

MINUTES
**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS/
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**
Meeting of Thursday, September 21, 2023 – 12 p.m.
Conference Room A, Gorham Municipal Center

Present: Councilor Suzanne Phillips - Committee Chair, and Councilors Phillip Gagnon and Virginia Wilder Cross.

Also Present: Director of Community Development Tom Poirier; Public Works Director Terry Deering; Town Engineer Charles Norton; Deputy Public Works Director Jeff Grant; School Facilities Director Norm Justice, and Executive Assistant Jessica Hughes.

1. Consideration of the minutes of the August 17, 2023 meeting.

A motion was MADE by Councilor Phillips, SECONDED by Councilor Gagnon, and VOTED to accept the minutes of the August 17, 2023 meeting. Unanimous vote.

2. Current Business

- A. Review and discuss staff recommendations on roadways for discontinuance and send back to the Town Council for action (June 6, 2023).

Councilor Phillips said that this committee is taking inventory of Town roads to check the status as we are not sure how some of these roads came to be, so we are just looking at these for inventory purposes at this point.

Public Works Director Terry Deering recapped that the committee looked at five roads at the last meeting, which included Pine Cone Lane, Bragdon Lane, Carll Lane, Goss Lane and Hamblen Road. He said that he passed the list of these roads onto licensed surveyor Steve Martin, so Mr. Martin is working on those steps. He added that the Town does not have much information on these roads as far as whether they are town ways or if they are discontinued.

Mr. Deering said that the next list of roads for review before the committee includes Smith Road, Deering Farm Road, Kinney Road, Shad Gully and Grant Road. He said that he'd like to get something done on the first list of roads before moving onto the second list.

Mr. Deering said that staff have a couple more roads for the committee to look at, one of which he and staff looked at with a developer the other day at the end of Waterhouse Road, which he never realized extended farther than it actually does.

- B. Work with staff to evaluate options for a site planning study of 80 Huston Road and bring back recommendations to the Town Council for review (referred August 1, 2023).

Regarding expansion, Councilor Phillips shared that at a Town Council meeting, they had talked about and realized that they had no master plan like the Town has for the Chick property and other places, so the Council wanted to see what the lot looked like and what kinds of uses could go on there.

Mr. Deering said staff have come to the realization that there are some things they can do off the existing bus parking lot area that they previously thought were off limits. He referred to the yellow block on the attachment B provided that reflected the area that could be expanded. He further said that additional area could be expanded on around the other School block area on the map to give them [the School department] more space. He prefaced the potential for expansion by saying that staff has not had anyone come in from an engineering firm to explore that through exact measuring. He said the map before the committee is what staff could envision as a future layout of Public Works as the Town moves forward.

Mr. Deering said obviously the shooting range would have to be turned so that police department users are not shooting against the bus parking area.

Mr. Deering noted that the sander rack would be expanded, and the building expansion would be off the end. He referred to the purple area on the map that would be the impound yard, and said that PD has some money in their budget and had planned on putting off the end of the sander rack, but after looking at this whole plan, staff decided that it would be a better use of the land next to the transfer station as there is already power there, which they needed anyway and this would give them easier access.

Regarding the red area behind the potential police impound lot on the map, Mr. Deering said it is a waste storage area with a concrete wall that Public Works will remove and move to another area that is a better defined area by the silver bullets or somewhere else.

Mr. Deering said the existing storage near the entrance to the Public Works facility is not in the greatest of shape and is packed full of equipment in the winter. He said they would entertain more storage as there is a lack of storage available.

Regarding Councilor Gagnon's concern with adding land onto the existing site, Mr. Deering said that on the right hand side of the road going up to Public Works he believes is in a land trust at this point. He said that there is a 30-acre piece to the west of Public Works just off the map provided that is a potential for expansion of the Public Works facility and grounds.

Mr. Deering said that the Town has a current DEP permit for the site, which he said he believes two of our limits are with an impervious surface according to the document. He said we are going to expand on this and we'll need some funding, we'll get an engineer involved, and we really need to research if we can expand on this entire site.

Director of Community Development asked if it just has a stormwater permit through the DEP or a site location of development permit to which School Facilities Director Norm Justice said he believes it is a site location of development permit. Mr. Justice said

that staff amended that years ago when they looked at a transportation expansion, which never came to fruition, because of permitting.

Mr. Poirier asked to confirm if there was a site location of development permit that showed an additional area of impervious surface to which Mr. Justice said – yes.

A brief discussion ensued regarding DEP stormwater permitting.

Councilor Gagnon commented that he is not a fan of where the impound lot would be. He said that he would want it more in the back of the property as opposed to the front only because it is a high traffic area. He said if you have an impound lot, you don't want people in that general vicinity or moving past it.

Mr. Deering said it would be fenced in and have security cameras around it. He said that he doesn't disagree with Councilor Gagnon, but staff felt that was a pretty good place to put that since it would allow easy access for PD and the wrecker, and it would be in the area of their camera activity, as well as be near utilities as it would need to be near power and in range of wireless capabilities.

Councilor Gagnon said he would rather have it at the rear of the lot to which Mr. Deering said that staff can see about relocating that.

Councilor Gagnon said that if the waste dump is going to be relocated near the silver bullets, he asked if it could be more comprehensive so that we could have a transfer pad added since Gorham is without any transfer stations currently.

Mr. Deering asked if he would be looking for something for household trash to which Councilor Gagnon said more along the lines of a resident having an A/C unit or couch to discard.

Councilor Phillips responded that the Town cannot accept a couch, and Mr. Deering said the Town is not licensed to take couches as it is another matter. He said that the Town has metal dumpsters up there that the Town does not advertise, but that's for when they pick up junk on the side of the road. He said if the Council wanted to get into that, the master plan could incorporate something where the silver bullets are located.

Councilor Gagnon said he is looking at this, because the Town's contract for waste management will end soon, so if we are going to move to [mechanical] arm/contactless pickup like every other town, he would want to see what our options would be for general pickup and drop off. He commented that right now, the Town has a dumping problem to which Councilor Phillips said she doesn't know why that issue came back up again.

Councilor Gagnon said people are dumping things like baby stuff by the trail head at the Cross Town Trail.

Councilor Gagnon said he doesn't think it is going to solve the issue, but he thinks people need a place to go that isn't a half-hour away, like Riverside or Casella. He asked

if Westbrook gets to go to Casella to which Mr. Deering said they have their own transfer station.

Councilor Gagnon said he is not looking for a robust thing there, but something like once a week or once a month as an added service for the community.

Councilor Phillips suggested twice a year like the Town does for brush in the spring and fall.

Mr. Deering said the Town accepts brush twice a year, but nothing else, because it is costly. He said the idea is good, but there is a cost involved.

Deputy Public Works Director Jeff Grant said bulky item pickup with tags was once offered when the Town had service with R.W. Herrick, but the option ended with Casella.

Councilor Gagnon commented that the site seemed tight on the map provided.

Councilor Phillips concurred with Councilor Gagnon to which Mr. Deering said that staff are trying to expand in directions that seem feasible without a huge undertaking like moving existing facilities to another spot. He said there is all kinds of room out behind Public Works to expand and do whatever we want.

Councilor Phillips commented that she thinks this is a good jumping off point, and that she wasn't thinking about the DEP permit.

Mr. Justice commented that there is an annual exemption based on square footage that has been used on the School side, but he doesn't know what the actual square footage is.

Mr. Deering said that he knows that the School's plan was to expand the bus facility toward Huston Road, which he noted was where the brush, leach bed and drainage are located. He said that there are a lot of things that would have to be relocated or built around. He further said that he almost thinks that the fuel depot is not in the same spot as illustrated on the map.

Mr. Justice said that they permitted one back in 2009, and he said that Owens McCullough of Sebago Technics worked on the sketch plan a year or two ago.

Councilor Phillips said it is too bad that we don't own the right side of the road to relocate the bus area so buses could go right out onto the road.

Mr. Deering said they are trying to keep the buses in fairly close proximity to the maintenance facility so they're not going all over the place.

Councilor Phillips said that although there are probably different priorities, if there were things that needed to take place, the map provided shows we can expand all over the place. She asked staff if there was anything on there that should probably happen

before anything else. She asked if the Public Works building should be expanded sooner rather than later to which Mr. Deering said that they are getting in that direction.

Mr. Deering said that biggest priority would be the sand building. As it is now, he said that with the sand and salt being uncovered, employees have to clean lumps and chunks off the screens. He added that as the sand and salt sits outside, the salt leeches out and sand that has been rained on for six months. He said if it were tested, there's probably not a drop of salt left. Additionally, the whole area by the lower shop should have the parking lot reconfigured with drainage.

Mr. Deering said that the last two trucks that were bought for Public Works did not have sanders in them as the sander rack is completely full, so the department has gone some other directions to try to make the sander rack be feasible, so these are things that will need to be addressed down the road.

Councilor Gagnon asked if the big open land area on the left of the map was buildable to which Mr. Deering said – yes.

Councilor Gagnon asked if there has been any consideration for solar to which Mr. Poirier said the Town put out an RFP for solar at the landfill field, the Public Works facility roof and any other spots. He said the Town selected one bidder, but could not come to terms with the cap on the landfill. He further said the Council did not want to move forward with putting a cap on the field, because the Town would then lose the ability to access the land for 25 years. Additionally, he said that there were concerns about the life of the roof at Public Works, so solar on the roof did not go forward. He added that the vendor wanted the Town to absorb the cost, but if the Feds came in and said the Town needed to remediate the landfill, the Town would have to eat the costs on not only solar, but any loss of revenue.

Councilor Gagnon asked if it was a lease-buyback to which Mr. Poirier said it would have been a lease arrangement.

Mr. Poirier said another proposal came in that was smaller and they still can correspond with that vendor if the Council wanted staff to do that.

Councilor Gagnon said that he wouldn't want to lease the solar panels, because a lot of those companies are unstable.

Mr. Poirier said the task was to develop a master plan and bring that recommendation back to the Town Council. He asked if the committee was looking to bring back the plan that was in front of everyone, and then based on this plan, staff could go through the permitting process to get some of the stuff approved, and when funding is obtained, move forward with it.

Councilor Phillips said – yes, and she was looking at what the best way would be to use this property. She said if we are going to expand, it would be nice to move everything in a perfect spot to which Mr. Deering said that was actually an idea from staff, which was

to move the whole bus compound, but the cost associated would be challenging. He said they are trying to be as economical and practical as they can be.

Regarding growth, Councilor Gagnon said that if you look at Westbrook's complex and some of the other ones, the map is helpful so that if we do need a sand/storage shed and we put one in, we can say it will go there and not get dozed in 10 years, because we want to put something else there. He said it is beneficial in doing stuff like this. His general concern was whether the [Public Works] building would reach capacity even without an addition to it, and are we going to need to build a new building, or put it someplace else on the site.

Mr. Deering said that is one reason why he doesn't want to do something off in the dirt. He said that when the Public Works building was built, they were always under the understanding that the building could be added on at that end, so realistically we are a long ways away from building an entirely new facility. He said maybe adding on at the end, and expanding the parking area on the backside would be a fairly easy and economical way to go in the next 25 years. He added that quite a lot of thought was put into that building to try to get as many years as they could, but it is really just needing space right now, and a new roof at some point. He said all the overhead doors were just replaced, along with all of the man doors in the last five years, so the building itself is in fairly decent shape. He noted they are pretty maxed out on office space, and suggested putting a second floor on the building in the front at some point.

Councilor Phillips said she doesn't mind sending something like this back to the Council, and then to spend the money drawing it up and then change it again, but the Council could decide since we would have to go through DEP permitting.

Mr. Poirier said that when we go through the permitting and the cost, and then how it's built, that will get refined as part of the planning process. He asked Mr. Justice where the School department is at with bus capacity to which Mr. Justice said the site is at capacity with the fleet that we have, and we struggle for adequate parking for employees.

Mr. Justice said it is hard to predict how quickly we are going to grow that fleet, but we will see in the next five to seven years – we are adding two or three more routes. He added that this matter has been on the School's radar for a long time and they are still grappling with it as there are multi-million dollars of assets sitting on gravel. He said there are concerns with the employees as well in terms of the safety issues. He said they always keep a number of spare buses there, and there was only one spare left in the parking lot on one day recently, so they were either all out for sports and athletics, and Bus Mechanic Tim Richardson always has one or two in the garage. He said they always keep a number of spares, and as the fleet ages they typically retire two buses a year.

Councilor Wilder Cross said she thinks that the Council will ask what the priority is, because when it comes down to money, we are going to need to know what the department's priorities and needs are.

Councilor Phillips said that it would be helpful for Mr. Justice to be at the meeting when this item is reviewed in case anyone has any questions, and Mr. Deering could write a memo to explain why this matter was brought up and what is going to be important.

If there was a potential bus lot expansion, Councilor Gagnon said the shooting range would need to be relocated, which he said he doesn't think would be very difficult – maybe need a bulldozer and move a berm or two. Regarding the potential police impound lot, he said if we did that, too, you'd have to relocate the yard waste dump, so there is some give and take.

Mr. Deering said that down the road, the area of the sand/salt storage would not have to be effected, because of the topographics. He said everything else above on higher ground is higher topographically, so those would be impacted by any future expansion on higher ground.

Mr. Grant said that in moving forward in the short term, they were discussing doing something with the silver bullets and the yard waste this fall, because the one spot that goes off at an angle it is not a good spot for residents and staff to clean the waste up. He added that they are trying to put it all down on the flat area, so the yard waste is easier to clean up, and make that all one site down by the silver bullets.

Mr. Deering said the red spot on the map has three concrete walls, which are in horrendous condition and need to come down.

Councilor Gagnon asked staff to take a look at relocating the police impound lot – he said he would rather it be at the back of the lot.

Mr. Grant asked if it was bordered by chain link fence with privacy slats, would it address his concern.

Councilor Gagnon said same fencing bordered the impound lot when it was originally at Narragansett and he didn't like that it was out in the open where we have kids. He said that if we have the public coming in the area and doing the waste dump, he doesn't want them to see barbed-wire and fencing around an impound lot. He said his other concern is with the safety aspect, because if someone is trying to get to a vehicle in there, we have security cameras that are not monitored on a regular basis.

Mr. Deering said that area is not in close proximity to where people are actually dumping.

Councilor Gagnon said he would probably want it more towards the shooting range area as there is parking way in the back and it's using up usable space.

Mr. Deering emphasized that it would be a significant cost for a building to run the power to which Councilor Gagnon said that they already paid for it in CIPs.

Mr. Deering replied and said CIPs revenue would not be enough to do what Councilor Gagnon wants to do to which Councilor Gagnon said then we would have to get a little

extra funding so that it looks a little better visually. He said that the Police department originally had an impound lot right as you drove by and were looking at the school, which was not a good design and not endearing to the traffic on Main Street. He said the same would apply here – the front should be nice and the impound lot should be out of sight.

Councilor Phillips said she just thinks it should be covered since there are vehicles from accident scenes that are impounded.

Mr. Deering said he would get in touch with Deputy Police Chief Michael Nault and Police Chief Christopher Sanborn to see if staff can come up with a different location that will suit everybody's needs and not break the bank.

Councilor Gagnon said he appreciates staff trying to go the cheap route to which Mr. Deering said not cheap, but the inexpensive route.

The committee asked staff to bring back the items discussed for review at the next meeting, and the committee will then send the proposed master plan to the Council.

3. Items Referred for Future Meetings/Action

- A. Provide a framework for the review and possible revisions to the Chick Master Plan and report back to the Town Council with a recommendation (referred on December 6, 2022)

Councilor Phillips said that she has been trying to set up a meeting to discuss this item and item B from below on the same night. She said that she would reach out to those groups that do use the fields to coordinate a night to meet to get their thoughts on the play ends. She said they would then circle back with the School department as they are trying to get it updated with the skatepark and everything else that is there now. She said she doesn't want to do things opposite, so that when there is a school expansion zone, we can talk about that at some point. She said she wanted to have that on there since going forward, there won't all be the same people on the Council, and she wants to avoid working against each other.

- B. Review the Little Falls Master Plan, explore current and future capital improvements for the Little Falls Recreation Area and Little Falls Community Center, consult with community groups and stakeholders for input, and take into account grant funding for parking area light improvements, and how best to incorporate them into the site, and make recommendations for changes to the Town Council (referred on February 7, 2023).

Councilor Phillips will conduct outreach as mentioned in the item above since the committee will be talking about the storage shed at Little Falls. She said that groups will offer to buy things and don't get to use the fields, so that will be discussed at a future meeting. She said her goal is to schedule a night meeting to discuss these two items in the first couple weeks of October with the stakeholders on those fields.

Councilor Gagnon commented that the last time a similar initiative was done, Recreation Director Cynthia Hazelton did a great job and put everything on a board, which is how Little Falls was born. He added that football has a lot of money that they want to get a scoreboard put up with at some point.

Mr. Poirier asked if the committee wanted staff to provide an overview as part of the meeting that night since a lot of these groups may not know there is a master plan. He said staff could come educate them on the current master plan, and then have a meeting on a different date to talk about what future changes need to happen – that way they are already prepared and will have seen it.

Councilor Gagnon said then the groups could recommend the use of their monies towards specific future improvements.

Councilor Phillips said yes – we could do that.

4. Other Business

No items were discussed.

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

The next regular meeting will take place on October 19, 2023 at 12pm.

6. Adjourn.

There being no further business, a motion was MADE by Councilor Gagnon and SECONDED by Councilor Wilder Cross and VOTED to adjourn. Time of adjournment: 12:51pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Hughes, Executive Assistant