

JAMESTOWN TRAFFIC COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 23, 2017

I. A regular meeting of the Jamestown Traffic Committee was called to order at the Jamestown Town Hall, Council Chambers, 93 Narragansett Avenue at 6:00 PM by Vice-Chairman Mary Meagher.

II. The following members were present:

Mary E. Meagher, Vice-Chairman
Vincent Moretti
William Munger
David Cain
Timothy Yentsch

The following members were absent:

Thomas Tighe, Chairman
Melissa Mastrostefano

Also present:

Chief Edward A. Mello
Andrew Nota, Town Administrator
Michael Gray, Public Works Director
Lisa Bryer, Town Planner
Kim Devlin, Clerk

Member Cain moved to move up item VI A) East Ferry Renovation Project – Design Alternatives; review and discussion and/or potential action and/or vote; Member Moretti seconded. So voted; 5 ayes, 0 nays.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A) **East Ferry Renovation Project – Design Alternatives; review and discussion and/or potential action and/or vote**

Public Works Director, Mike Gray, updated the Traffic Commission on the status of the East Ferry project. Mr. Gray stated that the curbing and railing has been updated, along with a retaining wall, a sidewalk and landscaping north of the steel pier. The last item that needed funding was the parking lot renovation. The council decided to move forward with conceptual designs for the area.

A landscape architect was hired, Jean Lambert, who now works for the town. Ms. Lambert went through the exercise of providing the best design ideas for the area. The number one priority was to preserve the number of parking spaces that currently exist, and other considerations were to protect the views and to improve the green space and signage. The intent was not to just focus on

the utility of parking but to improve upon the entire experience of visiting East Ferry.

Town Administrator, Andy Nota, stated that the plan Mike (Gray) is going to present is a result of a charrette that was organized in 2007 by the Town Planner, Lisa Bryer, as a part of the Jamestown Vision project the Planning Department has been working on.

Public Works Director Mike Gray detailed the layout and methodology behind the two different conceptual design options. The first option is to maintain the existing footprint and improve upon the aesthetics of the area by adding greenery, benches, sidewalks and stone walls to direct the pedestrian traffic. One drawback of this option is that the benches will overlook the parking lot. The second conceptual design option, which the Town Council approved, changes the layout of the area so that the green space and benches are adjacent to the waterfront, which would create a more appealing place to sit and enjoy the waterfront.

Vice-Chairman Meagher mentioned that, although the council approved the design option that changes the layout of the parking area, the next step the council will take is to meet with business owners in the area to gather their feedback on the plans. The council also intended to meet with the boards and commissions for their input, as well.

Member Cain stated that he doesn't feel there is enough room for delivery trucks to turn, in the second option.

Public Works Director Mike Gray stated that the existing angle of the turn is sharper than the 90 degree turn in the second option and that they also used turning templates in the design process. There should be no problem with a typical delivery truck making the turn, as emergency vehicle access was considered in the design process. A firetruck will be able to access the area.

Member Yentsch asked Public Works Director Mike Gray about the splash over from the retaining wall onto the vegetation in the second design.

Public Works Director Mike Gray stated that they will choose species that are saltwater tolerant. In the future there may be storms that affect the space, as is a reality for any waterfront community. At times the vegetation may need to be replaced, just as it has been in other waterfront areas.

Vice-Chairman Meagher opened up the meeting to comments from the general public.

Bill Wilson from Grapes and Gourmet stated that his main concern is the flow of traffic in the area and that the way the design is now is the way you want to go.

He stated that cars pulling into the parking lot will not be able to see if a parking space is open or not and they will drive down to the end of the parking lot only to have to back up the length of the lot to turn around. And, if there are other cars pulling in behind the first car they will have to back up to let the first car out and it will cause traffic to back up into the street.

Mr. Wilson also stated that this parking arrangement could also cause fights to break out between people that are looking for parking spaces.

Vice-Chairman Meagher stated that her concern is the pedestrian traffic in the area. People walk all over the place and that is equally as dangerous as not being able to see parking spots from a few spaces back.

Town Administrator Andy Nota stated that the priority is maintaining parking spaces, but it is also a community space and has more value than just parking. The balance is to achieve and maintain a functional flow for vehicle and pedestrian traffic, to maintain the 46 parking spots and to create an improved community space.

Town Planner Lisa Bryer stated that the existing design creates a different space than the new design. The new design makes you want to sit and look at water. The way the area is designed now, there is not an appealing place to sit and enjoy the waterfront.

Mike Ridge from Spinnakers Café stated that he supports Bill Wilson's comments and questioned if we even need green space at all. He stated that there is plenty of green space in Memorial Square and that a better use would be to get rid of the green space and add more parking spaces.

Vice-Chairman Meagher stated that they did explore that option, but that it would not add any more spaces even if the entire area was paved.

Mr. Ridge stated that the new design is worse than the existing one.

A discussion ensued.

Member Cain asked about the cost analysis

Public Works Director Mike Gray stated that the costs are the same for either plan.

Member Munger stated that he supports improving the original design and that you could push the sidewalk back further from the retaining wall to make room for benches along the water.

Member Munger also stated that the fenced in refuse are in one of the designs would not work because of logistical issues with dock removal and installation.

Public Works Director Mike Gray stated that the refuse area is no longer a part of the design.

Town Administrator Andy Nota stated that, since the subject was brought up, we do need to figure out a way to deal with trash removal at East Ferry. He stated that the dumpster Conanicut Marine currently uses is not even within their lease area.

Member Munger suggested connecting the boardwalk in front of Conanicut Marine with the sidewalk by the Wood Pile Pier. This would allow for motorized wheelchair access from one place to the other.

Member Munger moved that the Traffic Commission prefers Design 1 and to widen the sidewalk by the retaining wall to accommodate benches. Chairman Cain seconded. So voted; 4 ayes, 1 nay (Meagher).

III. READING AND APPROVAL OF MIUNTES

A) January 19, 2017 (regular meeting)

Motion was made by Member Munger, seconded by Member Moretti to accept the January 19, 2017 minutes. So voted; 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention (Meagher).

IV. OPEN FORUM

A) Scheduled Requests to Address

There were no Scheduled Requests to Address.

B) Non-Scheduled Requests to Address

There were no Non-Scheduled Requests to Address.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A) Conanicus Avenue Crosswalk; review and discussion and/or potential action and/or vote

Vice-Chairman Meagher stated that the Traffic Committee sent a letter to the state traffic commission but we have not heard back from them yet. It is a state road and it is up to them to determine the guidelines.

Chief Mello informed the committee that the State Traffic Commission, or a representative from the commission, is not the one who would attend a Jamestown Traffic Committee meeting. It would be someone from the Department of Transportation (DOT). Steve Pristawa is a representative from the DOT who also sits on the State Traffic Commission, so the letter is addressed to the right individual.

Chief Mello stated that Mr. Pristawa needs to receive permission from the Director of the DOT to attend a Jamestown Traffic Committee meeting and that

he is not sure of where the request is in the process. Chief Mello is certain that he would not seek permission from the State Traffic Commission to attend, but from the Director of the DOT.

Chief Mello stated that he verbally clarified with Mr. Pristawa the nature of the request.

B) Low Speed Vehicles to be permitted on Town roads where speed limit is 35 mph or less; review and discussion and/or potential action and/or vote (continued from 1/19/2017)

Vice-Chairman Meagher stated that Chairman Tighe talked to State Representative Deb Ruggiero and the lowest speed for a state road is 25 mph, which is faster than the low speed vehicles can travel. Ms. Ruggiero informed Chairman Tighe that there was a discussion at the state level regarding the idea of low speed vehicles and a number of police chiefs opposed the idea.

A discussion ensued on the details of changing state legislature to allow for low speed vehicles, which would include the registration and inspection process, as well as the logistics of the change.

By consensus item V (B) will be continued to the next meeting.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

A) Letter of State Traffic Commission re: Conanicus Avenue Crosswalk and request to attend upcoming meeting

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Committee, a motion was made by Committee Member Cain and seconded by Member Munger to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 PM. So unanimously voted.

Attest:

Kim Devlin
Clerk