

**RYE TOWN CENTER COMMITTEE
MEETING
Wednesday, June 7, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.
Rye Town Hall**

Committee Present: *Chair John Loftus, Kaitlyn Coffey, Victor Azzi, John Mitchell, Lindsay Gray, and Selectmen's Rep Bill Epperson*

1. Call to Order

Chair Loftus called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Review and approve past meeting minutes – May 3, 2023

The following correction was noted:

- Page 2, 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence should read: **Even more is going to happen in the next three to four years while waiting for construction, which will become known when the design is completed.**

Motion by John Loftus to accept the minutes of May 3, 2023 as amended. Seconded by John Mitchell. All in favor.

3. Review in general the overall layout, and specifically options discussed in prior years, and formulate ideas for subcommittees, further discussion new warrant article for additional funding (2025 or 2026 perhaps), etc.

Note: The below (a thru g) is for forward thinking; the Committee will not resolve any of the below in one discussion. Also, once the engineering firm is contracted, and they designate the landscape architect, the Committee will then be able to inject their thoughts. That will be down the road, so to speak.

a. Crosswalks using brick pavers vs. asphalt (or other materials) - Budget related

Chair Loftus noted it's quite a bit more costly to put brick pavers in. There's also the problem of frost, the pavers moving up and down, and having to be reset. It might not look so nice three or four years down the road and it might be a costly repair.

Selectman Epperson pointed out that the DPW Director should weigh-in on this.

Member Coffey asked about the asphalt being stamped to look like pavers.

Chair Loftus pointed out that he has seen this done. The problem is the paint wears off and it has to be repainted. He noted the crosswalks are something to be considered.

b. Benches (park benches) and locations. Where and how do we want?

Chair Loftus commented that he thinks there was some money for a couple of benches. The question is where would the benches be located and how does that relate to the pocket parks? He suggested having two to three people looking at each of the items listed and then bringing the ideas back to the Committee for discussion.

c. Pocket parks – Locations

To be considered along with the benches.

d. Landscaping plantings

Chair Loftus noted this is an item where the costs won't be known until the end. Landscaping is probably the last thing that will be done. He suggested they try to get this into the TAP Grant program. In not, the Committee should have an idea of what they want to do so a future warrant article can be proposed.

Selectman Epperson asked if there has been a number articulated for everything including lighting, curbing, bricks, etc.

Chair Loftus replied he has a number from 2021, which was \$925,000. He pointed out that about half the lighting was included in that number. He continued that the TAP Grant will only pay for certain things. It's not going to cover extra architectural and engineering. In order to have them done at the same time, the Town has to be ready to pay. He pointed out that a conceptual type plan wouldn't cost too much. It could then go back to the voters later.

Member Azzi noted that the TAP Grant Committee is working on hiring an engineer to design the details for the implementation of the TAP Grant. The Committee will be addressing some of the issues on that project that are now listed on this agenda. Some of these things will be worked out with the engineer that will be hired. He thinks that the Committee will learn something during the TAP Grant implementation that will help answer some of the questions being raised at this meeting. For instance, the brick pavers versus asphalt; he thinks that will be addressed in the TAP Grant implementation, which may remove this item from the agenda of this committee at this time.

Chair Loftus pointed out that this Committee should look at things they would like to implement, not necessarily what will be implemented. He continued that they should also find out how the engineering firm would break out the TAP Grant fees and a second line for additional fees for some type of planning for the intersection at Washington and Central, and Washington and Wallis.

e. Additional street lighting

Chair Loftus noted that about half of the lighting is included in the budget. Additional lighting would be extra.

Member Azzi commented that it would be appropriate for the agenda of this committee to discuss what they were thinking then and what they are thinking now for the whole stretch of Washington Road in terms of the electrical distribution center. He asked if all the electrical lines are going to be buried.

Chair Loftus replied probably.

Member Azzi asked if this included all the power lines, as well as the supply lines to the lampposts. This could be an expensive part of the project. He asked if this was estimated in the costs for the TAP Grant.

Chair Loftus asked if he is talking about taking the poles down.

Member Azzi confirmed.

Chair Loftus noted the project does not include those costs.

Member Coffey pointed out that this was discussed, but everyone said the costs would be astronomical.

Member Azzi commented he would like to put this idea back on the table. He asked if lampposts will be distributed on both sides of the street.

Member Coffey noted that by the library, there is one proposed across the street on the church property. There is also one proposed at the annex. She continued that CMA gave the Committee ideas about the lighting in the very beginning. If the Committee is interested in breaking off into a smaller group, it would be a good discussion to talk about the placement of the lighting. She thinks it would be a good idea to review the drawings; that way when the time comes, there could be some discussion that could be shared with the engineers. She also thinks there may be some things that can be done that don't have to wait until the TAP Grant. Chief Walsh and the Department of Public Works have been responsive in listening to some of the Committee's ideas that are within their means to do.

There was some discussion about shaving off some of the pavement at the Lang Road intersection now, instead of waiting for the TAP Grant.

f. Style of street lighting

Discussion above for street lighting.

g. Signage – style and color

Chair Loftus emailed an example to the Committee. The Committee should research different styles on the internet.

OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION WHICH PROBABLY FALL OUTSIDE OF THE TAP GRANT MONIES:

Note: The below (h thru m) are also items open for discussion that will ultimately affect the Rye Town Center look and feel.

h. Additional pavement needed for bike lanes, road changes, etc.

Chair Loftus pointed out that this will not be known until the design is done. More than likely, more money will be needed for extra paving. He asked Selectman Epperson if Washington Road is on the schedule for repaving.

Selectman Epperson explained it's not on the immediate schedule. His guess is it won't be put on the schedule until it's known what's going to be done in the Town Center.

i. Study of intersections at Washington & Central, and Washington & Wallis

Chair Loftus stated this would be good for a subcommittee to get opinions from people who drive their kids to school. The engineers are going to design how they see it, but the subcommittee could let them know what the problems are.

There was some discussion about the traffic issues during school pick up and drop off.

Member Coffey commented that it would be a good idea for the subcommittee to speak with the staff at the school also.

Chair Loftus pointed out that the more people who are aligned on an idea, the better it will be because that will form a consensus, which can be used to form an opinion for the architect or for a warrant article for more funds.

j. Further work on the Town Offices Annex

Selectman Epperson noted that during the building of the annex in phase 1, the electrical and structural was done to accommodate a phase 2. The idea was to get phase 1 done, take a look at the needs, and then make a proposal for phase 2. What will be done at the annex is also based on the Town Hall building. He commented the work for the annex will probably continue within the next five years.

k. Sod for TAP Grant project

The Committee does not think sod was part of the TAP Grant.

1. Irrigation system for Rye Town Center

In regards to the irrigation system, Member Azzi stated he thinks this is out of the question, as it would be setting a bad precedent. He doesn't think they should be planting grasses that require irrigation because there is an issue with water supply. He doesn't think there are any town properties that have irrigation.

Chair Loftus noted that part of the charge of the Committee is to make the Town Center quaint and enhance its beauty.

Member Coffey stated that the grass on the strip is going to be exposed to all the elements in the winter. It may be hard to grow grass, so other plantings may be better. She suggested taking pictures of what other communities have done.

m. Contracted lawn and shrub maintenance for Rye Town Center

DPW would handle the maintenance.

n. Interaction with Rye Public Library regarding Library Common. Could the Town become a stakeholder and help raise money?

Member Azzi noted that the Library tried to go in this direction, with not only the Rye Town Center and Washington Road, but the Library Common and the whole library parcel and how it relates to the town needs and desires for the future. This should be seen as one townwide project.

Chair Loftus agreed. If a common need could be determined, the Town could possibly raise some money to put the park together in conjunction with the Library.

The Committee agreed.

4. Further discussion about Lang Road intersection with Washington Road. While up to the engineering firm to come up with the optimum layout, the Committee is not precluded from making observations as denizens and submitting to the engineering firm.

Chair Loftus suggested forming a subcommittee to look at the Lang Road intersection.

5. Intersections at Washington & Central and Washington & Wallis. Most likely this will be an extra cost for the town as the TAP will not cover much in terms of ideas outside the TAP Grant. There is some overlap, and so discussion is warranted.

Chair Loftus commented that the Town would need to agree to pay the extra engineering fees to look at these intersections. This money would have to be kept separate from the TAP Grant.

Member Azzi stated that as part of the engineering that is done to implement the TAP Grant, at least the preliminary engineering should be done for those two intersections. Something

shouldn't be built for only a short section of Washington Road, without knowing where the improvements will be going beyond that area in both directions.

The Committee agreed.

Member Azzi suggested talking to the engineering firm that's retained to do the engineering for the TAP Grant about what the additional cost would be to do the preliminary engineering for those two intersections.

- **Subcommittees:**

- Crosswalks – pavers vs. asphalt: *Victor Azzi, John Mitchell, Jenn Thompson*
- Benches & Pocket Parks: *Kaitlyn Coffey, Lindsay Gray, Jenn Thompson*
- Landscape Plantings – Sod & Irrigation: *Kaitlyn Coffey, John Loftus*
- Additional Street Lighting & Style: *John Loftus, John Mitchell, Jenn Thompson*
- Signage: *Kaitlyn Coffey, John Loftus*
- Intersections of Washington Rd & Central and Washington & Wallis:
Bill Epperson, Lindsay Gray, John Loftus w/input from DPW Director Jason Rucker
- Path behind the church and annex discussion with Conservation Commission:
Kaitlyn Coffey, Lindsay Gray, John Mitchell
- Interaction with Rye Public Library: *John Loftus, John Mitchell, Victor Azzi*
- School Traffic: *Lindsay Gray, Kaitlyn Coffey w/input from Police Chief Walsh*

- Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, July 5th, 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion by John Loftus to adjourn at 6:44 p.m. Seconded by Bill Epperson. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger