

TOWN OF STOW
COMPLETE STREETS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the October 16, 2023, Complete Streets Committee Meeting

Members present: Kellie Barhight, Barry Evers, Brian Hatch, Karen Kelleher, Kathy Sferra

Members absent: Ingeborg Hegemann Clark

Also Present: Valerie Oorthuys, Michael Slagle

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

Meeting Minutes

Kathy Sferra motioned to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2023, meeting as amended.

Barry Evers seconded.

Roll call vote: Kellie Barhight **-Yea**; Barry Evers **-Yea**; Brian Hatch **-Yea**; Karen Kelleher **-Yea**; Kathy Sferra **-Yea**

Crescent Street Sidewalks

Members of the committee discussed feedback received from the public forum, Town Staff, and the engineers. Valerie Oorthuys stated that the project has received approximately \$500,000 in funding. She noted that funding will cover most of the project, but there are some features, like signage, that will need alternative funding mechanisms.

The committee discussed the section of the proposed sidewalk along Hillside Cemetery. Brian Hatch stated that he would like to see the sidewalk continue along the edge of the Crescent Street instead making the driveway of the Cemetery a shared use section for cemetery maintenance and pedestrians. Kathy Sferra supported the idea of making the driveway of the cemetery shared use, citing that the driveway is not typically used, and it would make for a better walking experience. Brian Hatch acknowledged her comments and asked if the shared use portion would be ADA accessible and would be wide enough for a pedestrian to walk past a parked cemetery maintenance vehicle. Kathy responded that the shared use portion would be 10 feet wide, allowing walking access. Valerie Oorthuys stated that the plans are ADA accessible. Members of the Committee agreed that if the shared use portion of the sidewalks is accessible and wide enough for both pedestrians and a cemetery maintenance vehicle, then a separate sidewalk along Crescent Road in front of Hillside Cemetery would not be needed.

The resident at 58 Crescent Street had stated at the Public Forum that he would like the retaining wall in front of his house to be replaced with a fieldstone wall, citing that a concrete block design would be out of character with Stow. Members of the Committee discussed how a fieldstone wall would fit the character of Stow, but a fieldstone wall would be a very large expense for the Town. Valerie Oorthuys suggested that alternatives like a stamped concrete wall could provide a compromise for the request of the resident and the budget of the project.

Valerie Oorthuys stated that she spoke with the Tree Warden regarding the tree protection infrastructure proposed near Warren Road. She stated that more information is needed about the proposed protection. She noted that porous pavement is part of the protection; she asked Brian Hatch if the Highway Department has the maintenance machinery for porous pavement. Brian Hatch stated that the Department does not have the machinery and would need to rely on salting the sidewalk in winter instead of sanding.

Kathy Sferra asked if another crosswalk could be added at the intersection of Crescent Street and West Acton Road. She suggested that the crosswalk could lead from the proposed sidewalk and lead to the grass triangular median. She stated that it could allow pedestrians to safely cross the street if they are walking south on the east side of West Acton Road (along Pilot Grove Farm). The committee suggested relaying this comment to the engineer to see if the crosswalk would be safe.

Updates on Ongoing Projects

Track Road Shared Use Path Design

Kathy Sferra and Valerie Oorthuys shared an update about the Track Road Shared Use Path. The Town has come to an agreement with MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration to develop plans that identify three alternatives for a path. The alternatives include an elevated board walk for pedestrians and cyclists, separate facilities for cyclists/pedestrians and vehicles, and a shared use path for all types of transportation users. Kathy Sferra noted that a shared use path for all users is what Town Staff are advocating for, while MassDOT is advocating for the first two options. Valerie Oorthuys noted that MassDOT reviewed vehicle count data that showed high vehicle traffic; the high number was not representative of a typical day and instead represented an event weekend at Crow Island. She stated that MassDOT has concerns regarding the interaction of cyclists and pedestrians with vehicles.

Marlboro Road Intersection

Valerie Oorthuys stated that a forum was held by the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) about modifications to the intersection of Marlboro Road and Route 62. At the forum, there was a proposed solution that was favored by TSAC and residents of Gleasondale. After the forum was adjourned, concerns about maintenance (like snow removal) and safety (like the interaction between the modification and the reconstruction of the Gleasondale Bridge) were identified. Valerie Oorthuys stated that the modification of the road will be temporarily on hold but will be discussed further once the construction of Gleasondale Bridge is complete.

Hudson Road/Route 117 Signalization

Valerie Oorthuys stated that the Town did not receive MassWorks grant funding for the signalization of the intersection of Hudson Road and Route 117. Kathy Sferra asked if there was any indication in the responses from MassWorks as to why Stow did not receive the funding. Valerie Oorthuys stated that no reasoning was provided. She stated that next year, the Town could reapply and describe the developments that have been permitted, such as the Cottages at Wandering Pond and the anticipated Stow Acres residential development. She added that MassWorks looks for ways to fund projects that foster economic development.

Kane Land Access Path

Valerie Oorthuys stated the Kane Land Access Path has been completed. There are two procurement items that will need to be resolved before the project is considered officially complete. Members of the committee asked what steps are next for the Kane Land. Valerie Oorthuys stated that a group of residents are aiming to identify locations of trails on the property, however the group may need to get permission from the Select Board.

Town Center Streetscape Improvements

Valerie Oorthuys announced that a consultant has been selected to develop concept plans for improving the transportation infrastructure around Town Center. A small working group of Town Staff will be

working with the consultants and providing key input. The consultant will meet with the working group on October 17, 2023.

Kathy Sferra motioned to adjourn.

Brian Hatch seconded.

Roll call vote: Kellie Barhight **-Yea**; Barry Evers **-Yea**; Brian Hatch **-Yea**; Karen Kelleher **-Yea**; Kathy Sferra **-Yea**

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Slagle