

MINUTES

TOWN OF GORHAM

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting of April 18, 2023 – 11:00 a.m.

Gorham Municipal Center, Conference Room A

Present: Councilor Virginia Wilder Cross - Committee Chair, and Councilor Ronald Shepard.

Absent: Councilor Seven Siegel.

Also present: Town Manager, Ephrem Paraschak; Town Planner, Carol Eyerman; Town Engineer Charles Norton, and Executive Assistant, Jessica Hughes.

1. **Consideration of the minutes of the March 20, 2023 meeting.**

A motion was MADE by Councilor Shepard, SECONDED by Councilor Wilder Cross, and VOTED to accept the minutes of the March 20, 2023 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).

As a recap, Town Planner Carol Eyerman said that staff have gone through a mapping exercise to create the pedestrian overlay zone and ordinance amendments so as to package all separate instances of language under one ordinance.

Town Engineer Charles Norton said that the committee had previously asked for project examples, as well as a calculation to charge as a fee in lieu. He referred to attachment A.

Mr. Norton said that pricing can fluctuate depending on whether it has open versus closed drainage, and whether the site where a development is located has curb and gutter drainage or an open ditch cross section. He said that a sidewalk can be put in a ditch, but it would need to be brought up to standards.

Mr. Norton then reviewed the sidewalk extension examples.

A discussion took place between Mr. Norton and Councilor Wilder Cross regarding a hypothetical project in which Councilor Wilder Cross asked if developers really have to install sidewalks in the areas reflected on the map, to which Mrs. Eyerman said – yes, and that staff made adjustments to designated areas where sidewalks should be installed.

Mrs. Eyerman said that repackaging the ordinance will make the requirements clearer for developers.

Town Manager Ephrem Paraschak said that we want to encourage growth in growth zones in designated villages. He said that this process has provided a great exercise, because it puts a dollar figure on it. He added that some examples and impact seems excessive. He asked if it makes sense to have zones [overlay districts] within our zones.

Councilor Wilder Cross said that the goal is to try to make the Town more attractive to businesses.

Mrs. Eyerman asked if this topic should be part of a smart growth conversation.

A discussion ensued in which Mr. Paraschak said that the turnpike will stimulate a lot of growth.

Mrs. Eyerman said that until that happens, developers will question why they are required to do sidewalks.

A discussion ensued regarding the Harvey Performance sidewalk construction.

Mr. Paraschak commented that the fiscal year 2023-2024 proposed municipal budget was made possible by TIF [tax increment financing] revenue related to sidewalks.

A discussion ensued regarding whether the TIF funds could be used to make improvements outside of the area in which Mr. Paraschak said – yes, as long as it directly benefits the TIF area.

Mr. Paraschak said that staff could reevaluate the impact example on a large commercial facility. He further said that the formula could be based on a circle around the village growth area, as well as a formula for an area farther out, which could result in less push back from developers and the public in general.

A discussion ensued regarding the impact to a business if a sidewalk is already in place.

Mr. Norton said that he had a discussion with the Director of Community Development Tom Poirier regarding the variability of project costs. He said the numbers provided were just estimates, and that staff could do a graduated fee schedule.

Councilor Shepard said maybe there is a way to put a cap on something.

Mr. Norton said maybe there is a way to pair with what Mr. Paraschak suggested regarding basing the formula within a certain distance from the village, and it being adjusted outside of that distance.

Mrs. Eyerman asked if the committee wants areas, or a graduated system and cap.

Mr. Paraschak said that the South Gorham Commercial area is an area where we want people to pay into sidewalks to build up the zone. He said that an area component would make a lot more sense. He said that staff can look at whether we could make an area component work, at a lower cost, and bring back area recommendations on the commercial calculation to try to make an equitable analysis.

Councilor Wilder Cross said that sidewalks on South Street are not well-maintained to which Mr. Paraschak said that they were likely footpaths built 30 to 40 years ago.

A motion was MADE by Councilor Wilder Cross, SECONDED by Councilor Shepard, and VOTED to send the item back to staff. 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).

Mrs. Eyerman shared her gratitude for Assistant Town Planner Damon Yakovleff's efforts with typed in 600+ records to create the map provided with attachment B.

Mr. Norton said that the dark black lines were all roads discussed at the last meeting.

Mrs. Eyerman said the goal is to limit the number of access points coming from these driveways onto darker black roadways on the map. She added that the amendment only applies to subdivisions, private ways, and commercial development.

A discussion ensued regarding Route 202/Tannery Brook apartments and the additional units being proposed of the back of the lot.

Mrs. Eyerman said that once you have a certain number of access points, it would trigger an urban compact zone.

Mr. Paraschak said that a question for the Town Council would be if they want to apply the proposed amendment town-wide or move toward PACTS areas.

A discussion ensued regarding whether the committee had any concerns with there being an impact or any push back from landowners in rural areas.

Regarding development on rural roads with corner access and intersections, Mr. Norton said there should be a consideration for safety.

Councilor Wilder Cross said there should be two sections: one for rural and the other for urban.

Regarding design standards, Mr. Norton said a consideration is that of should and shall conditions.

Mr. Paraschak said that if there is a way to circumvent urban compact zones, growth should be designed in a way to deter DOT from giving back roads to the Town as it is a huge cost that would be conveyed to the Town; as we build out, we should design standards around what triggers the zone.

Mrs. Eyerman said that staff can draft something.

A discussion ensued in which Councilor Shepard asked how much pressure does “should/shall” language put on the Planning Board, to which Mrs. Eyerman said that would depend on what the Council’s policy is.

Mrs. Eyerman recommended including a purpose statement.

A discussion ensued regarding an access point for a single-family home between two subdivisions.

Councilor Wilder Cross commended Mr. Yakovleff for his work on the map, which she appreciated.

A motion was MADE by Councilor Shepard, SECONDED by Councilor Wilder Cross, and VOTED to send back to staff. Unanimous.

- C. Review revising parking ordinances and forward any recommendations to the Town Council for consideration (referred by the Town Council on February 7, 2023).

The committee said that this item would be discussed at the next meeting.

- D. Review adding accessory use outdoor storage to the Roadside Commercial District and forward and recommendations to the Town Council (referred by the Town Council on March 7, 2023).

The committee said that this item would be discussed at the next meeting.

- E. Review increasing the Stream Protection Sub District from 75' to 100', better define stream, as well as add aquifers, and send recommendations back to the Town Council (referred by the Town Council on March 7, 2023).

Mr. Paraschak said the item could be discussed at the next meeting with a map of existing definitions and the 100 foot change, as well as a map with updated definitions and the 100 foot change.

3. **Items Referred for Future Meetings/Action**

- A. Explore a vernal pool transfer program consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan (referred by the Town Council on August 2, 2022).
- B. Review zoning in the Gorham Village Districts to increase economic development (referred by the Town Council on February 7, 2023).
- C. Review increasing the minimum square footage exemption for a fire suppression system from 400 to 800 square feet and report back to the Town Council with a recommendation (referred by the Town Council on February 7, 2023).

Mr. Paraschak said that Chief Fickett can be invited, and staff will provide real-world examples.

- D. Review a proposed contract zone for single and multi-family housing off of Robie Street, and send recommendations back to the Town Council (referred by Town Council on April 4, 2023).

4. **Other Business**

No items were discussed.

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

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Monday, May 15, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. in Conference Room A. The following items will be discussed:

- 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. Review revising parking ordinances and forward any recommendations to the Town Council for consideration (referred by Ordinance Committee on January 17, 2023).
- D. Review adding accessory use outdoor storage to the Roadside Commercial District and forward recommendations to the Town Council (referred by the Town Council March 7, 2023).

- E. Review increasing the Stream Protection Sub District from 75' to 100', better define stream, as well as add aquifers, and send recommendations back to the Town Council (referred by the Town Council on March 7, 2023).
- F. Review increasing the minimum square footage exemption for a fire suppression system from 400 to 800 square feet and report back to the Town Council with a recommendation (referred by the Town Council on February 7, 2023).

5. **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: 12:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Hughes, Executive Assistant