

**VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF MEETING
November 21, 2011**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: George Tyler (Village President); Dan Kerin, Mary Morris, Lori Houghton, John Lajza.
ADMINISTRATION: Dave Crawford, Village Manager; Darby Brazoski, Management Assistant Intern.
OTHERS PRESENT: Elaine Sopchak, Brad Luck, Cecilia Polansky, Ray Coffey, Jason Starr (Essex Reporter).

I. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Village President, George Tyler, called the meeting to order at 6 PM and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance. Management Assistant intern, Darby Brazoski, was introduced. Ms. Brazoski is in the MPA program at UVM and previously worked for the City of Burlington and Town of Jericho.

II. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

Additions to the agenda:

- Additional handouts on the Village Annual Meeting attendance, technology upgrade, and the Village Manager evaluation.
- Discussion of the “Amtrak Great American Train Stations Program” under ‘Old Business’.

III. GUESTS AND PRESENTATION

1. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
None.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Village Annual Meeting Attendance
Elaine Sopchak reviewed the task list and assignments to help increase attendance at the Annual Meeting.

Suggested changes/additions to the annual report include the following:

- Have the report from each Department Head that is included in the annual report touch upon three common goals set by the Board of Trustees in the past year so there is a focus and common thread to the annual report.
- Redesign the annual report with a graphic designer (this can be postponed to a future year when the budget is less tight).
- Add demographic information to the annual report (Elaine Sopchak will provide the information).
- Add a village government glossary to the annual report (Elaine Sopchak will provide the information).
- Add a brief (one page) on the activities of village groups and nonprofit organizations to the annual report (Lori Houghton will provide the information).

- Add a description of the Village Meeting process to the annual report (Steve Eustis will provide the information).

Staff will focus on the following:

- Updating the annual report per the suggestions above.
- Working with Department Heads to ensure there is a consistent message in the Annual Meeting (i.e. addressing three common goals set by the Board of Trustees).
- Additional advertising in the *Essex Reporter*.
- Reinstating the dinner (potluck).
- Determining a compelling topic for discussion following the Annual Meeting, such as the crescent connector.

There was continued discussion of ways to promote the Annual Meeting including Facebook, Front Porch Forum, flyers distributed to each household, advertisement in the local newspaper, and posting a banner. Elaine Sopchak reviewed a brief survey on the Annual Meeting that will be available at the tree lighting ceremony on December 7th. The survey will provide a sense of where people stand on the Village Meeting and why they do or do not attend. Darby Brazoski will post the survey on Front Porch Forum and the Village website.

2. Village Office Technology Upgrade

There was discussion of cloud computing being used by federal offices due to better security, greater flexibility, more connectivity, and less cost. Dave Crawford stated following several months of discussion with staff and the consultant and evaluation of cloud and Google technology, the conclusion is the Village needs to upgrade the server and have in-house email capability. The Village will need a new server regardless of the decision on in-house email. Sovernet service is no longer satisfactory or acceptable to the Village. It was noted CCSU uses Google Apps for their server.

The Trustees expressed support for upgrade of the server, but wanted more information before taking action on the in-house email, such as:

- Performance of the current server (process flowchart showing connections, who has access, software functions, and such);
- Improvement with an upgrade of the server compared to an upgrade with cloud technology or other service;
- Prices and explanation of services from other vendors.

Dave Crawford will have the technology group look at the system and provide a recommendation.

3. Village Manager's Evaluation

The Board will review and comment on the evaluation form which will be completed by Department Heads, Village Office staff, Village Engineer, Board of Trustees, and the Village Manager. Survey Monkey can compile the results after which the Trustees will meet with Department Heads and office staff for a thorough understanding of their evaluations. Mary Morris will facilitate the questionnaire. Comments are due to George Tyler by 11/26/11. The revised questionnaire will be returned to the Trustees for approval.

by 11/30/11 and forwarded to Mary Morris by 12/2/11 for distribution by 12/9/11. Two weeks will be allowed for completion.

4. Crescent Connector Questions to be Addressed and Strategy for Public Communication

George Tyler noted the crescent connector project has been accepted as one of the circ highway alternative projects and the CCMPO will recommend the project to the Governor as a transportation priority. There is no certainty of funding. John Lajza mentioned that Congress passed the addition to relief funds for damage from Tropical Storm Irene.

Issues/questions to be addressed by Village staff and/or the Village Engineer:

- Who will pay for the road? The hope is to use federal funds through the state and not use village taxes or a bond. The cost estimate for the road by CCMPO is approximately \$3 million (Village Engineer's estimate is approximately \$6 million). The CCMPO figure does not include work on Railroad Street or the traffic lights (the estimate by the Village Engineer includes these items). Water and sewer utilities are not covered by state funding for the project so this cost would have to be covered by the Village. The Village would have to cover Village specific add-ons and development costs.
- What is the impact on traffic? Will traffic improve at Five Corners or increase/decrease on streets? The road offers a choice to access Route 15 and Route 117 without going through Five Corners. Traffic may improve in areas at certain times of the day. Vehicles will be able to continue movement even with a train moving through the Village. The additional traffic lights with the crescent connector will not reduce traffic, but may improve flow at Five Corners. There is potential to decrease the time cycle at Five Corners because traffic will be diverted onto the crescent connector, but this will be offset by the stop at the Maple Street intersection. Maple Street and Park Street will be most impacted. The road will benefit underdeveloped property along the railroad tracks (economic development).
- What are the safety implications? Will there be crosswalks? Speed limit of 25 mph? What are the pedestrian implications (parking, walking, crosswalks, safety)? The draft plan for the road includes sidewalks and a bike lane.
- Regarding phases, is the crescent connector part of the multi-modal transportation hub and if so, what part? What is the impact on the existing train station?
- What are the maintenance costs?
- Will the traffic lights be synchronized on the crescent connector? With the Park Street lights? With the Five Corners lights?

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Cecilia Polansky asked if other alternatives were considered, including directing traffic down the IBM road from Park Street to avoid Five Corners or making some roads one-way only. Ms. Polansky felt the crescent connector as configured will not "fix anything" and is unimaginative. Also, only two alternatives are shown. Ms. Polansky mentioned building an over or underpass for pedestrians to avoid Five Corners. Dave Crawford

stated the tunnel structure would be cost prohibitive and may not even be used by people (the underused tunnel at UVM was cited). Mr. Crawford pointed out other potential options were eliminated due to cost or excessive disruption of neighborhoods. John Lajza explained the crescent connector project is positive from an economic development aspect and economic development in the area will increase the grand list, revitalize the downtown area, and help traffic flow.

5. Amtrak Great American Train Stations Program

A meeting with Amtrak is scheduled on 12/8/11 to discuss the train station program. Attendees will be from all over northern New England. Amtrak officials are aware of the issues and frustration with the Essex Junction train station. There will be a reserved table for representatives from the Village and Amtrak delegates to discuss the vision for the train station and what has been done to date. Dave Crawford, Darby Brazoski, Robin Pierce, George Tyler, and Jaye O'Connell will attend the function.

V. NEW BUSINESS

None.

VI. VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT

The Trustees received a memo on items in the Manager's Report.

1. Meeting Schedule

- December 5 @ 6:30 – Special Trustees Meeting
- December 27 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- January 10 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- January 24 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- February 14 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- February 28 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- March 13 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- March 27 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- April 10 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting
- April 24 @ 6:30 – Regular Trustees Meeting

Special Meetings/Events:

- December 7 – Light the Village Celebration and Train Hop
- December 13 – Budget Day
- March 7 – Special Meeting with Prudential Committee
- April 4 – Village Annual Meeting
- April 10 – Australian Ballot Voting

VII. TRUSTEES COMMENTS/CONCERNS

Dan Kerin announced Mark Brislin is planning a half-marathon in the Village in 2012. Mr. Kerin briefed the Board on progress on the police station site (presentations were heard from the owners of the four properties under consideration). Information is still being collected.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA & READING FILE

MOTION by John Lajza, **SECOND** by Dan Kerin, to approve the consent agenda as presented:

- 1. Approval of Warrants**
- 2. Approve Request from EJRP for Holiday Bonfire on 12/9/11**
- 3. Reading List Acceptance (Letters & Communications)**
 - Tree Lighting/Train Hop Poster 12/7/11**

VOTING: unanimous (5-0); motion carried.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION and/or ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Board, Village President Tyler adjourned the meeting at 7:58 PM.

RScty: M.E.Riordan