

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
September 22, 2009**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Larry Yandow (Village President); Deb Billado, George Tyler, Peter Gustafson, John Lajza.
ADMINISTRATION: Dave Crawford, Village Manager.

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

Addition(s) to agenda:

- Discussion of Pearl Street Grant Application with Village Engineer, Rick Hamlin (add under "Guests/Presentations")
- Sanitation Capital Request to Authorize Change Order for Sewer Pipeline Repairs (add under "New Business")
- Noise Waiver Request for High School Homecoming Fireworks (add under "New Business")

Correction to Consent Agenda:

Minutes of 9/8/09, Page 5, Section VI, Village Manager's Report, Item #4 – Streetlights – delete sentence reading: "Some of the lights have been turned off to reduce energy costs."

III. GUESTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

There were no comments from the public at this time.

2. Park Street Traffic Study Presentation by Joe Segale, Director of Transportation Planning, Resources Systems Group, Inc. (RSG)

Joe Segale with Resources Systems Group reviewed the planning study of potential improvements to Park Street. The study area included Park Street south of Five Corners, Park Terrace, Park Street School access, the proposed connector road from Park Street to Maple Street, and a slip lane on the Main Street to Lincoln Street. The hotel on Park Street and the condo units on Park Terrace were considered in the study, confirmed Mr. Segale.

Park Terrace improvements:

Mr. Segale recommended installing a bulb-out with a curb and grass on the corner of School Street and Park Terrace to narrow the street at the corner and emphasize one-way traffic on the street. In addition, the driveways at the bank access should be tightened up to help slow down traffic. Park Terrace is currently 22' wide. Mr. Segale suggested extending the sidewalk to Park Street and narrowing the road to an 11' wide lane with a sidewalk and green strip.

Park Street School improvements:

The corner of Park Terrace and Park Street will possibly be developed with a hotel. The (*proposed*) hotel lot connects in the back to an adjacent lot. Mr. Segale recommended making a connection from the (*proposed*) hotel's back lot which is designated for parking to the school property and having a connector road from Park Street to the school property and the adjacent parking lots. Curb cuts should be closed on Park Street between the railroad tracks and Five Corners (considered a high accident area). Traffic circulation would be one way into the hotel from Park Street and one way out onto Park Street, ideally through the school access. Access to the Hinsdale property (Domino's Pizza) could also be through the school access road. The idea is to share driveways where possible, stressed Mr. Segale. Lincoln Inn has multiple driveways with interconnecting parking lots. The concept is to consolidate driveways and relocate the access as far from Five Corners as possible. One-way circulation pattern in the parking lot is also recommended.

Maple Street to Park Street Connector Road:

Mr. Segale stated the proposed connector road will accommodate traffic using residential streets to bypass Five Corners. The connector road will also divert traffic from Five Corners. The amount of diversion is speculative, but the numbers are based on actual traffic patterns. It is estimated 37% of traffic will be diverted from Park Street to the connector road, 30% will be diverted from Maple Street to the connector road, and 30% will be diverted from Main Street to the connector road. An estimated 8,000 vehicles/day will use the connector road. Traffic on Railroad Street will increase from 2,000 vehicles to 5,300 vehicles per day. The on-street parking on Railroad Street will be relocated to the sidewalk side of the street. There will be 11' wide lanes, a green strip, a five foot wide sidewalk, and a bike lane on the proposed connector road. The intersection at Park Street and the connector road will be signalized. Depending on the scenario (build, no build) and the timeframe, level of service (LOS) will be A, B, C which means very little delay. Presently, there are 21,000 vehicles per day on Park Street. With the connector road vehicle queues on Park Street are not anticipated to stretch from Five Corners to Iroquois Avenue. At the intersection at Maple Street and the connector road there will be a left turn lane on Maple Street. Level of service will be A, B, C (depending on the scenario and timeframe). Level of service at the intersection of Main Street/Railroad Street/Railroad Avenue is A, B, C, D, and E depending on the scenario/timeframe. An example of "E" level of service is the delay that occurs when a vehicle is turning left from Railroad Street onto Main Street. The shift in volume of traffic and impact on Five Corners with the proposed connector road is shorter queues. An at-grade railroad crossing is needed on the connector road. New England Central Railroad supports the crossing provided the upgrades and maintenance costs are covered by the Village. The cost of the project is \$1.8 million with \$1.2 million for roadway and traffic signals and \$630,000 for the at-grade railroad crossing. Annual maintenance and operating costs are \$5,000 for the signals and \$7,400 for the railroad crossing.

3. Discussion of Potential Park Street Development

Bill Kalanges, property owner by the railroad tracks, spoke in support of the project. Mr. Kalanges asked about funding for the project. Mr. Segale said there are a litany of

funding sources including developer contribution, state and federal funds, and taxes. The availability of state and federal funds is questionable.

Diane Clemens, member of the Essex Junction Planning Commission, noted the condo project on Park Terrace and the traffic connection has been approved (*conceptual approval*) and should be shown in Mr. Segale's plan. Also, there are very actively used bike lanes on both sides of Maple Street that need to be considered. Support from the railroad needs to be confirmed. Joe Segale assured New England Central Railroad supports the proposed crossing. Robin Pierce added NECR is conceptually open to discussion of the crossing. Mr. Segale agreed the bike path on Maple Street continuing through the redesigned intersection needs to be shown. Bike lanes on the connector road will connect to the planned multi-use path. Further planning of bike lanes is needed.

Alex McEwing, owner of the Lincoln Inn, suggested a subsequent study be done as it appears the traffic problem at Five Corners is being moved farther down Park Street and there will be an impact on existing businesses. The streetscape looks good, continued Mr. McEwing, but many businesses on Park Street experienced substantial decline in business (up to 40%) during and since construction. Mr. McEwing questioned how businesses will benefit by moving the traffic intersection down the street and how business activity will be maintained during construction. Also, losing parking is an issue. Mr. McEwing suggested the connector road line up with the school access across Park Street. The railroad tracks are an issue to consider.

Mark Thibeault, Chairman of the Essex Junction Planning Commission, confirmed the Planning Commission has been discussing traffic circulation and access onto Park Street for Park Street School, the Hinsdale property, and the proposed hotel. A development plan on Park Terrace has been approved with vehicle access to Park Terrace. Mr. Thibeault asked why the study was done and the anticipated benefit to the community. George Tyler replied the study was done to determine impact on traffic. The idea is to decrease commuter traffic on Park Street to Five Corners and continue to improve the environment on Park Street by having the area become more pedestrian and business friendly. Mark Thibeault observed there may be better benefit if the connector road intersection is moved half a mile down Park Street as there is clearly a benefit to having more cars going past businesses on the street. Funds would be better spent on a plan that allows fairgoers to turn left out of the fairgrounds and enter into the village to shop or go to a restaurant rather than going to Burlington, stated Mr. Thibeault. Robin Pierce commented people like to see the stores where they shop and appreciate not having large trucks and lots of traffic around them.

There was discussion of level of service at Five Corners. LOS at Five Corners is F. The proposed connector road will not change the LOS. LOS E, F means more cars are arriving than can go through the intersection. LOS D indicates a potential wait of 35-55 seconds. LOS F is a delay of greater than 80 seconds. Five Corners is a difficult intersection and will likely always have congestion. With traffic signals at each end of the connector road, the roadway has some functions and works fine. Mark Thibeault questioned building the connector road when there is no time savings benefit at Five

Corners (10 seconds will be saved). Funding could be better applied for more benefit elsewhere in the village and existing businesses will not be adversely impacted, stated Mr. Thibeault.

Rick Hamlin mentioned the delay he has experienced on Maple Street during peak hour traffic (traffic is queued from Five Corners to Mansfield Ave.) and waiting through six cycles of the traffic light before getting through Five Corners.

Deb Billado mentioned the tremendous number of cars using the east bound lane on Maple Street (going into the oncoming traffic lane) to get in the left turn lane at Five Corners.

Larry Yandow said traffic backs up to Lang Farm on Rte. 15 when school is in session. Mr. Yandow assured the Trustees do support businesses in the village. A balance with traffic must be found that benefits all.

Linda McKenna, School Street, noted rail traffic seems to have increased through the village. Trains effectively slow down the traffic. Ms. McKenna expressed concern about the road plans in light of the increase in frequency of trains. Joe Segale stated there are four trains currently on the main line and four trains going to Burlington. More freight is being shipped by rail. Larry Yandow recalled at one point there were 60 trains per day traveling through the village.

David Knox, Maple Street, spoke in support of the project if it is done correctly. Mr. Knox asked if the unsanctioned left turn lane on Maple Street and sidewalks are involved in the plan. Mr. Segale said the study focused on the connector road and does include sidewalks.

Peter Gustafson commented on the length of time he has spent at Five Corners waiting at traffic lights over the past 30 years, expressing concern about the anticipated increase in traffic by Year 2020 and stressing the importance of planning for traffic from all five directions at Five Corners.

Further comments on the Park Street Traffic Study should be forwarded to the Village Office.

4. Discussion of Pearl Street Grant Application with Village Engineer, Rick Hamlin
Dave Crawford reported the Village did not receive ARRA (stimulus) funding. Application for state grant money can be submitted for a maximum grant of \$300,000 with a 20% match. The application process requires a public information meeting prior to submitting the application. The Village received a \$2.6 million earmark for the comprehensive Pearl Street upgrade by CVE. It may not be prudent at this time to expend time and energy on a grant application with the state. Rick Hamlin concurred with Mr. Crawford, noting criteria that give a community priority for receiving a grant from the state includes being an economic depressed area and having complete plans and permits in hand. There is slim chance Essex Junction will receive a state grant at this

time, especially since several million dollars in funding for projects has already been received. The state grant program is an annual application process so the Village's situation can be re-evaluated next year and an application submitted.

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Deb Billado, to not apply at this time for a state transportation enhancement grant. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Update on the Pearl Street Streetscape and Paving Projects

Dave Crawford reported lane striping will be done as soon as possible. It is not known when the arrows will be painted. The state is working with the paint contractor. Rick Hamlin commented once the arrows are in place, the lane configuration will be clear to drivers. Larry Yandow noted the road changes on Susie Wilson Road (Town of Essex) are confusing to drivers. Rick Hamlin stated coordinating signs and traffic signals is a work in progress. Also, cars and bicyclists must share the road from West Street into Burlington.

Seven Requests for Qualifications have been received for the Pearl Street streetscape project. The review committee (Robin Pierce, Rick Hamlin, Rick Jones, and Dave Crawford) will have a recommendation for the 10/13/09 Trustees meeting. Rick Hamlin briefly explained the difference between an RFQ (Request for Qualification) and RFP (Request for Proposal). Dave Crawford expressed appreciation for the effort by CCMPO and Eleni Churchill especially in moving the project through the process.

2. Recovery Act Projects

Dave Crawford reported paperwork from the Agency of Natural Resources for funding the sewer lining project has not yet been received even though the project is nearly half finished. The change order for the sanitation project includes five additional lines that require repair at a cost not to exceed \$50,000.

3. Railroad Upgrade Project

Dave Crawford reported work continues to garner support for the project at the next legislative session. New England Central Railroad continues to support the project.

4. Update on Local Option Tax Committee

Deb Billado announced the next meeting of the Local Options Tax Committee is 9/24/09. Highlights of the 9/10/09 meeting included meeting with Rick Maguire, Williston Town Manager, to discuss the local options tax in Williston. Originally the tax was not approved by the Williston taxpayers, but Act 60 brought the issue back on the table and the tax was reactivated with a sunset date which has since been renewed. The bulk of the tax in Williston was from the non-food industry in Williston (clothing and shoes are exempt), but now most of the tax revenue is from the food industry. According to Rick Maguire, noted Ms. Billado, the local options tax is working well for the Town of Williston.

George Tyler mentioned the concern of the impact of a local options tax on businesses struggling in the current economy. Deb Billado assured the committee will gather input from many entities before bringing the issue to the taxpayers for a decision.

5. Update on Railroad Ave. Revitalization Project and VCRD Initiative

George Tyler said the deterioration of the downtown area is of great concern to village residents who want the core downtown area revitalized. Money has been invested in the appearance of the area, but this has not resulted in a dynamic downtown. Deb Billado pointed out there is no control on the businesses that locate in the area. George Tyler said public input is needed as to what the public wants to see in the downtown core. It is suggested Sue McCormack work with the Railroad Avenue Revitalization team and plan a forum with the Vermont Council on Rural Development in February and coordinate with the Smart Growth meeting in October. Sue McCormack should also work with the Village Development Director, Robin Pierce, to ensure a concrete proposal at the forum in February for revitalizing the area.

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Deb Billado, to authorize the Village Manager to enter into a consulting contract at a cost not to exceed \$5,400 to assist the Village in the Railroad Ave. Revitalization Project and to put in place a planning forum in February, 2010, and further the funds shall be reallocated from the Village Business Promotion Committee account.

DISCUSSION: George Tyler noted the Council on Rural Development is waiving their fee. Larry Yandow mentioned the expansion of the village center (to include Pearl Street) is what caused the deterioration in the downtown core. There was further discussion of businesses that were in the core and the need to get businesses back there.

VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

6. Amend Action on Sale of Equipment

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, to amend the motion for the funds received from the sale of the equipment to read “And further, to direct the Village Manager to put the funds received from the sale of the catch basin cleaner into the Rolling Stock Fund, the funds received from the sewer rodder into the Sanitation Fund and the funds received from the sale of the Spreader/Sander into the Wastewater Treatment Fund.” VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. Schedule Board Retreat

The Trustees Retreat will be October 29, 2009 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

2. Sanitation Capital Request – Authorize Change Order for Sewer Pipeline Repairs

MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by John Lajza, to authorize that the sewer pipeline rehabilitation project capital be increased by \$50,000 to cover repair of five additional lines (South Hill Drive G10-G11, Redwood G14-G13, Mansfield Ave N27-N28, McGregor Street N17-N16, and McGregor St N16-N15) and that the funds come from the Sanitation line item for capital. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

3. Noise Waiver Request for Essex High School Homecoming Fireworks

Dave Crawford said the request for a noise waiver came in late and therefore is an addition to the agenda. There will not be enough time to advertise the waiver in the newspaper to inform the public. Mr. Crawford said he suggested the school submit their request earlier next year. John Lajza suggested posting the waiver on Front Porch Forum. George Tyler will post the information on the Village website as well.

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by George Tyler, to grant a noise waiver for fireworks at the Essex High School Homecoming football game on 10/3/2009 at 7 p.m. and post the information on Front Porch Forum, the Village website, and if possible, in the *Burlington Free Press*. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

Peter Gustafson noted there will not be a homecoming parade due to lack of volunteers for the floats.

VI. VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Meeting Schedule

- 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. W.A.V.E. Initiative

The WAVE initiative is a handprint painted at crosswalks with the letters “W”, “A”, “V”, “E”, on the fingers and the word “PLEASE” on the thumb to alert people to ‘Please’ ‘Watch’, ‘Acknowledge’, ‘Verify’, and ‘Enter’ before crossing the street.

3. RFQ for Pearl Street Streetscape Project

Staff reported seven RFQs have been received for the streetscape project.

4. Promotion Rail Trip from Essex Junction to Brattleboro

On Saturday, 9/26/2009, there will be a train running from Essex Junction to Brattleboro at a cost of \$12 each way.

5. Construction on Maple Street by IBM

Staff reported on unscheduled construction work on the water main on Maple Street by IBM due to a water leak.

6. Deteriorated Culvert/Drainage Pipe on Warner Avenue

Staff reported an 18” sleeve will be inserted into the crushed drainage pipe in the culvert on Warner Ave. The culvert is 30’ deep.

7. Concern regarding Waiver for Fireworks on September 13th.

Staff noted the police were informed of the waiver and fireworks.

VII. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS

Deb Billado reiterated her concern about cars entering the oncoming traffic lane on Maple Street in order to get to the left turn lane at Five Corners. Dave Crawford will have Public Works review the situation. There was additional discussion of cars and trucks exceeding the speed limit on village streets.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE

MOTION by Larry Yandow, SECOND by George Tyler, to accept the consent agenda as follows:

- 1. Approve Minutes of 9/8/09 Meeting as amended (Page 5, Village Manager's Report, Item #4, Streetlights - delete sentence reading: "Some of the lights have been turned off to reduce energy costs.")**
- 2. Approve Warrants**
- 3. Reading List Acceptance (Letters & Communications)**
 - Burlington Free Press Article about IBM**
 - Champlain Business Journal Article about Belted Cow Bistro**

VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Peter Gustafson, SECOND by Deb Billado, 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: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:45 p.m.

MOTION by Deb Billado, SECOND by George Tyler, to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene the regular meeting. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

Executive Session was adjourned at 10:14 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by John Lajza, SECOND by Peter Gustafson, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: 5 ayes; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

RScty: M.E.Riordan