

**MINUTES**  
**TOWN OF GORHAM**  
**ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Meeting of October 25, 2022 – 8:00 a.m.**  
**Gorham Municipal Center, Conference Room A**

Present: Committee Chair, Benjamin Hartwell, and Councilor Virginia Wilder Cross.

Absent: Councilor Ronald Shepard

Also present: Town Manager, Ephrem Paraschak; Director of Community Development, Tom Poirier; Town Planner, Carol Eyerman; Assistant Town Clerk, Letitia Genest, and Executive Assistant, Jessica Hughes.

1. **Consideration of the minutes of the September 20, 2022 meeting.**

A motion was MADE by Councilor Hartwell, SECONDED by Councilor Wilder Cross, and VOTED to accept the minutes of the September 20, 2022 meeting. Unanimous vote.

2. **Current Business**

- A. Develop a long-term plan for pedestrian improvements consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan (referred by the Town Council on August 2, 2022).

Director of Community Development Tom Poirier reviewed the attachment A provided, referencing bicycle and pedestrian recommendations from the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, and separate maps of the existing sidewalks within various Town villages.

Mr. Poirier said that a goal is to try to identify areas on maps where the committee wants sidewalks so that it is clear to the Planning Board. He noted that some existing sidewalks are missing from the maps provided. He said that all new districts currently do not require complete extensions of sidewalks, and a goal would be to make a seamless transition. He added that other than the Mountain Division Trail, the Town really does not have bicycle facilities.

Town Planner Carol Eyerman said that the committee may want to instruct staff to add in figures showing bike facilities in design standards under a later phase two or three. She said an overlay could be done for both pedestrian and bike facilities, but the committee should address bike facilities

Town Manager Ephrem Paraschak recommended adding a sidewalk on lower Main Street from Mosher Road.

A discussion ensued among committee members and staff regarding potential pedestrian improvements on lower Main Street.

Mrs. Eyerman said a consideration is if we don't have a sidewalk somewhere, do we want to add a pedestrian connection.

Mr. Paraschak asked if we should ask Public Works to provide the overlay so we can see that network to which Mr. Poirier said we need to update the existing Gorham map with all current data, then add a rough overlay.

Mrs. Eyerman recommended layering all transportation modes on the map.

Mr. Poirier said we need to be clear on standards for bike facilities to which Mrs. Eyerman said the complete streets plan will talk about more global bike facilities.

Councilor Hartwell commented that he has never felt it was fair to have a developer make a connection if they had to.

A discussion ensued between Mr. Poirier and Mr. Paraschak regarding the costs for the Narragansett sidewalk project.

Councilor Hartwell referenced that the Old Shoe Trailer in Westbrook came right up against the road, and that this committee should consider reducing side setbacks.

Mr. Paraschak asked if changing setbacks would be an easy change as far as zoning amendments if the Council wanted to look at setbacks, to which Mr. Poirier said that a contract zone could be done.

Mrs. Eyerman said that the original reason for buffering and setbacks was to allow for firefighting.

A discussion between Mr. Poirier and Mr. Paraschak ensued regarding disadvantages and implications of both scenarios.

Mr. Paraschak issued caution to avoid the term "growth" in design standards.

Mr. Poirier recommended extending the sidewalk to Waterhouse Road.

Councilor Hartwell is in support of the overlay idea.

Mr. Paraschak recommended adding the USM sidewalk network to the overlay.

Councilor Wilder Crossed asked if we only do a small overlay, what if a developer chooses to build in an area to avoid having to install a sidewalk to which Mrs. Eyerman said that the Planning Board would review and may still require a sidewalk if the area is on the edge.

Mr. Poirier said that the intent of this work is to make the language crystal clear for the Planning Board.

A discussion ensued regarding a contract zone making language applicable to all businesses in a zone.

Mr. Poirier said that the ordinance would not require businesses to carry the burden on their own.

Mrs. Eyerman said this process will go a long way for developers.

Staff will work on the maps with overlays.

A motion was MADE by Councilor Wilder Cross, SECONDED by Councilor Hartwell, and VOTED to table the item for further discussion at the next meeting. Unanimous vote.

- B. Review revising standards for curb cuts on arterials and designated collectors consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan (referred by the Town Council on August 2, 2022).

Mr. Poirier referred to the attachment B provided, referencing his memo and proposed new standard to address access limitations on arterial and collector roads. He said he will ask the Public Works Director and peer Traffic Engineer to review the draft standard. The purpose for the standard is for better access management; less driveways equate to less reductions in traffic speed.

Mr. Paraschak commented that page nine would increase ability to have more density.

Councilor Hartwell asked about persons avoiding triggering a subdivision and selling a lot every five years to which Mr. Poirier said that they would still have to meet standards.

Councilor Hartwell said that it sounds like a lot of this will overlay with MDOT compact zone policies, and it seems like DOT compacts should not have to be a set distance from driveways.

Mr. Paraschak shared a hypothetical scenario of a person with a property that doesn't have the spacing for driveways according to standards. He asked if they would have to go to the Planning Board regardless of doing a subdivision or a staff site review to get permission, or does staff have the ability to waive that to which Mr. Poirier said – yes, there is a waiver provision.

Mrs. Eyerman asked what the goal of this and other access limitations was to which Mr. Poirier said to maintain the capacity of road systems.

Mrs. Eyerman said that part of New Portland Road is in the villages redevelopment, and the triangle is headed west out of the villages. She wants to be make sure the language is also tailored to village areas.

Staff will send the language to the Public Works Director and peer Traffic Engineer.

A motion was MADE by Councilor Wilder Cross, SECONDED by Councilor Hartwell, and VOTED to table the item for further discussion at the next meeting. Unanimous vote.

- C. Explore a vernal pool transfer program consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan (referred by the Town Council on August 2, 2022).

Mr. Poirier referred to the attachment C, referencing his memo, two sample vernal pools overlay districts, and a document to assist municipalities with setting up an overlay district.

Mr. Poirier said that he needs to talk to a Land Trust as the Town has to protect vernal pools in the rural district. He said he has not talked the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust yet, and that he also needs to talk to landowners in rural areas to get approval to survey vernal pools. He said a consultant would need to be hired, which could cost a minimum of \$50k.

Mr. Poirier said the next steps would be that would talk with the Land Trust, if the committee wants to proceed.

Mr. Paraschak asked if we can use our own land to which Mr. Poirier said – yes.

A discussion ensued between staff regarding which parcels to survey first.

Mr. Poirier recommended checking with the DEP first. He added that staff will get costs, then talk to a Land Trust partner, then prepare a list of landowners.

Councilor Hartwell recommended using the term “designated rural areas” broadly.

A motion was MADE by Councilor Wilder Cross, SECONDED by Councilor Hartwell, and VOTED to table the item for further discussion at the next meeting. Unanimous vote.

### 3. **Items Referred by Town Council to Committee for Future Meetings/Action**

- A. Review and recommend amending kennel setbacks and screening requirements in the Land Use and Development Code (referred by the Town Council on October 4, 2022).

A brief discussion ensued between Councilor Hartwell and Mrs. Eyerman regarding the recommended language to reference under the setbacks and screening requirements in which Mrs. Eyerman said it would say something to the effect of “...100 ft setback, but the committee or Planning Board can waive if it abuts a designated open space.”

Councilor Hartwell said there is not a big rush to address this.

### 4. **Other Business**

No items were discussed under this section.

5. **Schedule next meeting and discuss agenda items for next meeting.**

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at 8:00 a.m. in Conference Room A. The following items will be discussed at the next meeting:

- A. Develop a long-term plan for pedestrian improvements consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan (referred by the Town Council on August 2, 2022).
- B. Review revising standards for curb cuts on arterials and designated collectors consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan (referred by the Town Council on August 2, 2022).
- C. Explore a vernal pool transfer program consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan (referred by the Town Council on August 2, 2022).

6. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, a motion was MADE by Councilor Shepard and SECONDED by Councilor Wilder Cross and VOTED to adjourn. Time of adjournment: 9:40am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica Hughes, Executive Assistant, and  
Letitia Genest, Assistant Town Clerk