apply for bike lines and sidewalks. The area being in the Historic District will also make a difference in the process. He noted that it is federal money and the application process is a two-year window. It is funding through the federal highway department and managed through the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. The Town would vote to manage the grant application with the help of CMA. Someone from the Town will have to become certified in this process. New Hampshire DOT puts on a Local Project Administration (LPA) class. These classes are scheduled twice a year and one is scheduled for the spring. The designated person from the Town will be required to attend the six-hour presentation to become certified. It would be preferable to have a couple of people attend. They should be someone that can help administer the project, either someone with financial background or insight and/or someone involved during the design construction. The

class makes the applicant aware of all the federal requirements. The Town must meet all the requirements or risk incurring costs and losing the funding without being reimbursed. CMA would help the Town assess the concept and the construction costs to be used in the grant application. Rockingham Planning may be able to help in preparing the application or CMA would help. CMA does that less frequently but would be willing if the Town needed help. He stated that from the components of Rye's application and looking at others that have been successful, he feels that Rye is a good candidate. Rye is a historic community with a lot of historic homes. The permitting is very sensitive to historic impacts. Even the aesthetics of the sidewalks need to fit in the corridor and not impact the aesthetics of the historic nature of the homes and stonewalls.

Mr. Corbett added that it looks a little tight in some areas and there may be some issues regarding whether the Town can put sidewalks or bike lines in some sections. These are common unknown restrictions going into the grant application process, which will be worked out during the engineering study. In the first part of the project, alternatives are evaluated to see what the impact will be, to make sure that there is a feasible project going forward. The project could get to that point and realize that there is not enough right-of-way width and an easement is not possible from the abutters, as they may not want a sidewalk in front of their house; or other opposition and the project shuts down. When the Town gets through this process, they will know if the project is viable before entering into the design phase.

Chair Stewart pointed out that the distance that is being talked about impacts three private homes. The rest of the land is town owned. Would CMA help or be a part of the deed research?

Mr. Corbett answered that it is absolutely required as part of the design process. One of the first things that is done is to make sure that there is a good understanding of the property boundaries and the right-of-way lines. However, doing this prior to the design phase is less common. It is certainly something that CMA could do. They would do it through a sub-consultant that they work with frequently. It will be difficult to get this in the time frame before the application is due. It is very unlikely, given how busy surveyors are. The Town can hire a surveyor at any time. They will research the deeds, go out and look for monumentation and establish the right-of-way. Given that it is the beginning of November and the Committee is looking to have a warrant article by January, it would be extremely difficult to procure a firm.

Chair Stewart expressed concern spending town money on hiring CMA to do design work if it is a non-starter.

Mr. Corbett agreed. The Town would be spending some money to further the development concept and to get an estimate, which wouldn't be huge costs. It wouldn't be into the LPA process. The Town wouldn't have to commit to that at all. The application could be submitted and then the Town could decide to withdraw from the process if they find that there is no way to do this without impacting other properties.

Selectman Winslow said that in a perfect world he agrees with Chair Stewart this is something that they want to do. However, after talking to Craig Musselman, he realizes that it is not realistic to get this done in time. There is an opportunity for between \$380,000 to \$600,000 of

grant money available to the Town. Does the Committee want to vet \$10,000 to hire CMA as a placeholder and see what happens when the survey comes in?

Member Bradshaw said that since the road is already laid out, there should already be right-of-way studies and surveys.

Mr. Corbett noted that it would probably not be for the whole corridor. Certainly it would be just piecing together information. The right-of-way is probably well established but in older towns it is more difficult. Sometimes it is not legally established and is based on a standard width of a three-rod road. There may be some information that a private home owner has done but it is unlikely that it has been done collectively for the whole corridor. With these projects, if there is any impact to the private property, the Town has to pay the property owner for a temporary easement. That would be a cost that would be included in the grant funding.

Chair Stewart asked about the availability of CMA and the services they would be providing.

Mr. Corbett answered that if the Town is successful in the grant application, they would still have to submit for engineers, as they could not just direct hire a firm. CMA would love to help with the project and certainly could do that in the timeframe. The scope of what the Town needs CMA to do would depend on how much the Town and Rockingham Planning could do and what other things the Town would need help with. It could be plans to present at the deliberative session and developing the construction cost estimate. CMA would submit a proposal to make sure this is covered and work on the time charge on how much the Town thinks it needs help with.

Member Bradshaw pointed out that CMA just did this same type of project with New Castle. She asked if he could give them some idea of what they should be contracting for.

Mr. Corbett stated that bare bones the Committee needs to take the information coming out of the charrette, along with any other input, and refine a plan. CMA would help to develop the preferred alternative by laying that out as a concept and putting together a construction cost estimate for the work.

Selectman Winslow stated that one of the important things is to get a schematic so it can be presented at the deliberative session. Also, there is a Board of Selectmen's Meeting on Monday and he would like to present this idea because the money to pay CMA could come from the \$22,300 that the Town received from the State.

Selectman Winslow noted that Mr. Corbett is willing to attend the Selectmen's meeting on Monday night in order to support the Committee and the plan. He suggested that the Committee talk about what needs to be done for that meeting. Most importantly, what is the Committee's vision? Is the vision (barring any survey or right-of-way issues) sidewalks from the Rye Junior High to the Library and crossing the street near the church and down to the Town Hall?

The Commission agreed.

Next would be bike lines. It seems to be possible to have bike lines on both sides.

Mr. Corbett stated that they should have bike lines on both sides, but that will affect having sidewalks on both sides. He recommended the sidewalk on one side, which may alternate where there are constraints, such as stone walls and property issues.

Member Bradshaw recommended having a raised crosswalk in the vision; at least one, from the Library to the Town Hall.

Member Loftus pointed out that Plan New Hampshire included a raised crosswalk at each end of the corridor and a total of five.

Mr. Corbett stated that they are extremely effective for calming traffic and advancing pedestrian safety and people hate them.

Member Bradshaw pointed out that there should be three raised sidewalks because the children cross at Lange Road.

Member Loftus pointed out it would require two at Lange Road in order to affect the traffic going in both directions.

Mr. Corbett stated that the whole intersection could be raised with a different texture for the middle.

Member Bradshaw clarified that the TAP will pay for the overall concept, which would include the sidewalk, two bike lines, three or more raised crosswalks and some lighting.

Mr. Corbett confirmed. He added that TAP would pay for the crosswalks but they will need to be convinced that raising them is the right approach. The Town will be working within a budget that TAP sets. If that is exceeded, then the Town will have to make choices. Obviously, raised crosswalks are more expensive.

Member Loftus asked if TAP would pay to put the utilities underground.

Mr. Corbett answered that they would not. They will pay for some landscaping. There was discussion on the maintenance of raised sidewalks and the costs.

Selectman Winslow asked Mr. Corbett about the cost of CMA's services in order to get the Town a general conceptional design and the cost estimate.

Mr. Corbett stated that he could have that information by Friday. The concept and the cost estimate are pretty straight forward but there would be some additional costs, depending on the number of meetings the Committee wants CMA to attend.

The Committee agreed on four meetings at this time.

II. Public Input - None

Selectman Winslow reported that Ms. Barba will be presenting her report at the Selectmen's meeting on Monday night.

III. Meeting Minutes – To be done at a future meeting

IV. RTCC Survey Update

At the last meeting, Chair Stewart suggested to the members that in order to have the coverage from the Committee on all of the key points from the charrette and to get the Committee's position, she felt that they should go through each item. It was decided that each member would review the table that she prepared and send her their comments by e-mail.

Chair Stewart reported that there was pretty clear uniformity on most things and there are a few that will make for interesting conversation. The Committee is obviously proceeding on with the safety and traffic issues but there are still items to be discussed, including round-a-bout feasibility and desirability, bike lines and raised crosswalks. She pointed out that the next topic was buildings and should have included assets; such as Parsons Field and pocket parks. The TD bank site may or may not be discussed as it is not town owned. The fate of the trolley barn should be discussed. She stated that she will correlate the comments and do up a proposal of discussion items for the next meeting.

V. Next Steps

There was discussion on getting the survey done and the cost of it. Chair Stewart said that she would contact Phil Corbett to get an estimate from the surveyor that CMA uses. She asked Member Azzi to get an estimate from Jim Verra, as well.

Selectman Winslow suggested either putting the money for the survey into the budget or maybe encumbering some of the \$22,000 that came from the state.

Chair Stewart reminded the Committee that they are on the agenda for the Selectmen's meeting on Monday night. She will do the presentation.

Chair Stewart promised to share the results of the survey costs with the Committee.

VI. Other Business - None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mae Bradshaw to adjourn at 6:29 p.m. Seconded by Nina Parrott. All in Favor.

Respectfully Submitted.
Dyana F. Ledger