MINUTES OF THE WEST MAIN STREETSCAPE STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2010 AT 8:30 A.M. IN ROOM
207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present
Matt Bowman, Chairman; Bill Bonaminio, Tod Dixon, Earl Kurtz III, David
Pelletier
Absent: Karen Bertoni, Sheldon Dill, Patti Flynn-Harris, Paul Fracasse, Stephen
Larson, Carol Trulock, Lelah Campo.
Staff: Jerry Sitko and Joseph Michaelangelo.
Guest: Tom Sheil, Milone and MacBroom
Press: Josh Morgan, Cheshire Herald

I. ROLL CALL
Mr. Bowman called the roll.

II. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
Following roll call a quorum was not present to conduct business.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, August 28, 2009
Tabled due to lack of quorum

V. COMMUNICATIONS

VI. BUSINESS

A. Project Status
The status of the project was discussed with those present by Mr. Sheil, the
consultant. He commented on getting the decorative light approved on the
street, and said he informed the State the Town does not want to do a waiver,
but wants to meet the State’s full cut off standards. Mr. Sheil thinks it will be
okay, the specs are done and we are on board with DOT. The easement map
has also been straightened out.

Relative to the Furniture Barn, Rossini’s and Sunshine Convenience Store, Mr.
Bowman stated that when this project first started everyone was on board with
giving the Town curb cuts, widening curb cuts and making it better for everyone.

According to Mr. Sheil it came down to crunch time and decision time. The State
bought into everything, all the meetings have been held, and now we want the
State to approve the plans.

Mr. Sitko said it came down to signing papers and the application for PZC.
It was stated by Mr. Bowman that there was the ability to come out onto Railroad Avenue.

Mr. Sheil said they know this, and one of the people said he was not comfortable with things. Everything was explained to the State.

Mr. Bowman said it would be better to exit and have a backup on Railroad Avenue, so there would be no blocking of parking spaces for someone coming out of the curb cut.

Mr. Sitko said it came down to the final decision weighing the loss of parking spaces versus the seating area.

The committee was informed by Mr. Sheil that 8 spaces in total would have been lost, but it did not affect the capabilities. Town Planner Voelker is drafting regulations that would allow for shared parking.

The owner of the Furniture Barn, Fred, was willing to allow shared parking because of non-competing times. Things were falling into place, but when it came to crunch time, the business was not comfortable.

Mr. Sitko said it was a business decision, and they did not want to be beholden to someone else, but rather have everything buttoned down on their site. They have also been talking about expanding, and how this would affect the parking configuration.

It took a while to wind through this, and Mr. Sheil said we are talking about people’s lives and businesses. He said we will come in under the original $500,000 for the first phase, and we have $900,000. In the first phase it is controlled by the timing of the culvert replacement. So, all of our work is structured so we are not getting in the way of this work.

Because of all the time which has elapsed the culvert is scheduled for construction in Spring of 2011. The Town can build its work this Spring and get all the plans ready for the next phase.

Mr. Sitko advised that the State plans the culvert work on a late Summer, long weekend.

Regarding Rossini’s Mr. Sitko said Mr. Sheil met with them, Johnny from the convenience store and Fred (Furniture Barn) a few times, and a decision had to be made.

On Christmas weekend, Mr. Sheil said he visited the convenience store (Johnny’s) and was there half an hour talking about the project work. He strongly
believes everything will be okay on the light issue. Within a week of approval, he will call Mr. Michaelangelo, set the dates for the invitation to bid and get it out. The DOT is ready to go, but there are questions about how the drainage was tweaked on the curb, and Mr. Sheil will get this straightened out. The good news is that there has been close coordination with the DOT.

With regard to the power poles at Strollo’s, Mr. Sheil stated that this has been a huge issue. We went around in circles with the department and utility company, and the provider is AT&T which owns the poles.

The DOT had a huge issue with the pole next to the culvert, and said the Town must move the pole, so there are 3 poles to take care of, plus 2 more. This will be done in the spring, at one time, because DOT wants it done to get these poles out of the way at the same time.

AT&T has been told the Town will move the 3 poles. At this time the DOT does not have funding in place to fix the culvert, although it is being designed and they said they would do the work. Mr. Sheil said the poles will not be moved based on some plan DOT is doing, and then the Town finds out a year later the poles must be moved again because the design is changed. The poles will be moved before the culvert is done, but not as part of the first phase of the street project. We don’t want to risk it, and DOT wants the poles moved before they start work at the expense of the Town.

Mr. Bowman questioned the Town having to pay for the removal of the poles as part of the streetscape project.

In response, Mr. Sheil said when the Town puts in its island of refuse…the median in the road…the DOT proposed a plan to install this island, and pay for the work with State money. The streetscape proposal for the island of refuge does not require the Town to move 3 poles, only 2 poles. The Town had requested an ultimate design, and must pay the difference because of this design.

Mr. Bowman said he thought the State requested AT&T to do pole removal for nothing.

Mr. Sheil said “no”. But, if it is related to their safety improvements for the road it must be done. The department’s position is that they can safety reconstruct West Main Street and install the island of refuge with the design which does not require moving 3 poles. If the Town wants a little wider road for emergency services, this can be done, but it is not necessary. The Town has to pay for the poles.

The committee was informed by Mr. Sitko of a productive meeting with Dalton, Lyon & Billard and Country Lumber, with Mr. Sheil and the DOT looking at the
proposed island of refuge. They presented some good ideas, and based on discussions with these businesses, the thinking was adjusted on the location.

For what the State is doing for the crossing of the island refuge, etc. at their cost, Mr. Bowman said the Town should maybe keep quiet. He thought that anytime the State requested a pole to be removed AT&T had to do it at no charge. With the way things are now, the Town would move 2 extra poles, and get the island of refuge and the whole crossing.

It gets more complicated, and Mr. Sheil said there are more layers here, and it is better for the Town to move the poles. Also, there must be discussion about coordination of the next phase on the island of refuge, and sit down with Police and Fire Departments so they can see the new design. The geometries are all set, but the actual configuration of the island is still a bit up in the air, and a modified design must be reviewed with the Fire and Police Departments. The time for such a meeting has not been set, and will be coordinated through Mr. Sitko.

On the drawings, Mr. Sheil pointed out the location of the island of refuge, which is 10 feet wide.

Mr. Bowman stated that the island refuge will be similar to the one at the old McPhee's.

Mr. Sheil said it will be raised with treatment around the edge.

With regard to the timing of when the project goes out to bid, Mr. Sheil said that when he hears the street light situation is straightened out, DOT will allow it to go to bid. He will work with Mr. Sitko, Northeast Utilities, DOT, and the lighting company to resolve everything so things can work out. Mr. Sheil will call the lighting company on January 25th to get the information he needs.

Mr. Sheil showed the photo metrics and the sketch which talks about the pattern of light distribution, and the language says it is a cut off light. It must say full cut off light. The lights are leased from CL&P, and maintained by Northeast Utilities under its lighting program. The West Main Street project is the cutting edge for a whole series of streetscape improvement issues associated with State highways. Mr. Sheil said he can get some full cut off light which can be purchased. But, there will be all sorts of problems with rewiring, meter cabinets installed. We would have to go back to the drawing boards with the improvements. He wants to get things resolved as soon as possible, and will know more on Monday.

If we go to bid on February 15th, Mr. Bowman said that is 3 weeks away, and asked how long the bid would be out.

Mr. Michaelangelo said it would be 3 to 4 weeks to the middle of March.
The bid packages will go to Mr. Michaelangelo, and Mr. Bowman said the bid opening could be March 15th.  

The bonding requirements must be covered and Mr. Sheil said they would be split between the Town and the State. Everything seems to be falling into place. He is ready to go and just needs the light.  

Mr. Bowman informed the committee that he has been working with Mr. Sitko to get a meeting with the new Town Council so they are up to speed as to status of the project. The meeting would probably be held in March.  

With the bid opening on March 4th or 5th, Mr. Michaelangelo said it could come before the Council at its March 9th meeting.  

Mr. Bowman expects great numbers on the bids, with a lot more done for the money we have than 2 years ago. There is a requirement for the contractor to be bonded, and that may limit the number of people who participate due to the current economic conditions and the insurance companies.  

Two years ago when this project started, Mr. Sheil said that when projects were done funded by Department of Economic and Community Development, part time inspection services were offered. This is an advantage to towns in the cost of the project. Since this is a State highway there may be a requirement by the State for full time inspection.  

Mr. Sitko said there is no money now for the Safe Routes to School Program, but there may be money in late Spring. It is important to get money for the program and the Town must have a plan which is very involved, with 60 pages of requirements. Mr. Michaelangelo has talked to the Education Department and has sent information to Greg Gibbons.  

Mr. Bowman said he would rather use State money, if possible. He commented on the Housing Authority constructing housing in the area with more people in the area than there is now. Sidewalks have been requested on West Main Street all the way down on the north side.  

If it is not worth pursuing the State money, Mr. Sitko said he assumes it will be, but there may be money put in the capital budget for a few years out.  

Regarding the inspection, Mr. Sheil said originally the project was signed off for part time construction inspection. We still hope this is the case, but there is a possibility the State will require full time inspection since this is what they are doing now as a result of the I-84 project. The Town does not control how the State makes this call. Hiring someone full time will cost more money.
A comment had been made about a gas main being installed under the Yankee Gas program, and Mr. Sheil advised that the project move forward, and let Yankee Gas come in whenever they plan to do so. He does not want to hold up the project.

Mr. Bowman noted that Yankee Gas is increasing the line, and one of the problems is the community pool running out of gas.

According to Mr. Sitko there is talk about Yankee Gas starting the Cheshire to Wallingford and Wallingford to Cheshire leg in 2010. Then, the rest of it, Cheshire to Waterbury bumps into the streetscape, and this is a concern.

Mr. Bowman said the line would not be in the streetscape area, and the only thing it would affect is the culvert.

Mr. Sheil thinks it will be the same as what the water company did on Route 10, and it will be done in pieces.

If the gas company knows this is coming, Mr. Bowman said they can do the space where DOT will be working and connect on either end of it.

Mr. Dixon said this is what he is suggesting since everything will be torn up, and it will save the company money. They put the pipe in during the project, have a little investment but they cannot recoup it right away. There could be a regulator station at Route 10.

Mr. Bowman thought the main concern was getting the gas line from Wallingford to Cheshire to increase gas availability for Route 10. This was supposed to be done by September.

B. Next Meeting
When the bid date is known, another meeting will be scheduled.

Mr. Sitko will e-mail everyone on the status of the bids.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Dixon; seconded by Mr. Larson.
MOVED to adjourn at 9:30 a.m.
VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W/Milton, Clerk. (Recorded from Tape)