

**TOWN OF RYE – TAP GRANT COMMITTEE  
MEETING  
Thursday, August 24, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.  
Rye Town Hall**

**Present:** *Chair John Loftus, Victor Azzi, Lydia Tilsley (arrived at 5:18 p.m.), and Police Chief Kevin Walsh*

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Loftus called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Review meeting minutes from July 27<sup>th</sup>, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, and August 10<sup>th</sup>**  
*Not addressed*

**3. Chief Walsh has been invited and he will present his opinion on the Lang & Washington intersection and why he does not recommend all-way stops.** Chief Walsh has been asked for a write-up that can be submitted as part of the pre-interview package. Thus, there can be alternative reasons for employing, or not employing, all-way stops.

The Committee met with Police Chief Kevin Walsh to discuss the intersection at Lang Road and Washington Road. Chief Walsh noted that he sent the Committee information addressing the Police Department's Driver Compliance Plan for all roads in town. He also sent a report of accidents at the intersection. The accident analysis covers the time period from 2001 to 2021 and shows that the intersection is safe with a low accident rate. The information also included a traffic count, which was done around July 12, 2021, to show the vehicle count at the Lang Road/Washington Road intersection at different times of day. A site walk was conducted with Bill Lambert, NH DOT Engineer, and other representatives of DOT. This site walk was done prior to the construction on the other end of Lang Road connecting to Route 1. At the site walk, there was discussion about the possibility of doing a three-way stop sign at the intersection with Lang and Washington, which was not recommended as it doesn't follow the NH Traffic Control Manual. The traffic congestion and bottleneck that the stop signs would create would be significant, especially during morning commute and the school pickup/drop-off times (7:45 to 8:15 a.m.). It was noted that it will be interesting to see how the Town Hall Annex will affect traffic during that time, as the business hours start at 8:00 a.m. This will be the first year to analyze that traffic.

Chief Walsh noted that heaviest time for traffic in the morning is between 7:50 a.m. to 8:10 a.m. (about 20 minutes), with buses coming in around 8:00 a.m. He also noted that there has been an

increase in the number of students riding their bikes to school, which comes from both directions. There have been no issues with the bicycle traffic coming in to school. He pointed out that the most traffic in the afternoon for pickup is between 2:35 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. The students are released in the afternoon in waves. The bus riders are dismissed first with the pedestrians and bike riders going second. The majority of the pedestrians and bicyclists go towards the center of town and the Library in the afternoon. He hopes that the goal of the Committee is to look at the sidewalk in that area to continue it down Washington Road from the Public Safety Building.

There was some discussion about the sidewalk and its location.

Referring to the all-way stop, Chair Loftus asked Chief Walsh if it will cause traffic to go slower.

Chief Walsh explained that the stop signs will cause bottleneck and probably rear-end accidents, especially the ones on Washington Road. He pointed out that in Bill Lambert's letter it states that stop signs shouldn't be in areas where a bottleneck and more accidents will be created.

It was pointed out by Member Azzi that there are some four-way stops in town already; such as, Lang's Corner.

Chief Walsh commented that there were probably accidents in the past in this area, so that may be why it was created that way. He noted that South Road at West Road had a three-way stop sign when he first came to work in Rye. There was a bicyclist who was hit during a bike event at that intersection and that's what created that intersection to be a four-way stop. There's always been a compelling reason why a change like that would happen.

Chair Loftus pointed out that with an all-way stop, it will give the people coming in on Lang Road a chance to turn. They won't have to wait to see what cars traveling on Washington Road are going to do. The cars will be stopping and those cars on Lang can make the turn.

Member Azzi asked about the number of cars dropping off students. Chief Walsh agreed to count the cars over a couple of weeks to get an average for the Committee. He will also put together any information he thinks may be beneficial for the traffic engineer.

Chair Loftus commented that his idea is just two lanes on Lang Road. With one lane coming in, it opens up the view, which is a problem right now on Lang Road. With two cars side by side, one car is blocking the other driver's view and they try to move ahead a bit, until they are right up to the crosswalk. He pointed out that there will be more pedestrians from the school because of the sidewalk. Right now, it's a safety issue for the future because of pedestrians.

Chief Walsh spoke about the backup of traffic in front of the middle school during drop-off and pickup times. He noted that right now, the traffic pattern going into the school for drop-off/pickup works smoothly and is managed by the Police Department. There is some labor involved but it's only twenty minutes in the morning and twenty minutes in the afternoon.

Chair Loftus pointed out that the genesis of where the Town Center Committee and the TAP Grant Committee are coming from is safety. They are more interested in the children's safety than a vehicle having to stop for thirty seconds.

Chief Walsh agreed. He continued that in his opinion the Town has a good system and it's safe. Putting the sidewalk in is an excellent idea for pedestrian safety.

Member Azzi mentioned to Chief Walsh that one of the other things the TAP Grant Committee and the engineering firm will be looking at is the speed limit through the Town Center. Chief Walsh noted that he has spoken with the Select Board about having a traffic engineer evaluate all the roads in town to draft a blueprint as to what the speed limits should be.

Chair Loftus asked Chief Walsh to provide his input in writing, so it can be put into the packages going to the engineering firms. Chief Walsh agreed to provide that information.

**4. Dates of Sept. 5, 6 & 7 have been confirmed with the three engineering firms:**  
Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> – Wright-Pierce; Sept. 6<sup>th</sup> – BETA, Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> – SLS. All start at 1:00 p.m.

**5. Continue discussion about the following from the August 10, 2023 meeting:**

- a. Relevant drawings from preliminary design used to budget the TAP applications (i.e., conceptual drawings from CMA Engineers, Ironwood Landscape Architects)
  - o *Member Azzi is working on getting the preliminary designs.*
- b. Existing surveys eight pages of engineering drawings are being put onto thumb drives.
  - o *Complete*
- c. Project scope, including a description of the boundaries of the project 1) Grange Park to the east and 2) War memorial to the west and related requirements for firm to consider.
  - o *A draft has been sent to the Committee from Member Tilsley. Chair Loftus will review and send to Member Azzi to review.*
- d. Description of the Lang Road & Washington Road intersection, problems in the area and how it relates to the project Chair Loftus has sent a REV 2, PowerPoint presentation based on the previous committee review. This was sent to all members, via earlier email, for all to review.
  - o *The Committee agreed the PowerPoint did not need any changes.*
- e. Traffic monitoring statistics for the Lang Road/Washington Road intersection Police Chief Walsh is working on organizing the data and hopes to have it completed by August 16<sup>th</sup>.
  - o *Information provided by Chief Walsh.*

- f. Video of school drop-off/pickup activities.
    - *Member Tilsley has videos of both drop-off and pickup process. The Committee reviewed the videos and agreed they should be used as part of the engineering package.*
  - g. Input and questions from the TAP Grant Committee. The committee would like to get an answer from the engineer as to what the cost would be for a conceptual for the two ends of the Town Center, as it's not part of the TAP Grant. The additional funds will need to be paid by the Town. It was agreed that the estimate would probably be part of negotiations once an engineer is chosen. Chair Loftus will reach out to Leah Savage to see if the committee can discuss this with the engineer before selecting a firm.
    - *The Committee agreed this will have to wait until a firm is chosen.*
  - h. Input from the Rye Town Center Committee. Chair Loftus is working on getting this information. Their input may not be needed until the engineering firm is hired.
    - *It was noted by Chair Loftus that the Town Center Committee has not had a meeting since May. This information can be added later in the process.*
  - i. Input from the Plan NH Charette will also be included.
    - *The Committee agreed to give the firms the whole Plan NH Charette Report. Chair Loftus has this in an electronic format and will put the report onto five thumb drives.*
  - j. School dismissal times for September 5-7<sup>th</sup>.
    - *Chair Loftus will confirm the school dismissal times for the days that the interviews with the engineering firms will be held.*
- 6. The pre-interviews will be held in the conference room at the Annex.** Firms were asked to arrive by 1:00 p.m. A site walk will be given to all firms with school dismissal being viewed at about 2:15 p.m. Firms will be given a chance to ask questions after the site walk is completed. It's anticipated that the pre-interview and site walk will end about 3:30 p.m. The Annex is reserved until 4:00 p.m.
- 7. Discussion on how to consolidate the packages.**
- *The Committee will bring all materials to the next meeting in order to prepare the packages for the engineering firms.*
- **Next meeting: August 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 p.m., finalize anything outstanding**

### **Adjournment**

**Motion by John Loftus to adjourn at 6:13 p.m. Seconded by Lydia Tilsley. All in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted, Dyana F. Ledger