

New Hope Borough Council Workshop

February 4, 2019

Present: Connie Gering, Dan Dougherty, Laurie McHugh, Ken Maisel, Tina Rettig, Borough Manager E.J. Lee, Chief of Police Michael Cummings, and Administrative Assistant JoAnn Connell.

Absent: Peter Meyer and Alison Kingsley.

Audience: Joseph, Anthony and Frederick Favoroso, Steve Coppens, Michael Burns, A.I.A, and Pam Kerr.

Council President Connie Gering called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM

MAIN STREET PEDESTRIAN PROJECT

EJ Lee, Borough Manager provided a summary update on the background of the project and where things currently stood. The intersection of Main St. and Ferry St. was completed back in November. After the completion of Marin & Ferry, discussions about the use of concrete versus existing brick was raised with property owners, which led to Council authorizing two separate change orders (one at the December meeting and another at the January meeting). Since then, updated plans were submitted to Penn Dot for review and approval as the roads are owned by PennDOT. Once the Borough receives authorization from PennDOT, the project should begin 2 weeks thereafter.

Pam Kerr (in audience) asked if the Logan Inn would be doing any sidewalk work and how this project fits with their efforts.

Ms. Lee responded that the Borough's project and the Logan Land Development Project have been coordinating to make sure both improvements line up with each other. The Logan Inn will be constructing ADA accessible ramps on their side with crosswalks that will line up with the new ramps that will be installed as a part of the Borough's project.

BRIDGE STREET SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Ms. Lee provided a summary update on the background of the project and where things currently stood. The main components of the project are:

- Improving the stretch of dirt gravel strip that runs along Bridge St. by making it an ADA accessible sidewalk.
- Removing the large stone and replacing it with a fence to widen the existing dirt gravel proposed to be converted to concrete ADA accessible sidewalk

Options for consideration for the project that need to be discussed:

- To add red dye color to the proposed concrete to add to the historic look at a cost of \$20.00 to \$22.00 per square foot. Ms. Lee confirmed that this additional work would not be covered by the grant.

- Adding additional imprint to the red dyed concrete for a faux brick look at a price of \$35.00 to \$40.00 per square foot. Ms. Lee reminded the group that this would also not be covered by the grant.
- The plans currently call for four decorative poles to be installed at the newly improved sidewalk where flower baskets can hang. There were previous discussions of the possibility of adding accent lights on the poles, which would add \$12,300. There was a brief discussion of adding solar panels to those lights for a more sustainable method of lighting the poles.

There was further discussion to analyze the costs of the red dye and faux brick to come up with the idea that these additional items (mentioned above) be listed in the project bid specifications as itemized additional items to see where the final costs fall for Council to decide which route to take.

Ms. McHugh asked if the specifications of this project went before the HARB as the project sits within the historic district, to which Ms. Lee responded that it has not gone before the HARB, but the Borough can bring the project before the HARB for their review, but keeping in mind that ADA accessibility and PennDOT required specifications would override any aesthetic looks that are desired by the HARB. But the Borough can include the red dye and brick look stamp as alternatives to the bid specifications to see where the costs come in.

Mr. Steve Coppens (in the audience) asked why real brick cannot be used, to which Ms. Lee answered that real brick would not meet PennDOT's ADA accessibility standards to be covered under the grant. And also iterated that safety and accessibility is the priority in this sidewalk improvement project.

These estimates discuss are based on several quotes. When it comes due to making a decision all these areas can be itemized out. Ms. Lee further explained the timeline of the project. Currently, the Borough is in the final design phase by the Borough Engineers to be submitted to PennDOT for review and approval. Once the Borough receives PennDOT approval, the next step is to finalize the bid specifications for advertisement. The bid process takes a few months to advertise, hold a pre-bid meeting, make amendments to the bid as necessary, review the bids received and publicly award the project to a contractor. Once a contractor is in place, it would be another two months before the project can start due to contractor background checks and executing an agreement. The Borough is currently aiming for a fall construction schedule. If the Borough can't meet the fall schedule, the project would be postponed to early spring of 2020.

Ms. Kerr (in the audience) asked if you went with the concrete could artists paint on it, to which Ms. Lee responded that would have to be acceptable to Penn DOT and there would probably be requirements. Again, Ms. Lee iterated that safety and accessibility is the primary concern and those two items must be met in order for the Borough to get the funds from this grant.

Mr. Maisel raised the question about the lights and whether the decision on the lights need to be made now. Ms. Lee shared that the lights currently sitting on W. Mechanic St. by the bridge are the same poles and similar lighting to what would be proposed for the Bridge St. project if the Borough decides to add the lights to the poles. Ms. Lee responded that the Borough can include the lights as an alternate to the bid specs as well to see where the costs come in for that and make a final decision on that later.

Mr. Maisel asked if these would just be accent lights or if there are other streetlights already in place at that site, to which it was responded that there are currently streetlights sitting on the other side of

Bridge St. so the area is actually already well laminated, so the poles would serve primarily as accent lights.

Mr. Coppens (in the audience) asked What type of fence would be used at this site, to which Ms. Lee responded that the fence located at the train station is similar to what would be installed at this site.

Ms. Coppens shared that he had other questions pertaining to the stairs, fence, poles, and the tree proposed for removal. Ms. Lee invited Mr. Coppens to Borough Hall to meet with her to discuss the project more in detail to address all his questions and concerns. Ms. Lee iterated that the existing stairs on site will not be changed. All work will be from the stone pillars to the existing street.

Mr. Favoroso (in the audience) had questions about signage during construction, to which Ms. Lee responded that there would be alternate route signs for both the pedestrians and cars. Mr. Favoroso also inquired about the opening of the fence and whether any emergency services would be able to access the buildings on the other side of the fence without having to go around either end of the fence. Ms. Lee responded that there are openings proposed for the fence that is identical to the existing openings in the stone pillars that lead to the stairway to the internal sidewalk, but she will also check into the plans further in detail with the Engineer and provide him with all the specifics of the plans. Ms. Lee will be in contact with Mr. Favoroso to address all his questions and concerns.

REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE

Members of the Revitalization Committee in attendance; Anita Maximo, Jules Sghiatti, Susan Taylor, Lisa Menz and Ed Duffy who is a former member.

Council President Gering shared that upon discussion and careful consideration, Council would like for the Revitalization Committee to take a year break to re-evaluate the purpose of the group and understand the needs of the Borough that the Revitalization Committee should be involved in. The group currently calls for 18 positions, five of which are currently vacant and has been a struggle trying to fill the vacancies in addition to difficulties in targeting the key projects that the group should be focused on.

Jules Sghiatti/Lisa Menz both Co-Chairs of the Board stated that they are concerned with the Revitalization Committee taking such a long break as the committee has been working on many areas such as: business signage, banner, parking, kiosks and more and there are a lot of members that are committed. They also shared that of the current sitting members of the Revitalization Committee, an average of 8 to 9 members attend the monthly meetings, but there have not been Council representation at the meeting for a while, which has had some impact on the progression of the group's efforts. Ms. Menz further iterated the value of the group of locals who have a vested interest in the community to recognize and see what the community needs.

Ms. Anita Maximo, STC liaison to the Revitalization Committee shared the value that the Revitalization Committee has in being the binding glue to the other boards and committees in supporting the underlying recommendations listed in the Borough Master Plan. She further asked where the Borough stood with a new master plan that can be used as the guiding tool for the Revitalization Committee.

Ms. Susan Taylor, Friends of the Canal liaison to the Revitalization Committee stated that there are so many things going on in New Hope that it would lose momentum to close the committee down for a while and since the members are active in place the committee should remain.

Mr. Ed Duffy shared that the Revitalization Committee may be just idling a bit before it gets going again and added that as long as you have people to keep it going the Committee should continue to operate.

Council President Gering, speaking as a former member of the Revitalization Committee, recognized the value of the group, but also voiced her concerns with the large number of member and what the focus of the group was and what they need to concentrate on. She recommended that perhaps a smaller group would be more efficient, and looking around and researching what other municipalities have done, such as Doylestown Borough, see that they similar committees called Economic Development Committee. She further added that even if not a whole year, a take a few months to evaluate the group.

Council Member Laurie McHugh asked what would be needed to make these proposed changes to the Revitalization Committee. She further added that the group should meet in a smaller setting made up of just a few members of the Revitalization Committee and begin to focus on specific items. Start with a goal and start with a smaller group that is more manageable over the next several months to do a thorough evaluation. Council Member Ken Maisel also volunteered to help with this effort alongside Ms. McHugh.

Council Member Dan Dougherty added comments about the Borough's efforts of transparency and also understanding what the efforts of the Revitalization Committee does. He further voiced his concerns in reading the Revitalization Committee's mission statement being very broad, which would add to the difficulty of the group not being able to focus on appropriate projects and recognizing their limitations. He shared that the goals and mission of this group sounds more like what a local Chamber of Commerce would do. He added that committees should not create sub committees, but rather, the original committee should be working collectively to be responsible for a common goal.

There was further discussion about the role of the Revitalization Committee and the local Chamber of Commerce to clarify that they are two separate groups with two separate focus and goals, and what the Borough's role has been in the past and what it should be moving forward.

Ms. Gering summarized that these discussions are the reason why the Revitalization Committee needs to go through an evaluation period to clear up these very issues.

Ms. McHugh added that they coordinate a meeting with Mr. Maisel and members of the Revitalization Committee review and evaluate what the complete scope of the committee is, in order to figure how what direction the Committee should be moving, including evaluation of the number of members, focus, name of the group etc. She proposed that they aim to have these discussions with the members of the Revitalization Committee for further discussions at March Council Workshop Agenda to provide updates.

Mr. Maisel requested that the sub-committee group recommended by Ms. McHugh meet to try and narrow down and focus on the group's scope of work in their efforts of community improvement.

Ms. Gering summarized that Ms. McHugh and Mr. Maisel work with the members of the Revitalization Committee to narrow down the mission statement and have an understanding of the group's role as an advisory group to Council for discussions at a future Council Workshop (March or April).

Mr. Dougherty further added that the mission statement be specific and goal oriented with examples of what kind of projects that the group would be focusing on.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Kerr asked what is being done about the issue of speed on Bridge/Ferry/Chestnut that was raised at the December Council meeting.

NH Police Chief Cummings responded that his department is conducting a study with an inferred radar near Wedgewood, Cintra and provide data to the Borough Engineer, who would then use that data to submit a report to PennDOT to petition for lower speed limit and other safety measures that are appropriate for that area.

There was a question from the about the Master Plan, to which Ms. Lee clarified that the "Master Plan" that everyone is calling is really the Borough's Comprehensive Plan. She explained that the municipal Comprehensive Plan serves as a planning guide. Usually when the Borough applies for any kind of grant funds, the projects that is being pursued with the grant is identified in the Comprehensive Plan to show that the project is something that is part of the Borough's overall goals and objectives. The Borough's Comprehensive Plan was last updated and adopted in 2011.

Mr. Dougherty asked how often a Comprehensive Plan is updated, to which Ms. Lee responded that the usual range is anywhere from 10-15 years.

Mr. Favoroso asked if there would be a new road name for the Bridge St. improvement, to which Ms. Lee responded that there would not be any changes to the name of the road.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 pm