

Planning Board
Thursday, December 18, 2008, 7:00 P.M.
York Senior Center

Call to Order, Determination of Presence of Quorum

Chairman Tom Manzi opened the meeting at 7:00 and determined presence of quorum. Tom Manzi, Barrie Munro, Dave Woods, and Lew Stowe were present. Glen MacWilliams, and alternates Todd Frederick and Valerie Gunn were absent. There were four people voting. Town Planner, Christine Grimando, represented planning department staff. Patience Horton recorded minutes. The meeting was filmed on video camera.

Public Input

Open to the public to address any issue other than the scheduled public hearings.
No one came forward to speak.

Field Changes

There were no field changes.

York Beach Planning Board Subcommittee—Initial Streetscape and Infrastructure findings.

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss draft infrastructure scenarios as proposed by members of the York Beach Village Planning Board Subcommittee and as commented on by the Fire Chief, Dave Bridges and many of his firefighters, Police Lieutenant LaConte, Director of Public Works, Dean Lessard and community members, including the Planning Board Subcommittee members Fran Zanka and Beth Dutton.

Subcommittee Co-chairman Barrie Munro said the group came together in March 2008, at the request of the Board of Selectmen, which charged the Planning Board to form a sub-committee to make recommendations relative to matters pertaining to York Beach Village. The Planning Board subsequently provided the subcommittee with a list of subjects to address and prioritize. At a subsequent joint workshop the Sub-committee was charged with Infrastructure and Streetscape items related to the million-dollar FEMA grant for the construction of a four-foot by nine-foot culvert to carry fresh water drainage from above Route U.S. One and the land lying between U.S. Route One and York Beach Village. The Town approved a matching sum a year ago. Since the streets will be dug up, the subcommittee is preparing recommendations for changes above the streets, including parking, lighting, sidewalks, pedestrian amenities and the relocation of public utilities. Since traffic circulation is an important variable, it too has been a primary subject of analysis. Public Works director Dean Lessard has been working with the subcommittee and the committee has pledged to provide Dean its recommendations based its analysis of public input and input from the Police and Fire Departments in late December or early January. The committee has met every week, sometimes twice a week. One extended goal, Barrie Munro continued, has been to come forth with ideas so the Town will have other plans prepared for FEMA to review during future grant periods.

Subcommittee co-chairman Dave Woods gave a PowerPoint presentation gathered from a street survey the planning board subcommittee conducted in November and December. Questionnaires had been left at the library and at several Beach locations, as well as on the Internet. The surveys asked questions about streetscape and traffic flow, as well as demographic questions.

The survey asked about the possibility of parking on one side of the street or not, which was answered closely with 48 pro and 52 con. There was a question about delivery trucks. There was a question if 20-minute parking meters might better serve the convenience store area. Questions were asked about moving the electrical poles and putting in decorative lamps. In no particular case was there an outstanding, weighted opinion. Answers seemed to fall one way or another close to the 50 percentile. Forty-six percent wanted to move or remove electrical poles, and 52 % found the electrical poles unimportant. Widening sidewalks did not get an overwhelming response one way or another. But changing Railroad Avenue into a pedestrian mall found more than 70% of those surveyed saying no.

The survey asked should Nubble Road be made one-way, seasonally. A little more than half of the respondents said they would like to keep it as it is now. The other 45% wants to change the traffic pattern. Dave Woods said it is difficult to come up with a weighted answer in almost all of these questions, which include questions about traffic. Dave Woods put five different traffic pattern scenarios on the overhead. They mapped options of one- and two-way streets from Railroad to Church to Long Beach to Ocean, alternating the possibilities from year-round to seasonal. Review of the maps yielded many ideas.

There is great difficulty for people on the Nubble trying to get to the post office in summer. They have to either go a roundabout way or add to traffic congestion by using Ocean Avenue and Rail Road Avenue. A pedestrian light at the business corner in front of the Goldenrod was proposed. The intersection at Rail Road Avenue and Ocean Avenue was described as a potential safety problem. A proposed bike lane off Ocean Ave. and bus and trolley stops were proposed. Blocking off the street between the Inn on the Blues and Shelton's for use only by emergency vehicles and pedestrians was another idea. After the 5th scenario had been presented, Chairman Tom Manzi opened the **public hearing**.

Joe Lipton said he had been asking around for input about traffic flow. He gave another version of how traffic might go, including parking and traffic islands. He explained reasoning behind all his suggestions.

York Beach Fire Chief **Dave Bridges** spoke with 38 years of York Beach firefighter experience. He said there had been 1,307 calls out of the firehouse in the past year, and 735 of them had required a right hand turn on to and up Railroad Avenue during the summer, putting the trucks into oncoming one-way traffic. He indicated that although frequently great confusion resulted for pedestrians and civilian drivers caught in the situation, that time was of the essence and this route to the east and north was the fastest way to deliver critical safety services. Bay Street was not a suitable option, too many pedestrians and

the confusion and safety risk that would result. He also did not like the left hand turn onto Ocean Avenue. "Cross-over" turns are always dangerous and not desirable. The Bay Street and the turn onto Ocean is not suitable for the forty-five foot ladder truck. Twenty feet of unobstructed lane width is necessary. He summed things up saying that he had trouble with all the scenarios presented

Ferris Bordman asked if the Selectmen or the Town vote determines the final say in this radical change. Disaster is written across traffic changes, he said. He prefers the one-way loop year-round. **Beth Dutton** said that when that the traffic pattern changes from one-way to two-way in the fall, even the citizens get mixed up.

Lieutenant LaConte of the York Police Department challenged the value of any kind of traffic signal at the intersection of Ocean Avenue and Rail Road Avenue. He said he was not aware of any serious pedestrian injury or vehicular collision at that intersection and therefore thought the intersection should remain as it is. Traffic moves slowly and that is good because it tends to limit the likelihood of injury to pedestrians and minimizes the extent of vehicular collision damage. When asked if two-way traffic year round would be good for Church Street, LaConte responded that it would not. He did not want heavy seasonal traffic on this residential street.

There were several negative comments with respect to adding to the congestion in front of the fire station by having a turn around just past the station.

At this point in the work shop, it seemed as if the Committee's efforts might have been wasted given the negative comment, but Barrie Munro suggested that in fact the input that the Planning Board and Sub Committee was receiving was in fact beginning to give direction. The positives and the negatives were beginning to be well defined and would provide the Planning Board, the Sub-committee and the Board of Selectmen with a much improved basis for whatever decisions might be made with respect to traffic circulation and possibly parking.

Public Works Director **Dean Lessard** said he used to be the Traffic Engineer for Southern Maine. When vehicular traffic is slow, there is not much liability. The liability comes when a pedestrian is hit. The striping in York Beach does not meet State standards. When something is contrary to the traffic standard, it opens up the town to liability. A standardized two-yellow line indicates one-way. To remove the yellow lines and change them to a two-way dashed-white line, they could be painted over or could be ground off, which scars the pavement and makes it difficult to maintain. Lew Stowe said if the group makes a decision tonight, the decision might create a liability. Dean Lessard said York Beach is already in a liability. Christine Grimando said the subcommittee has had little time to hear a lot of information. Tonight is not a decision night.

Jim Carmody said he is a Nubble resident where traffic is very difficult five months of the year. He is the Traffic Engineer for the City of Portland. He has done streetscape projects. He has dealt with every issue heard this night, himself. He believes one-way in summer and two-way the rest of the years is best. It is impossible to improve without

decreasing the parking. He cited how the city of Portland had and was planning to limit parking on several major busy streets. There are spaces by the Goldenrod that make it impossible for large vehicles to make turns. Fire department responsive time is lowered with a loop in front of the firehouse. There have been accidents because the town has not put out adequate signage or other devices to keep both pedestrians and drivers informed as to one way and two-way traffic or even pedestrian crossings. Later there was a consensus that signage and other traffic guides should be improved.

Bill Burnham said he was disturbed to learn of the upcoming May 14 vote. It is a big rush for a million dollars, he said. Don't rush to put it to a vote. **Fran Zanka** commented that the Railroad Avenue property lines go right along the curbing. The buildings overhang that property line. **Jim Carmody** asked what is more important? Parking or walk-ability. Every motorist is a pedestrian. What about taking the parking out and having wider sidewalks with two-way traffic. **Beth Dutton** said some parking spaces will be lost from taking a space away from each cross walk. **John Welch** said the biggest problem is the bottleneck by the Goldenrod. **John Carmody** said making Nubble Road and Broadway one-way is unworkable.

Dave Woods asked if Ocean Avenue Extension should be one-way. **John Carmody** said it should, and many others shared his opinion. That came up several more times during the meeting. There also seemed to be approval for the section of Main Street south of the intersection with Rail Road Avenue to be one way south. There was also agreement for Beach Street to be one way east.

Barrie Munro and Lew Stowe talked about **Dave Woods's** PowerPoint presentation. They decided it should be narrowed from five to three scenarios before going to the Selectmen. It was suggested that future presentations should include clear statements of the pros and cons of each scenario presumably including the viewpoints of the Police and Fire Departments and the public. **Lew Stowe** said he wants to see more alternatives to Railroad Avenue. **Dean Lessard** said getting rid of the parking that is 20 feet from the crosswalks on Railroad Avenue and bringing in uniform traffic control devices would make the street safer. (These devices were not defined.) **Jim Carmody** said the pedestrian signal would probably not work. Traffic might not let pedestrians through or vice versa but the principal objection to a traffic signal is the queue that will inevitably develop on a busy day. Bump outs won't work, he said. The plow drivers don't like them.

Dean Lessard said he needs a timely capital project ready to go onto the May ballot. It has to be ready in January. Drainage projects must tie into the FEMA project. The sidewalk project for Railroad Ave has to tie into it. If the footprint is wider than it is now, it won't be permitted. If it is 9-½ feet wide, they will permit it, if it is in the existing structure. When taking a pipe down Beach Street and out onto the rocks, should the route go down Railroad and through the parking lot and intercept the brook there? What are the different descriptions of how the pipe should go? he asked. If the road is narrower, there would be more sidewalks. The conduit for streetlights has to be considered. **Dean Lessard** is hoping to have final design for public hearings in the spring for fall construction. There are maybe eight weeks to work on this. It is too late for the budget, but not for the

design. The placeholder he uses is \$200,000. Christine Grimando said the Board of Selectmen meeting will confirm budget items.

There was a discussion of how wide Rail Road Avenue should be and what kind of parking if any should be permitted and whether or not one or both sidewalks could be widened. There was also a recommendation and discussion of allowing parking on Ridge Road between the Post Office and the intersection. It was acknowledged that the road would have to be widened if parking was permitted. There was also a brief discussion of what could be done with Hawk Street. One suggestion was to link Hawk Street with the ballpark parking area by a pedestrian bridge.

In general discussion, Joe Lipton said \$34,000 had been earmarked for fixing the sidewalk in front of the Inn on the Blues. It has been available for three years, but the Town cannot do it without knowing how the adjoining properties will be fixed. Dave Woods said the recommendation should be made to send Ocean Avenue one-way, year round. It would make sense to get into compliance with the parking spaces that will be timed for 20 minutes. Jim Carmody said he has some 30-minute meters in Portland. High turnover makes friction. He has the police chalk the tires.

The York Beach Village Planning Board Subcommittee will have full subcommittee meeting on upcoming December 30, at 8:00. It was suggested that the agenda for this meeting should include provision for agreement with respect to those items for which here is general agreement and those for which the Police Department and the Fire Department are apposed.

New Business There was no new business

Old Business There was no old business

Other Business/Adjourn

In other Business, Tom Manzi had watched the Board of Selectmen three days prior, on December 18. They were trying to get Walgreen redesign to LEEDS standards. Tom Manzi thought the Selectmen should ask the Planning Board to design an LEEDS ordinance. Christine Grimando said it could be done.

Tom Manzi said the Planning Board Chairman should always train the Vice Chairman on running the meeting. Perhaps the Vice-chair might conduct some early levels of an application, and then that person would be better prepared to become chair.

The meeting ended at 10:20.