

Safepath Approved Minutes

Date: Friday, May 3, 2019
4:00 - 5:45

Location: Town Hall

Present Committee: Mary Ann Driscoll, Tim Driscoll, Philip Marcus, Jane Finn, Ken McDonald, Tom Maher, Margaret Sofio, Jim Zuckerman

Public: John Ireland, Jim Cerny, Ann McAndrew, Mike McAndrew, Heidi Maddock, Andy Schulte, Paul Hamblett, Sharon Dobbins, Kurt Dobbins, Margaret Pesce, Peter Rice, Scott Benson, Nancy Vailas

Mary Ann Driscoll, Safepath chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Greetings and Introductions - Mary Ann Driscoll

Mary Ann began with a little background. Safepath began as a task force to identify the most dangerous sections of Route 1B and to explore possible ways to make the road safer. Eight years ago Phase 1 was completed from the end of the Wentworth Hotel sidewalk to Wild Rose Land under a TAP award.

Private money was raised for Phase 2, from Wild Rose Lane to Rodgers BLVD, which is under construction now.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss Phase IV, from Beach Hill to Pit Lane. The Town has received another TAP award to do this section. A warrant article will be voted on at Town Meeting

on May 14 to see if the Town will accept the TAP award and appropriate \$403,000 for Phase IV. Eighty percent, \$322,400, will be reimbursed to the Town, which leaves \$80,600 to be raised as tax dollars to meet the 20% matching requirement.

1. Update on Phase 2 Ken McDonald

Ken McDonald reported that ledge was removed and the stone wall moved back on the property owned Peter Taylor and Linda Westinghouse. They gave the Town the right of way over their property to construct this Phase. They are pleased with the results. The company installing the granite curbing is scheduled for the end of next week, weather permitting. Then the sidewalk will be completed including ADA compliant ramps, etc. This phase was funded with private donations

2. Plan for May 14th vote Mary Ann Driscoll

- a. Table on May 14 - Safepath will staff an informational table during the day with information, maps, and photos explaining phase 4. Mary Ann will send an email to get members to sign up for a schedule for staffing the table. We are aware that we **cannot** ask for donations at that time.
- b. Outreach to voters - members will be reaching out to residents to encourage them to come to Town Meeting and to make sure they know that they have to be present at the Meeting which starts at 7pm in order to vote for the Warrant Article regarding the TAP award.
- c. Materials- Safepath handouts were available at the meeting.

3. Grand Opening of Phase 2

David Borden will be planning a grand opening of Phase 2 upon its completion.

Fund Raising - Philip Marcus

- a. Philip raised the idea of having info at the Garden Club's Plant Sale. Jane Finn will check with garden Club to discuss. It was mentioned that Mary Pat Gibson was interested in landscaping Phase 2 after its completion. It was pointed out that a plan would have to be approved by the Town and the property owners. There are specific requirements of what can be done on the property at the Commons.
- b. Follow up on the Wentworth Event. A gathering was held at the Wentworth to thank donors and to give information about Phase 4 and the Warrant article to be voted on at the Town Meeting. Donors and those expressing interest in the project were invited and encouraged to bring friends and neighbors. Over 75 people turned out. Philip spoke with Jason Bartlett, general manager of the Wentworth Hotel, and he was pleased to help with our event. They support our project and want to be a good neighbor. Philip has sent thank you notes to donors and will follow up with people who expressed interest but couldn't attend the Wentworth event.

5. Communication

Articles will be submitted for both the Island Items and July Islander. All articles must be reviewed and approved by Ken McDonald. Mary Ann will let Beth know the deadline for submitting the Islander article.

6. Public Questions and Answers

Mary Ann led the discussion with information regarding Phase 4 and TAP award and Warrant article. The TAP Award is for Phase 4, Beach Hill to Pit Lane. It cannot be used for any other part of 1B. TAP is a federal program with very specific requirements. All phases of the Project must be done under TAP guidelines, including approving the Warrant article, surveying, design, construction, etc in order for the money to be reimbursed. We

have a town employee who will oversee the project. If approved at Town Meeting, the Project will begin. The Safepath Committee is not involved in the execution of the Project. The town executes the plan and will be working with a TAP project manager in Concord. Each phase must be approved before it begins in order to be eligible for reimbursement. Because it is a State road, their approval is necessary as well.

Once the survey is complete, the design phase will begin. We cannot start the design until the money is approved so that is why we do not have plans to show people. It may not be a "sidewalk". It might be a widening of the shoulder. That will be decided in the design phase, safety, feasibility, maintenance will be considered.

There has been some confusion and misinformation regarding the Project. The State has a defined right of way from the center of the road which is determined by a survey. Several people have had their properties surveyed and know where the location of that right away and have planned their personal landscaping and projects beyond that right of way. There has never been an intention of grabbing private property by eminent domain.

Concerns have also been expressed regarding lack of transparency and communication. Mary Ann took responsibility for that on behalf on the committee. It was not intentional. Safepath has been meeting at members' houses. Updates have been included in Island Items and articles have been included in the Islander. However, it was apparent at the last Select Board meeting that there is the need and desire to have more communication and transparency. Tom Maher also expressed that he shares the blame for the lack of transparency. Recently, the Select Board made the Safepath an official Town committee.

Which is an advisory committee to the BOS. All meetings are public and will be posted. Minutes will be available on the Town website. Ken McDonald reported that the new Town website is up and running and the Safepath will be under Boards and Committees. The Safepath information has not yet been input but will be soon.

The meeting was opened for questions. Many comments and questions were expressed regarding the lack of transparency and communication, especially with residents directly affected by the Project.

- Scott Benson is very disappointed in the lack of transparency and is concerned the Project will affect his property. How can we vote for something when we cannot even see a plan?
- Margaret Pesce never got a phone call and she is directly affected.
- Paul Hamblett is very upset about the lack of information. How can this be going on without anyone knowing. How can we see the plan? Why has no one spoke to those affected? Referred us to RSE 91-A and said the committee has been running in private.
- Sharon Dobbins requested that the homeowners directly affected be part of the process and considered in the planning. People think it is going to look like Phase 1 and be a "sidewalk"? How much do you disrupt homeowners if it is in the right of way but already constructed or planted? Tom Maher will contact Town Counsel and have an answer for the Town Meeting. We will not take private property.
- Jim Zuckerman spoke about safety issues. The state determined that 1B is the second most walked, cycled and run stretch of road in the entire State and yet it

has some of the most dangerous and narrow stretches in the State. Any where we can widen the shoulder and increase sight lines will make the road safer for all.

- Jim Cerny noted that in the span of one hour last summer he counted 300-500 cars in front of his house. His questions was regarding alternatives and whether the idea of off loading traffic to Walbach had been considered. Tim Maher reasoned that pedestrians could be encouraged to take the river route which would separate the walkers from the cyclists and cars. Some one suggested that footprints could be painted directing them off Main Street like they have done in Rye. Tom Maher reminded us that the speed limit will be lowered to 20mph on May 15 as in past years.
- John Ireland asked if there are plans to do the entire loop. Tom replied that there are not plans to do the entire loop but that other sections have ben identified as unsafe and are potential future projects. If we are successful and voters approve, then future sections like the school will be considered. Research to develop expertise to make accurate assessments based on real numbers is part of the process. Some sections cannot be done.
- Andy Schulte asked what future costs there will be associated with snow removal and maintenance. Tom responded that if the shoulders are widened the State would plow. If sidewalks are added then snow plows would be used. The Town is responsible for the maintenance of sidewalks. DOT has an addendum that the Town takes full responsibility for maintenance, liability, etc. Ken McDonald affirmed that it would

require additional work for Public Works but that is also part of the factors taken into consideration in the design.

- Nancy Vailas stated that she is in favor of the Project and has donated money but they have already been impacted by the wetlands issues and she asks that we please get input from the homeowners. It is goodwill to involve the homeowners. She applauds us for our work.
- Andy Schulte asked for confirmation that TAP money cannot be used to pay Ben, the Town employee, who will oversee the Project and Tom confirmed.
- Kurt Dobbins would like to see conceptual plans. Working together starts with communication. There are unintended consequences. Sometimes when the road is widened the traffic goes faster. Counter intuitive.
- Jim Zuckerman noted that 34 unsafe locations were identified on 1B and reminded us it is about safety.
- Tim Driscoll noted that the DOT would not allow 1B to be widened so that is not an issue.
- Ann McAndrew commented that it is not true that all Warrant votes are by voice. Tom Maher confirmed that the TAP and vehicle warrants will be paper ballots. The TAP requires 66% in favor to pass and the vehicle article a simple majority.
- Heidi Maddox has lived here her entire life and increased traffic is one of the changes she has witnessed. She asked if there will be a cross walk. Ken McDonald responded that a cross walk may be considered but there are very specific requirements that have to be met, like unobstructed view, sight lines, etc.

- Peter Rice said since there is not a design people are concerned how it will impact them. People just need to come together and compromise.
- Nancy Vailas reiterated that they just want to be included.
- Margaret Pesce asked if the TAP application is available. Ken McDonald said it is available online at the State of NH website under TAP program.

David Borden made a motion to adjourn and Margaret Sofio seconded the motion. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45.