

Meeting Minutes

Route 20 Sewer Steering Committee

October 2, 2013

Meeting Location: Department of Public Works Building, Conference Room

The Agenda for the meeting was posted as follows:

- Approval of Past Minutes
- Discussion of current issues and options:
 - Mission
 - Marlboro alternative
 - Development alternatives
 - Utility burial
- Discussion and vote on reorganization

Steering Committee Attendees: Bob Haarde, Andrew Sullivan, Peter Abair, Ted Pasquarello, Steve Grande, Lisa Eggleston, Richard Robison, Eric Poch (8:00)

The meeting was called to order at 7:54 PM.

Discussion ensued about when the Steering Committee last met as a group, as opposed to meeting in joint meeting with the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). In discussing the attendance of Steering Committee (SC) members at joint committee meetings and steering committee meetings, it was recommended that Michael Precourt, who has not been in attendance at meetings, should be removed from the Steering Committee. A motion was made and seconded. The motion was approved unanimously

The committee then voted to approve the minutes of the last Steering Committee meeting. The motion carried with 5 votes in favor and two abstentions (Peter Abair and Lisa Eggleston).

Discussion of Steering Committee Mission (8:00)

Bob Haarde led a discussion about the mandate of the steering committee and the progress to date made by the CAC and its sub-committees. It was asked of each SC member, to weigh in on their perspectives on the steering committee's role and specifically whether the burying of utilities was in complement to the sewer project and if so, how that could be addressed by the two sewer committees.

Rich Robison stated that, as a member of the Sudbury School Committee, his initial interest was because of the potential use of the grounds at Curtis Middle School for the sewer's leaching field and the prospect of the sewer enabling for commercial develop to take some of the tax burden away from residential payers. He also shared some concerns about potential negative impacts to the school system

with declining enrollments and how that could result in a renewed discussion of a school closure and redistricting.

Andrew Sullivan saw the Steering Committee as playing a vital role in guiding the conversations of the CAC, in particular, the prospect of pursuing a possible connection to the Marlboro sewer system and forgoing the use of Curtis Middle School grounds as a leaching field. He presented some background in the Marlboro potential alternative. He also indicated that he thought that the SC should propose to the CAC that the burying of utilities in complement to a sewer project should still be pursued by the CAC Utilities sub-committee.

Eric Poch also embraced the concept of “doing it all” including the depression of utilities even within context of the sewer project, and especially supports general Route 20 streetscape and walkway improvements. However, he noted that “cart before the horse” issues could jeopardize the project and its support at Town Meeting. He noted that the public has difficulty supporting any piecemeal or general proposals associated with the sewer because of lack of vision toward what will result from the sewer. He supports a master plan for the area, by which the community can see such a vision and supports that goal, but warned that diversion from the sewer by focusing on utility burial could dilute support for the sewer and progress specifically made toward its completion. He also recounted issues raised in past sewer discussions (dating back over a decade), including the failure of the business community to support a Business Improvement District (BID) initiative, and that the SC should engage with the Planning Board and BoS regarding potential 40B issues which should be proactively addressed through continued support of the Housing Production Plan and the need for zoning incentives to entice development of particular parcels.

Steve Grande approached the discussion as an owner of commercial properties. The town’s property assessment process is frustrating to commercial property owners. Despite being limited in number and restricted in the types of improvements that can be made, commercial assessments continue to rise. He expressed great interest in the potential Marlboro alternative. He shared concerns about how the project would be paid for and noted that betterments could be a difficult financial hurdle for commercial property owners.

Peter Abair stated that when moving to the town five years ago, the one drawback was a Route 20 commercial area that was out of place with the character of the community. His support for a sewer is based upon making Route 20 a more pedestrian-friendly destination for residents and visitors, enabling commercial and retail property owners to do more with their properties, and improving traffic flow in the area by increasing tertiary route access and egress. All of which could be gained via a sewer. He favors the development of a visual rendering for the target area with the aforementioned improvements for the public to better envision the goals of the project.

Ted Pasquarello’s philosophically supports the project. Commercial owners would rather be on sewer than septic. To the point where even some level of premium versus current financial requirements could be acceptable. He is concerned however, that additional discussion by the CAC or actual phasing of the

sewer project to include the depression of the utility lines would cause delay and possibly eventual defeat of the entire project.

Lisa Eggleston's experience with the sewer discussion dates back to 1999 with the original needs assessment. Her perspective is that it is an important step to take to preserve the long-term viability of the town's water supply. Many properties are facing failed systems. She noted that the Sudbury Water District has also discussed the project recently and is in the process of articulating their position on the project.

Bob Haarde suggested that the Steering Committee recommit to its role of providing guidance to the CAC. The discussion then focused on what the priorities should be for both the SC and CAC. The issue of 40B had been introduced during the previous discussion and Peter Abair noted that progress toward the 10% affordable housing requirement was a priority of the Planning Board. Impact such as capacity and redistricting on particular schools was noted as a potential detriment to the sewer project in the community, as the sewer could attract 40B projects. Rich Robison noted that SPS is very keen on open discussion about any project that could potentially impact the student population. Abair noted that a prudent planning effort would be for the Town to determine a site for an incentivized high density housing project with affordability where the Town wants it. This would empower Sudbury to forestall unfriendly 40Bs and potentially reach the 10% target, making future 40Bs impossible. Bob Haarde suggested that the Steering Committee recommend to the Planning Board and SPS that they communicate with each other as planning specifically around high density housing is pursued.

The Committee also discussed making recommendations to the CAC that the Marlboro alternative be pursued and investigate DEP permitting simultaneously.; that the CAC's Joint Utility Subcommittee continue to investigate the concept of utility burial in the Route 20 target area; and that the CAC subcommittees continue to explore opportunities to maintain high water quality preservation as well as improved beautification of the Route 20 business district..

A motion was made to draft a letter to the BoS, Planning Board and SPS outlining these recommendations which was seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Steering Committee Reorganization

A discussion followed regarding the reorganization of the chairmanship and other formal positions of the Steering Committee. Bob Haarde indicated his interest in the continued work of the Committee as a member but hoped that someone else would consider his position as co-chairman. Eric Poch indicated that he would like to remain as a co-chairman. Andrew Sullivan and Peter Abair both indicated interest in the chairmanship. After additional discussion, Abair made a motion that Andrew Sullivan be elected to fill Bob Haarde's co-chair position and that Eric Poch retains his co-chair position. The motion was seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried at the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 PM.