

Approved As Written
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
June 21, 2017
7:30 PM
Jamestown Town Hall
93 Narragansett Ave.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. and the following members were present:

Michael Swistak – Chair	Duncan Pendlebury – Vice Chair
Rosemary Enright – Secretary	Mick Cochran – arrived at 8:00 p.m.
Bernie Pfeiffer	Dana Prestigiacomio
Michael Smith	

Also present:

Lisa Bryer – AICP – Town Planner
Andy Nota – Town Administrator
Michael Gray – Public Works Director
Hali Beckman – Landscape Architect
Marilyn Munger – Conanicut Marine
Ron Ratcliff
Rob Packer – Conanicut Marine
Bill Munger – Conanicut Marine
Mike Ridge – Spinnakers
Bill Wilson – Grapes & Gourmet
Jack Brittain
Mary Brittain
Charlie Petit
Arlene Petit
Bruce Dickenson

II. Approval of Minutes June 7th, 2017

A motion was made by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Smith to accept the minutes as written. So unanimously voted.

III. Correspondence

1. FYI – Administrative Subdivision – Mecca/Cameron – Plat 9 Lots 249 & 570. Received
2. FYI – Memo to Zoning Board – Recommendation HGWTO Scully 113 Frigate. Received

IV. Citizen's Non-Agenda Item – nothing at this time

V. Reports

1. Town Planner's Report
2. Chairpersons report
3. Town Committees
4. Sub Committees

VI. Old Business

1. East Ferry Improvement project – Development Plan Review and Approval within the Jamestown Village Special Development District

Commissioner Swistak brought the audience up to date on this project. DPR is the Planning Commissions purview, parking and landscaping are under the planning commission purview. This did not have to come before planning but Town Administrator Andy Nota and the town council decided it could go to planning. There will be a recommendation to the town council after this meeting whether it be positive or negative. We do not make a decision, this is up to the town council. This has been before the planning commission for the 3rd time. The goal of the staff making East Ferry better. Public discussion is important and he appreciates all the effort that staff has put in for this. Let's remember we are all on the same team here.

Town Planner Lisa Bryer said it is very important to have everyone's input. We had a meeting April 19, May 7 and a TRC meeting on Friday June 19th. The Planning Commission was concerned about circulation in the plan that the town council chose. At the next meeting they decided to look at the plan the town council originally wanted and the staff and consultant Hali Beckman sat down to address the issues that came up at the April 19th meeting.

Lisa Bryer invited the public up to look at the full size plans. She explained the latest plan and the turn arounds, these changes were made based on comments from the last meeting. We were able to narrow some of the green to get more spaces. Today there are 46 spaces with the new plan there are 47 spaces. There is a loading space and also a turn around space. Staff met with the fire department to make sure that they have adequate safety in place. The fire department may re-evaluate their practices by bringing in just the rescue truck. We have 2 handicap spaces we joined together next to the walkway so there is more room. We added bike racks and landscaping has been added. This hybrid plan is an alternative favored by the town council and planning commission.

We received correspondence from the condo association and there were 2 items we made changes to that she just mentioned regarding the parking and turn arounds. She pointed out the difference in the configurations. Ms. Bryer went over the points on Bill Mungers letter. Parking space wise they are exactly the same.

Andy Nota said the turn on the left there are basic parking lot standards applied to this plan. 24 ft. on the entrance all the way through 24 feet wide more then 12 feet for the other car to come through. Andy said they would like to relocate the pump building, they will be looking to relocate this in the future. This will be an added benefit in the future and create more space.

Can we connect the 2 pedestrian ways to show that it is a pedestrian zone? Yes we can. What is the dimension for the parking lot today? 60 feet? Currently it is 62 feet curb to curb.

Marilyn Munger 10 Knowles ct. – loading and unloading why do we want to move it further away then where it is now. Minor concession. It will still function the same way. Make downtown better. We are creating space for the public currently it does not serve as a public space this will create more public use. Currently it is not user friendly for the public. It benefits the residents, those eating ice cream and just walking through town.

Rob Packer Pennsylvania Ave. – how long does it take to unload a car he says it is 30 minutes to unload. There will be a problem he said because they are all blocking each other in. He says How can you account for cars and loading in this small area? He mentioned he spoke to people that sit in their cars and look at the water.

Andy Nota said the problems we have today are the same as the new plan. He sat at TRC and was listening to that same statement. He sees the same thing happening now. What are the real issues? He is having trouble reconciling. Based on Planning Commission request.

Ron Ratcliff – 23 Ship St. - asked where is the traffic study? The traffic committee looked at this, this is not a plan that was formulated in the office. He said Bill Mungers letter is from his years of experience. This is not just a commercial property it is used by many interest groups, we are trying to find the sweet spot. Trying to get through the peak weekends, this design is based on engineering standards for width and parking spaces for depth. Can we get used to the change? Yes we can eventually.

Ron Ratcliff said businesses don't like it, residents downtown don't like it. Public access is more important?

Andy Nota said, So far this is the biggest group of people to show up. Usually it is a half dozen at most that have been here on this issue. The small group does all the work there is a much broader commitment to the people in this community. Most people will not come to a meeting and that is why staff needs to do their due diligence.

This is a tough discussion. Local Jamestown press he said the letters to the editor are against. Looking at it cost wise everyone down there are against it. 9 months out of the year it will not be. Andy Nota, This is not using tax dollars it is funds available to the town. Town was just awarded 65K in a grant 20% of project was funded by the state. Some people would rather see it as a tax credit. Andy personally is embarrassed by the way in which it looks currently. We have staff efficient in doing a lot of the work ourselves.

Commissioner Swistak said the town came to the planning commission and showed us 3 options, 4 out of 7 said they liked the green on the water. That night based on traffic commission review we had to go with original, they asked town to go back and make everyone happy looking for compromise from all the people that don't like it.

Jack Brittain – 14 Clinton Ave. – He does a lot of service work down on the docks now it is congested if there is a delivery truck or a van parked down there you can't see.

Leave it the way it is.

Charlie Petit – 28 Bryer – For all the handicap people when they go to the ferry Arlene can drop him off currently, the new plan is more difficult. Where is the tree going to go for Christmas. He is against the plan for handicap reasons.

Arlene Petit – echoing Charlies concern there are a lot of people that are handicap and it is going to be more difficult. Who is giving us money? She was answered Department of Commerce.

Bill Munger – Conanicut Marina – Carol Hopkins was going to come tonight. Used a lot by racers too. Racers have a lot of gear to load and unload.

Founder and president of Conanicut Marine. Been at the site for 40 years. He has witnessed this area function for a long time and he is very familiar with this. Currently there is a mix of 15 min, 30 min and no more than 2 hours. Boaters can touch and go but they cannot hang around. Most of his customers go to the boatyard, they are careful about that because they want their customers to spend money downtown. Bill went through all the pictures he handed out tonight. He went through picture by picture to explain the different deliveries. He then read his letter and thinks that scheme 2 would be a foolish choice and he thinks a traffic study should be done before a decision is made. He said if I was sitting in your chair I would want to know how we can accommodate those people that want to use it. He went through his letter step by step.

40 years ago 10 moorings and 30 now we are up to 500 moorings probably not more moorings added. People are still going to want to get to the bay, we need to accommodate that growth going forward. He suggests that the planning commission reject scheme 2, it is pretty but we need something that works. He would like a traffic study and thinks it is foolish to do this without. We do not want to be stuck with it.

Bruce Dickenson – 41 Arnold Ave. – he uses the touch and go a lot, he gets making it more beautiful and the embarrassment. Look at Fort Getty we didn't change it much but made it better he thinks the flow line will be bad.

Bill Wilson – Grapes and Gourmet he signed petition against the new plan, his concerns are safety issues in the parking lot.

Bill Munger – if someone has a vehicle longer than 18 feet it slows it down. There is always service work that needs to be done on the vessels. He does not see this as a touch and go operation.

Jack Brittain – the area needs a manicure he thinks it will create unimaginable problems he thinks we can achieve both. He hopes the Planning Commission takes into account the consideration for all handicap people. Any storm you will be replacing the bushes. He is down there 3-4 times a week doing work he thinks this will be impossible.

Andy Nota – appreciates all the comments and the acknowledgement that went into this plan, when we are done someday with this whatever is finished it will be nice. Leadership

is tough because you have to make hard decisions. Handful of users that have been represented here tonight, there are more users there that is why it was brought to the Planning Commission. The town is not engaged so whatever improvement is made they see as better. He disagrees with some of the comments made, the parking spaces have not been reduced. Before we leave tonight lets agree to how many spaces there are. There are 46 today and what you have before you tonight is 47 spaces. He does not understand how they can say it is a reduction. Beyond this we have come with existing plans both this plan and the existing. This is not trying to make it harder for the businesses. He disagrees with the comment the it is taking away handicap accessibility we are improving and enhancing it. We have had to make some modifications in the last few years regarding handicap spaces. One bone of contention is the long fairway. He doesn't know what is going to happen. Is there going to be congestion on the weekends? It is now. Bill Munger and this room is saying this plan is not functional it is beautiful but not functional.

Andy Nota said there are lots of deliveries and customers and residents. We are vetting this to look at traffic. What doesn't come to us is businesses that modify things without coming to us and those things will also effect and influence flow here to the apex of what we are talking about, for instance increased ferry service. Which Andy hopes they get. We want our businesses to be successful.

Arlene Petit said you are getting a view of what happens everyday there. The big trucks that go in there will hinder the parking and flow this is what the business owners are talking about. She says it affects the flow of the businesses. Lisa said it cannot be handled now and it wont be then either. Service people like a furnace guy it is a bigger truck. Today it accommodates.

Ron Ratcliff - you guys have a very difficult decision to make beautify or make it more functional? Comes down to why should we do this? To beautify it or make it more functional what criteria did you use?

Rob Packer said if you do change the existing layout please put enough money aside to put it back.

Mary Brittain – have you gotten any letters from people in support of this?

Commissioner Smith said things have changed we used to have a reporter here at every meeting and they don't anymore. He is impressed with this turn out.

Mike Ridge – Spinnakers – he has the most to gain from this new plan he is scared of this new plan, guessing on the traffic part a traffic study would be beneficial here. He thinks the general public cares but most of which is negative is what he has heard. Going forward with additional information. He thinks a traffic study would be a way for concrete information. One of the plans had a reduction in parking spaces that he is against. Commissioner Swistak asked are you ready Andy and Lisa for a vote? Andy said we have presented a number of plans 1,2,3 a bit of a hybrid. There is nothing else we can offer you. Whatever decision you make you send to the town council and they make. Findings of fact need to be done.

The town council has chosen to have a meeting July 17 or Aug 21. If we wrap it up Wednesday July 5th we can get it to the council for their July 17 meeting.

We are hoping to get some asphalt curbing work done this fall. And how anxious are you that if this does not work and it would cause a big problem, option would be to staff it and make it work on the key short term time periods to provide a control mechanism if it does not work. It is getting so busy down there now, we are a victim of our own success Dutch Harbor decided they need a parking attendant and even if we do not do anything we may need that anyway. Munger says no matter how busy it gets this is not something staff can fix. Half of the parking spaces are on a dead end street. This does not need to be so complicated because it already works.

We will not be able to come up with it tonight. We will give a commitment as it stands today.

Commissioner Swistak wants a quick vote tonight.

Cochran – parking and traffic flow down there is not perfect it is terrible, he goes down for many reasons there is lots of illegal parking down there now, the drop off is illegal. There is a parking and a traffic flow issue there. He is confident that Ms. Beckman can make either plan more beautiful. Traffic and illegal parking is an issue that the town needs to take care of. The parking situation downtown can be a problem. Most of the boat yards in town provide parking for their customers. Service vehicles he does not know what they are taking off their trucks to fix something on a boat. Fire lane is plenty big for safety. He is good with either plan. He likes the beautification. Scheme 3(reduction of parking spaces not actually reduction)

Pfeiffer – seriously consider the safety aspects, creates safety issues. He has concerns with the plan on the left. He would like to see the existing configuration.

Prestigiacommo – firm believer in data, is the traffic study doable in the time frame she can see either plan she says the one on the right can be prettier but wants the traffic study. He would only recommend the traffic study only be done if you are leaning towards scheme 1, based on that Dana leans towards existing configuration.

Smith – involved in this property since 1953, he likes the existing configuration but would like to see existing plan with plantings.

Enright– came tonight thinking about the problems of the parking. Green space is green space she has a problem with plan 3 will it be that much more attractive. She would like to see more benches. One of the things she hears at the deli is the money aspect and the town need to let the population know that the money is the same. She likes the current configuration.

Pendlebury – He thinks that if you polled everyone in town you would have everyone say it is a problem now so we have to look at it as a resource, it is access to the bay is also getting close to the water too, it is pedestrian space in addition to car space. Safe areas and graciousness, what we have right now is. He thinks there needs to be a green connection Jack Brittain said 5 feet he says 10-12 feet. He likes to have the green on the water but if he put a dead end street in a parking lot it is too much pressure on the driver, he thinks dead

end street has become too long. If we lose a parking space but we can make it more beautiful we have to live with it. He is not in favor of keeping the existing scheme the way it is but not in favor of Scheme 3. We may have to lose a space to have the green on the waterfront.

Swistak – He is completely frustrated that we cannot have the green on the left. Can we go back and look at widening the green space on the water side by a little scheme 3A
Lisa said 3 A you cannot be sitting at a bench and have a car right behind you. The green space you are trying to create has another barrier. Low barrier Duncan said we are trying to come up with a compromise through out Scheme 3 and end up with nothing. There is not pedestrian connection. We presented that to you prior. The green space you are trying to create is going to be narrow and a barrier.

Smith likes existing if we can make the sidewalk more user friendly he would rather enhance it.

Kathy Brown 72 North Rd. – she does not walk on the grass anyplace on the lawn. People don't pay any attention to it.

A motion was made by Commissioner Swistak to ask Andy Nota and staff to come back to our meeting on July 5th or July 12th with the last iteration of the existing configuration Scheme 3 creating a more pedestrian friendly space on the waterfront and seasonal plantings. Commissioner Pfeiffer seconded the motion.

Hali said one of the things brought up, we are taking this whole area and making this accessible for the whole town. One of the considerations talking about handicap accessible, it is more handicap accessible and also more pedestrian friendly.

So unanimously voted.


Commissioner Swistak asked if we should have a meeting on July 5th or find an alternate location for July 12th. Planning Commission said July 5th is fine.

VII. New Business – nothing at this time

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Enright and seconded by Commissioner Cochran to adjourn at 10:30 p.m. So unanimously voted.

Attest:


Cynthia L. Reppe