

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
July 28, 2009**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** Larry Yandow (Village President); George Tyler, Peter Gustafson, John Lajza. (Deb Billado was absent.)

**ADMINISTRATION:** Dave Crawford, Village Manager.

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**I. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Village President, Larry Yandow, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

Additions to Consent Agenda:

- Grant Amendments for Five Corners Redevelopment Project
- Revised Check Register

**III. GUESTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

1. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

Chris Chiquoine

Chris Chiquoine requested a copy of the list of CVE events to be monitored for noise and those that received a waiver. Dave Crawford reported a meeting with CVE and the police is being scheduled to discuss the process for reporting noise and to review various reports/complaints on events that were monitored. There is a list of events that have verbal agreement at this point in time, said Mr. Crawford, offering to forward the list to Mr. Chiquoine.

On a different note, Mr. Chiquoine suggested one way to inform many people of the Trustees meetings is to post the meetings on Front Porch Forum.

Tom McCormack

Tom McCormack expressed concern about police interaction in a personal property dispute. Mr. McCormack was directed to the Essex Selectboard as the forum to express his concerns.

2. Public Hearing & Actions on Pearl Street Streetscape Project

The public hearing on the Pearl Street Streetscape Project was opened at 6:45 p.m. Dave Crawford reported the process is gaining momentum to move forward with the signed cooperative agreement from VTrans. Hamlin Engineering is keeping the project on task through lots of work and effort. Ande DeForge is the liaison from VTrans.

Rick Hamlin, Hamlin Engineering, stated many of the initial steps have been done including a comprehensive study and findings by CCMPO on the Route 15 corridor that concluded in August, 2008. CVE is doing studies of the fairground frontage area on Pearl Street as well. Alternatives were recapped and choices were made based on review, continued Mr. Hamlin. Findings from the CCMPO Route 15 study found existing conditions that included strip mall development, inconsistent pavement, and minimal landscaping. The CCMPO study also found that CVE has an underwhelming front door image and does not connect Route 15 and adjacent property or offer effective landscaping or buffering. Mr. Hamlin reviewed a conceptual

illustration of the CVE entrance from the 2005 study by Saratoga Associates. The illustration shows a split driveway, creates space for a building on the corner, maintains the pedestrian entrance in its current location, and shows a new sign, new style of fence, and hardscape from the curb to the fence in front of the grounds. An updated plan by Saratoga Associates done in 2009 shows hardscape from curb to fence in front of the grounds, fence with castellation, a ticket booth and pedestrian entrance centered on the spine of the fairgrounds, drop off/pick up area and bus shelter in its current location, traditional sign, and the driveway split by a landscaped island. The surface in front of the entrance archway and ticket booth is different in color from the hardscape to provide the experience of “entering the fair”.

An aerial photograph of existing conditions at the front of the fairgrounds was reviewed. Existing conditions include four travel lanes, two lanes inbound and two lanes outbound between curb lines. An overlay of proposed streetscape improvements shows concrete pavement (hardscape) from curb to fence, a wider hardscape on the other side of the street, and lighting on both sides of the street with historic gas lamps similar to those installed at Five Corners. The pedestrian crosswalk will be relocated west of the current site to the front of the proposed ticket booth/entrance building. New road striping on Route 15 includes a bike lane, single lanes inbound and outbound with a common safe harbor turn lane. The lane configuration holds to West Street and then opens to four lanes (two inbound and two outbound), the existing configuration. Studies have shown approximately one-third of the inbound traffic turns off at West Street Extension, stated Mr. Hamlin, adding the planned configuration east of West Street Extension will slow traffic. Curb to curb work is part of the re-striping project underway now (by West Street Extension) and does not use Pearl Street streetscape funding except for the elimination of the crosswalk. CVE is providing the local share funding of 20% for the work in front of CVE. In front of the shopping center and Mac’s Market there will be a wide concrete sidewalk and lighting on both sides of the street. The lane configuration continues (one inbound, one outbound, center turn lane) in its current configuration.

The temporary construction easement (on the rendering the dashed line offset from the public right-of-way) will allow access to CVE property during construction. The permanent easement is also identified on the drawing. CVE will maintain the property beyond the public easement.

Mr. Hamlin showed a pedestrian view of the fairgrounds from the edge of the walkway by the driveway and reviewed some design features of the structures on the site. The sign will have upright columns. The top of the sign will likely be changed from what is there now. There is hardscape all around the sign. A fire hydrant will be located by the sign with plenty of room for fire truck access. The wrought iron fence has detail and is connected by brick columns. The fence will run behind the sign. There are two ‘pocket parks’ with benches and a tree in the fence line. Brick pavers will be used for a different surface in these locations. Besides providing a rest area for pedestrians, the locations could be a place for handling storm water (sumps) or a display space for what is happening at the fairgrounds. A cupola in green and white festive stripes (mimicking a tent) and a clock has been added on top of the ticket booth building at the new pedestrian entrance. The roofline is different from the proposal by Saratoga Associates (the center of the building is heightened) so the structure is more visible from a distance. There will be a welcoming archway as the entry to the grounds and the walkway will be a different color from the hardscape. There is space in the archway for the ticket sales windows. The building is 35’ deep, 25’ wide on each side of the arch. The archway is 20’. The front of the building will have glass and two tone brick with smaller window panes than those proposed by Saratoga. The existing pedestrian entrance will be changed to a drop off/pick up area and a bus shelter. Elm

trees will be planted and will provide a high, wide canopy. The utility poles that are there presently will remain. Dave Crawford suggested the utility poles could be tied into the project with some decorative applications, such as planters on brackets on the poles or wrapping the poles in colored fabric, perhaps to match the colors on the cupola.

Mr. Hamlin recapped major points of the streetscape including a full width walk from curb to fence, a substantial iron decorative fence, gas lights for street lamps to match the lights at Five Corners, and an entry building that ‘announces’ the entrance to the fairgrounds. The project’s budget including a 20% contingency is \$2,560,000. Presently costs are estimated at this amount. Unit price cost estimates were done. The missing link is the section from the fairgrounds to the fire station.

Mr. Hamlin explained sole sourcing is not allowed due to use of federal funds. The exception is the gas lamps which will match the lamps installed at Five Corners. Documentation from the Five Corners redevelopment project will be used to support sole sourcing the lamps and help reduce the lead time for the order. The next rendition is the investigation of more energy efficient lamps. Efficiency Vermont contacted Hamlin Engineering about retrofitting LED lights, but it is likely metal halide will be chosen to provide the same light quality from fewer lights but alternatives are being examined, reiterated Mr. Hamlin.

Dave Crawford reviewed the timeline which includes sending the design package out for proposals in August and awarding the bid in mid-September. Final design work will be done in an October/November timeframe and in the spring the project will go out to bid to begin construction in May, 2010. The easements have agreement, but the documents must be signed and forwarded to VTrans.

Dave Grimm, CVE General Manager, stated the agricultural barn along Pearl Street will be relocated per the master plan for the fairgrounds. The sign will have remote control announcements (LED) so messages can be readily changed. Public service announcements, such as “Vote Today” or “Give Blood”, could easily be posted. The work being done by the Village and Hamlin Engineering is much appreciated, said Mr. Grimm, adding the concept is very exciting to CVE and the community at large.

Larry Yandow spoke in support of the fence. George Tyler commented the proposal is the essence of what Saratoga Associates proposed. The traffic pattern is more logical and reasonable. Rick Hamlin pointed out the lane narrowing to a single lane will occur before there are curb cuts (before the fairgrounds). The bike lane and a single lane of traffic will both help slow traffic. The “choke point” already exists.

There were no further comments. The public hearing was closed at 7:35 p.m.

**MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by John Lajza, to approve the plan for the Pearl Street streetscape as presented by the Village Engineer (Hamlin Engineering) on 7/28/09 and to move forward to the next steps in the project. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **1. Pearl Street Streetscape and Paving Projects**

Dave Crawford reported complaints have been received from residents on South Street and West Street that the road reconfiguration is creating more traffic on these streets. The situation was

explained to those residents who called in a complaint. A meeting was held with the police to review and discuss the transition of lanes. It is clear a better way to disseminate information to the public about what is going on in the village is needed, observed Mr. Crawford, because though the project has been under discussion for a couple of years, the public does not always connect past discussions with project ground breaking. South Street has had traffic problems for years, noted Mr. Crawford. The police can provide more enforcement to dissuade people from avoiding Five Corners by using neighborhood streets. Signs can be posted regarding fines for disregarding Stop signs. Traffic on the roads when IBM was at full capacity was higher than it is today, commented Mr. Crawford. The construction barrels are temporary, but they do alert the driver to an upcoming change. The police are concerned about dispersing traffic from the fairgrounds after a large concert. It is possible to have two outbound lanes turning right out of the fairgrounds to the traffic light during these times, but there is no way to maintain two lanes. The safe harbor lane is needed to Warner Ave. Also, fair concerts are 10 days out of the year while the reconfiguration plans address traffic all year long. Peter Gustafson suggested manipulating the light to lengthen the green signal. Rick Hamlin said the light has to cycle to allow left turns out of the fairgrounds. To disperse traffic from concert events at the fairgrounds the safe harbor lane will be used as a second lane for right turns and there will be increased use of Gate E onto Route 2A. Dave Crawford stressed the lane configuration is a good design even under re-examination at this late date. The change in traffic patterns is significant, and the configuration is not final as yet. Several state agencies have looked at the plan. Issues that have been raised are about what happens on West Street and South Street. John Lajza said he has not seen that much additional traffic on the other end of South Street. Rick Hamlin stated there is an increase in traffic because drivers are getting caught in the 'Right Turn Only' lane coming into the village forcing them to turn onto West Street. Traffic control measures can be done on the streets. Speed limits can be monitored. Hamlin Engineering will ask VTrans to post additional signs to alert people to the lane changes.

Dave Crawford also reported a response from VTrans on the road title has not yet been received.

## 2. Recovery Act Application

Dave Crawford reported the sidewalk and streetscape applications will be resubmitted with the budget in mind (decision is needed on whether to survey the right-of-way for the next submittal). Invitation will be sent to Sen. Leahy to attend the dedication ceremony for the Five Corners redevelopment project in August and to show plans for the streetscape project from the shopping center on Pearl Street to the fire station as well as the crescent road connector and multiuse path (part of the rail upgrade project). It is hoped that the demonstration of use of earmarked funds for the Five Corners project will lead to further earmarks for the other projects. John Lajza noted the projects enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety. This point should be emphasized.

Mr. Crawford reported per the correspondence from Winslow Ladue, Agency of Natural Resources, the state accepted the vote process followed by the Village for borrowing. The determination is the public hearing and vote held in June is an appropriate ballot commitment.

## 3. Railroad Upgrade Project

Dave Crawford mentioned the staff change in the VTrans Rail Division with the Rail Division Manager, Robert Ide, taking the position of Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles. Effort will continue to gain legislative support for the rail upgrade project. The CVE Board of Directors requested more information on the project before signing a resolution of support and will discuss the matter at their September meeting. Staff continues to garner public support and

has put together the best case to the legislature. George Tyler suggested having IBM weigh in on the project with the thought that IBM may benefit from rail transport of materials to/from the facility in Essex Junction. Mr. Crawford will contact John O’Kane to discuss the issue.

**4. Local Option Tax Group**

Peter Gustafson reported to date four community members and two Village Trustees are on the Local Option Tax Committee. Two more members are being sought. The date of the first meeting of the group will be set after the membership is established

**5. Circumferential Highway Advocacy Group**

John Lajza asked permission from the Trustees to be proactive and set up a meeting with the Corps. of Engineers to provide community input. Dave Crawford suggested inviting the various participants in Boston to the area for a meeting. George Tyler suggested the Corps. of Engineers be asked to determine the carbon footprint of tens of thousands of cars idling versus a small piece of highway. John Lajza expressed frustration with regard to the argument of mitigating wetlands which were created by the way farmers plowed their fields rather than putting mitigation efforts into improving impaired brooks or other waterways. Mr. Lajza stressed the need to get the federal agencies to understand the issues. People want to live in the village because it is the way it is. If there is a highway bisecting the community (Rte. 2A alternative) and people cannot get from one side of the village to the other then the purpose is defeated.

**6. Memorial Day Parade 2010**

A meeting of volunteers interested in helping with the Memorial Day Parade 2010 will be scheduled in the fall. Notice will be published in the *Essex Reporter*. Linda Bogardus and Ann Gray volunteered to attend the meeting to bring everyone up to speed.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Set FY10 Village Tax Rate**

Dave Crawford reported a tax rate of \$.2149 is needed to support the budget. The amount represents an increase of 3.6% or 7/10<sup>th</sup> of a cent. Impact on the average residential property (assessed value of \$266,372) is an increase in payment over last year of \$19.71. IBM provides 10.1% of the grand list or 21.3% of total taxes collected (IBM pays \$464,947 including the annually decreasing subsidy).

**MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by John Lajza, to set the FY10 tax rate at \$.2149 to raise \$2,184,894 approved at the 2009 Annual Meeting. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

**VI. VILLAGE MANAGER’S REPORT**

**1. Meeting Schedule**

- August 11 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- August 25 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- Sept. 8 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- Sept. 22 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- Oct. 13 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- Oct. 27 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- Nov. 10 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- Nov. 24 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting (Thanksgiving week)
- Dec. 8 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting

- Dec. 22 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting

## 2. Essex Junction Trains

A meeting is scheduled September 1, 2009 to discuss trains in Essex Junction.

## 3. Finance Report

FY09 closed at a high deficit in the WWTF, but Water and Sanitation are on target. General Fund reserve from FY08 was drawn down in FY09 to \$160,000. Expenses against the reserve (Fire Department salaries, engineering costs, road salt, budgeted reserve) will result in an estimated reserve in FY10 of \$100,000 which is 3.4% of the budget. The auditors recommend maintaining a 5% reserve (\$150,000). One cent on the tax rate (which raises \$100,000) is needed to get back on track in the FY11 budget. The tri-town portion of the waste water treatment facility operating fund budget has a \$250,000 deficit. Funds (\$250,000) were borrowed from the Chittenden Bank. With the emergency purchase of the pumps the deficit is \$300,000 so an additional \$50,000 is needed. Septage and leachate revenues are higher than estimated and the village's share in the tri-town arrangement equates to approximately \$50,000. Per the Tri-Town Agreement the village can put its share of revenues into a separate reserve account for future treatment plant capital improvements. The auditors will confirm this is allowed.

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Peter Gustafson, to transfer approximately \$50,000 (the Village's share) from the Tri-Town WWTF Operating Fund to a village fund for future capital improvements to the waste water treatment facility. VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

## 4. Land Application of Sludge

Land application of treated sludge will occur on the Whitcomb Farm. The operation is controlled and approved by the Agency of Natural Resources and the Chittenden Solid Waste District. The material is fertilizer for crops. John Lajza confirmed the treatment plant produces the cleanest sludge in the state. The sludge material must meet all federal requirements for land application. Land application is a green use and diverts the material from the landfill.

## 5. Annual Village Block Party

Kudos to Patty Benoit and all the volunteers for another excellent and successful community block party.

## 6. CVE Noise Agreement

A meeting is scheduled with CVE to discuss the reporting process and recent events at the fairgrounds.

## 7. Projects before the Planning Commission

The Trustees received a list of projects being handled by the Planning Commission.

## 8. Grants

Sawyer Joecks reported building upgrades in Lincoln Hall and the Brownell Library may qualify for an Educational Facilities Grant (\$25,000). There is an Historic Preservation Grant (\$15,000) which could possibly be used for improvements to Lincoln Hall or even the railroad station. A Recreational Facilities Grant (\$25,000) targets programs versus buildings and could be used to expand community and recreational programs and events, such as the annual block party or

Memorial Day Parade. There are additional opportunities to investigate including grants for transportation railroad museums and streetscapes and lighting.

**VII. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS**

Larry Yandow commented downtown Essex Junction is a “tomb” on Saturday nights and suggested finding a site where people can have an outdoor picnic while watching a current film shown on a small movie screen. Dave Crawford assured staff is grappling with trying to get more people downtown when the stores are open.

Peter Gustafson publicly thanked the community for supporting the fifty 8<sup>th</sup> graders going to Washington, DC in April, 2010. The bottle drive collected 24,000 bottles and cans in four hours. Another bottle drive is scheduled on September 12, 2009.

**VIII. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE**

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, to approve the consent agenda as presented below and with the addition of the grant amendments for the Five Corners redevelopment project and the revised check register:**

- 1. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting (7/14/09)**
- 2. Approve Warrants**
- 3. Confirm Authorization of Required Direct Deposit**
- 4. Reading List Acceptance (Letters & Communications)**
  - Amended Village Charter
  - Land Application of Waste Water Facility Biosolids

**VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by George Tyler, that the Board of Trustees go into Executive Session to consider legal matters, contract negotiations and personnel matters, and potential budget changes related to personnel issues where premature general public knowledge would clearly place the Village at a substantial disadvantage, and to permit staff (i.e. Village Manager and intern, Sawyer Joecks) to be present for the session.**

**VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

The Board entered Executive Session at 9 p.m.

**MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Peter Gustafson, to adjourn Executive Session.**

**VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

Executive Session was adjourned and the regular meeting reconvened at 9:22 p.m.

**X. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by George Tyler, SECOND by Peter Gustafson, to adjourn the meeting.**

**VOTING: 4 ayes; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.