

**COMMUNITY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 16, 2022, 8:00 A.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order

A. Meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m. by Chairman Davidoff.

Attendees – Mayor Shari Cantor, Chairman Leon Davidoff, Councilor Adrienne Billings-Smith, Councilor Ben Wenograd, Councilor Mark Zydanowicz, Acting Town Manager Rick Ledwith, Community Development Director Duane Martin, Town Engineer Greg Sommer, Engineer Julie Viera, Town Planner Todd Dumais, Chief Building Official Tim Mikloiche, Atty. Gina Varano.

2. Business Items

A. Meeting Minutes for December 7, 2021, and January 19, 2022 – Chairman Davidoff mentioned one correction to the December 2021 minutes. At that point, Chairman Davidoff was no longer Deputy Mayor and was just Councilor Davidoff. With this correction made, both minutes passed without objection.

B. 2021 Complete Streets Annual Report – Mr. Ledwith stated a copy of the annual report had been uploaded to CivicClerk. A Complete Streets policy was adopted in 2015 to ensure the roadways complement and enhance the surrounding neighborhood character and accommodate all users. The annual report evaluates progress toward the development of complete streets. The report reflects a little over \$1M in complete street improvements including an additional 4.4 miles of bike trails and several sidewalk and crosswalk improvements. Mr. Sommer went over the highlights of the annual report. He stated this past year about \$100,000 in funding was received, allowing for the addition of 2.16 miles of bike routes and just over 4 miles of bike lanes. These were all part of the resurfacing program. He also highlighted the launching of the Traffic Calming program. Speed humps were incorporated on Grove Street and added some semi-diverters on Four Mile and Newport to help alleviate the traffic and crash issues at those sites.

C. Brownleigh Area Drainage Review – Mr. Ledwith briefly went over the memo drafted by Julie Viera (uploaded to CivicClerk) outlining a flood issue in the Brownleigh and King Edward neighborhood area where some backyard and basement flooding occurs. The memo outlines specific neighborhood issues and potential solutions. Mr. Martin stated this is not a new issue. The neighborhood has been challenged with drainage/flooding issues for many years and it is a difficult problem to address; the land is flat and the water tends to sit due to poor-draining soils. Ms. Viera reported that on top of the land being flat, the backyards are at a low point and at the end of a very large drainage system that discharges into wetlands and property across the street, which is also a very flat area. Four options are being considered. Option one is to do nothing. Option two is investigating private property and wetlands

including Bloomfield, as the flow drains north into Bloomfield. Option three is to split the flow and have some of it go down into a larger pipe on Simsbury Road and an outlet through private property (requiring permission, etc.) at a cost of about \$3M. Option four is to have an aboveground detention system on the southeast corner of the Aiken School property but further investigation is needed to see if this is feasible due to grades and if there is enough capacity to hold some flow.

The recommendation at this point, options two and four. There is a plan to have a meeting with the town of Bloomfield to discuss the project and see if they have any interest. Also, assessing the feasibility of the aboveground detention system on Aiken will be done.

D. Albany Avenue Service Driveway – Mr. Ledwith briefly introduced a memo from the Director of Community Development (uploaded to CivicClerk), requesting the service driveway off of Albany Avenue (2649-2679 Albany Avenue) become a Town-maintained service driveway. According to information reviewed, the intent after its creation in the 70s was for the Town to accept the service driveway as a street; however, no formal action was ever taken. Asphalt patching and snow and ice control have been done over the last 50 years on this driveway; however, the driveway requires resurfacing/replacement at a cost of approximately \$100,000. Mr. Martin reported there are some strings attached. Typically, the Town is asked to accept the street, the Town Engineer would perform an evaluation and decide if it would become the Town's responsibility to maintain in perpetuity and what are some possible issues that could come about from this. One issue is there is not a typical street right-of-way width, another issue is the paved surface is only about 20 ft. wide but it is a service driveway. There is a drainage system with two catch basins in the service driveway but pipes are going to private property and eventually to State land. The cost of maintaining this system is not included in the \$100,000. It would need to be assessed and a determination made if any maintenance or replacement is needed.

Additionally, there is a sidewalk already in place and it is in fair condition. Per the residents, the sidewalk is not used a lot and they would not be upset if it were removed because of the snow and ice maintenance. There is street lighting on Albany Avenue but not on this service driveway and whether it is needed or not is questionable.

3. Communications

4. Staff Reports

A. Community Development – Mr. Martin highlighted a few areas of his Community Development Update memo (uploaded to CivicClerk). Regarding the North Main Street Road Diet, the plan is to return to the Committee on March 23 with the consultant to give a presentation with the submission of the final draft report to Engineering, possibly in the beginning of March. A public information meeting will be held on April 29, followed by a full presentation to the Town Council on May 10 or May 24. The Fern Street Bridge will be completely replaced. A consultant has been hired and we have received grant funding of \$3M to replace the bridge. It is in the final design stages with construction planned to begin this summer. Besides being put out to bid, easements from private property owners still need to

be obtained and getting an Army Corps permit. Once those items are completed, the project can go out to bid and, hopefully, start construction in the summer. Of note, the DOT inspected of the bridge last year and there were structural integrity concerns. The DOT wants to further restrict the load capacity of the bridge due to these concerns. The State is requiring the load rating be reduced as well. If the bridge is to remain two-way, restrictions will need to be pretty low, limiting it to 9 tons for an ambulance or box truck and for a tractor-trailer, it would be 15 tons.

An alternative in the interim (between now and bridge project completion) is to consider alternating the flow of traffic across the bridge by placing concrete barriers across the bridge and putting stop signs up until a temporary traffic signal can be procured. Per the DOT, the load-bearing issue cannot wait until construction starts. The consultant is aware of the load-bearing issue and has started staging for the bridge replacement, shutting down the weaker side of the bridge, with the barriers as part of the first stage. Trout Brook Trail Phase 6 is at the DOT being reviewed and is awaiting commitment to fund to go out to bid and start construction this year. Phase 6 is from Fern Street to Duffield Drive. Mr. Mikloiche provided some building activity highlights, including the reduction of permit application to approval time, which had been three to four weeks out and is now at about a week. Inspection time has also improved. It is now five to seven days out, depending on the inspection type and there is a one-day-a-week project inspector for the larger jobs. Mr. Mikloiche also reported hiring a new part-time building inspector, Robert Tavella. CityView is still being brought online for online permitting and inspections and is currently in the review process.

5. Future Agenda Items - 2C (after budget)

6. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 8:57 a.m.

/axb