

TOWN OF STOW
COMPLETE STREETS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the December 19, 2022 Complete Streets Committee Meeting

Members present: Karen Kelleher, JP Benoit, Kathy Sferra, Brian Hatch

Members absent: Daren Thraen, Ingeborg Hegemann Clark

Karen Kelleher called the meeting to order at 1:00PM

Previous Meeting Minutes

Brian Hatch motioned to approve the minutes of the November 21st, 2022 meeting as amended

Kathy Sferra seconded

Roll call vote: Karen Kelleher -Yea; JP Benoit -Yea; Kathy Sferra -Yea; Brian Hatch -Yea

Recap of Marlborough Road/Route Intersection Realignment Public Forum – Traffic Safety Advisory Committee

Planning Director Valerie Oorthuys said roughly 20 people attended the forum in person, with a similar number joining remotely. Valerie Oorthuys said the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) resolved to try two different approaches to realigning the intersection, likely to start sometime in January 2023. Karen Kelleher asked what signage will be required for the new intersection alignment. Valerie Oorthuys said that a stop sign will need to be installed for the second phase of the realignment pilot. Brian Hatch added that the Highway Department has obtained price quotes for a stop sign, “new traffic pattern” signs, and water-filled temporary barriers that will be used to limit access through parts of the intersection. Karen Kelleher asked if the TSAC’s existing budget will cover these expenses. Valerie Oorthuys the committee has a small budget via Stow’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that will cover these costs. JP Benoit said the first phase of the realignment can be done soon, and that closing an additional lane will require installation of a new stop sign and therefore a vote to amend the Traffic Rules & Orders by the Select Board at an upcoming meeting.

Crescent Street Sidewalk Designs

The committee reviewed a price quote from engineering firm GCG Associates to design two sections of sidewalk on the north side of Crescent Street from Warren Road south towards Hartley Road. Kathy Sferra noted that the scope of work includes noting the locations of trees over a 9” caliper width and asked that this be revised to include all trees in the survey area. Kathy Sferra also noted that the draft scope includes identifying any adjacent wetlands and filing any needed Notices of Intent with the Conservation Commission; no wetlands are located near the proposed project and this task is not necessary.

The Committee verified that the only other project drawing funds from their implementation account is the pre-design phase of Track Road shared use path improvements. Staff recalled that the committee has committed just under \$16k to this project and that there are otherwise sufficient funds to advance the Crescent Street sidewalks designs as quoted from GCG Associates. JP Benoit said he is concerned about committing design funds to sidewalks near the Randall Library, which is slated for major renovations and site reconfigurations in the future. Karen Kelleher asked if library renovations could be impacted by sidewalk construction on the north side of Crescent Street. Valerie Oorthuys said a sidewalk ramp would need to be installed at the library end of a crosswalk at the intersection of Library Hill Road and Crescent Street. Kathy Sferra said that such minor construction near the library should not interfere with other

library renovation plans. JP Benoit asked that the current status of library renovation plans be made available to the engineer for the Crescent Street sidewalks.

Kathy Sferra asked how the engineering firm was selected. Planning staff said that the outgoing Highway Superintendent administered a procurement process for “on-call engineering services” to allow design contracts to be executed with a small number of pre-selected firms. Planning staff recalled that another estimate obtained from one of these pre-selected firms came back at well outside the Complete Streets Committee’s available funds.

Kathy Sferra motioned to accept the proposal for Crescent Street sidewalk engineering by GCG Associates, subject to amendments

Brian Hatch seconded

Roll call vote: Karen Kelleher -**Yea**; JP Benoit -**Yea**; Kathy Sferra -**Yea**; Brian Hatch -**Yea**

FY2024 Budget Discussion

Valerie Oorthuys said this committee does not require an operating budget, and the provided budget memo discusses capital planning topics. Valerie Oorthuys said that \$60k allocated by Town Meeting for Town Center concept plans in 2021 will likely not be sufficient to advance that project. Valerie Oorthuys said that she will draft and publish a Request for Proposals for the concept plans, and time that so that an additional funding request can be made to Annual Town Meeting to cover any funding shortfall. Valerie Oorthuys said that the capital planning items in the Planning Board’s budget included \$450k to advance Town Center transportation designs to a 25% phase, necessary to include the project on the state’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and that this capital request is also reflected in the Complete Street’s Committee’s budget.

Kathy Sferra asked for an estimated timeline for advancing Town Center transportation designs and construction. Valerie Oorthuys said she has requested that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) hand over traffic count and road safety audit data from the Town Center intersection, and said that data will be incorporated into an RFP for conceptual planning to be reviewed by the Complete Streets Committee in January. Kathy Sferra asked how Town Center transportation planning tasks will relate to library renovations. Valerie Oorthuys said preliminary designs for the Library’s exterior should be available in fall 2023, but that a general site plan for the surrounding area has not been advanced. Brian Hatch suggested that library site planning and town center transportation engineering be handled by the same consultant. Kathy Sferra said the Complete Streets Committee is somewhat ahead of the library renovation committees, which may be a problem given the close link between the two projects. Brian Hatch agreed, and said that the traffic rules and design of Common Road remains an outstanding issue for both projects.

JP Benoit suggested removing Library Hill Road and Common Road from the scope and focusing transportation improvements more specifically on areas along Route 117. Valerie Oorthuys said her argument for including those sections is that the library committee may not be able to fund improvements in those areas. Karen Kelleher said that obtaining concept plans may focus the site planning of the library project and do not commit the Town to any single design approach. JP Benoit said that the library project will likely require some overflow parking at the old fire station diagonally across from the library, which could influence the design of that intersection.

Kathy Sferra asked if an additional funding request could be made to Town Meeting in the fall if the previously allocated \$60k proves to be insufficient to fund concept plans. Valerie Oorthuys said that a

consultant could be asked to provide a scope of work that falls within that budget and make recommendations for more funding for any additional tasks. Kathy Sferra said she would prefer the project be kept in the previous \$60k budget, and that an RFP process begin only after library renovation plans are more certain.

JP Benoit said that Complete Streets concept plans for Town Center could actually help advance the library project and inform important issues for their site design. Several Committee members argued that they should move forward with publication of an RFP ahead of Annual Town Meeting and not wait until the library committee advances their designs.

JP Benoit motioned to accept the budget memo as drafted

Kathy Sferra seconded

Roll call vote: Karen Kelleher -**Yea**; JP Benoit -**Yea**; Kathy Sferra -**Yea**; Brian Hatch -**Yea**

Other Updates

Planning Director Valerie Oorthuys provided an update on the Track Road project and said that roughly half of the funds previously allocated by this committee to advance conceptual designs and conversations with MassDOT have been spent. Valerie Oorthuys said MassDOT has decided that in order for the Town to access a \$750k federal earmark for final design of a shared use path, Stow must select a consultant through an RFP process to provide conceptual designs of different cross sections that will be assessed by MassDOT for suitability for construction funding through the TIP. Kathy Sferra said that MassDOT requires an assessment that their preferred alternatives are feasible. The Committee discussed challenges in drafting an RFP that satisfies MassDOT and sufficiently protects the Town against financial risk.

Valerie Oorthuys said she is continuing to press the consulting engineer for the Kane Land access path project to post the construction bid documents, and that she is unclear about the reasoning for the delays. Valerie Oorthuys said that a wide range of potential construction costs have been estimated, and so it is unclear if sufficient funds are available for construction. Valerie Oorthuys said that bidders for the construction may be asked to hold their price for 90 days while staff determine if additional funding needs to be requested from Town Meeting. Valerie Oorthuys said that the consulting engineer cautioned that this requirement may discourage some potential bidders.

The Committee scheduled their next meeting for Monday, January 23, 2023 at 1PM.

Brian Hatch motioned to adjourn

Kathy Sferra seconded

Roll call vote: Karen Kelleher -**Yea**; JP Benoit -**Yea**; Kathy Sferra -**Yea**; Brian Hatch -**Yea**

Respectfully submitted,
Malcolm Ragan