

Monday, September 08, 2008

This regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held this evening in the Juliani Meeting Room, Town Hall. In attendance were: Gregory B. Mills, Chair, Barbara D. Searle, Vice Chair, Owen H. Dugan, Secretary, Harriet S. Warshaw and Katherine L. Babson, Jr.. Also in attendance were Hans Larsen, Executive Director, Terrance J. Connolly, Deputy Director and Albert S. Robinson, Town Counsel. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

The following warrants were executed #7 in the amount of \$1,458,741.58, #8 in the amount of \$2,160,368.82 & #9 in the amount of \$3,608,479.80.

1. Citizen Speak

None.

2. Executive Director's Update

Approve Minutes of August 4, 2008

A typo on page 2 was corrected to read \$110,000,000 from \$110,000.

Warshaw moved, Searle seconded and the Board voted (5 -0) to approve the minutes of August 4, 2008.

The Executive Director reviewed the Special Town Meeting Schedule. Wellesley Club will meet on Monday, October 6th and October 13th is Columbus Day. He proposed that the Board meet on Tuesday, October 6th and will meet at 6:45 p.m. prior to STM.

3. Abbott Road/Forest Street Intersection Improvements

Steve Fader, Town Engineer, Kien Ho, BETA and Deputy Police Chief Bill Brooks joined the Board for the discussion on the proposed intersection improvements.

On June 23rd the Board heard concerns on the proposed changes that have been developed by BETA Engineering and the DPW. BETA was asked to consider further revisions to the geometry of the roadway and the placement of the traffic island.

This week the Board did a walk-thru and the DPW placed stakes on the front yard of 164 Forest Street. The stakes will determine whether the owners landscaping impedes the line of sight when they exit their driveways.

Kien presented BETA's analysis and proposed changes. The new proposed corner will be 14 feet out into Abbott Road with a 24 ft. opening to the island. This island is 10 ft. wide with 36 feet of roadway on the other side of the island. There is 15 feet of corner after the driveway on Abbot Road. The proposed change will have curbing.

Ms. Searle and Mr. Mills agreed that from their walk-thru of the driveway that the plantings are within the Town Right of Way and do impede the line of sight of the residents as they exit. This safety hazard was raised by the owners.

The Board asked the owners to remove these plantings on the Town's Right of Way as well as the other plantings on the private property as they are impeding the line of sight. When this is done the Board would be able to assess if any improvements should be made.

Monday, September 08, 2008

Ms. Warshaw felt that line of reasoning addresses the original issue but there are other issues which have been raised by the residents and the police such as vehicles speeding and the turning radius of buses and fire trucks which should be considered.

Deputy Chief Brook noted that there have been only two accidents in the past 4 years both in 2005. The speeding issues do increase when Babson begins its academic year in the fall.

The Chair asked for public comments or questions to the Board.

Russ Corsini, 19 Lincoln Rd.- approved the moving of the island and asked why one side of the island was bigger than the other?

Kien – because of the turning radius for the buses.

Sharon Kasper, 90 Abbott Rd. – questioned if the driveway was new.

Meg Greer, 24 Windsor Rd.- doesn't feel the town should spend the money to change of intersection. It was wider before the plantings were put in 7/29/07. She provided a Google Earth photo before the garage was added and the plantings. She feels the landscaping is the problem.

Andy Hoar, 129 Abbott Rd.- feels there is a safety issue for all the houses on that intersection and doesn't think taking down the landscaping will prevent the cars from slowing down.

Nancy Bagdasarian, 60 Windsor Rd.- agrees with the Board. The problem is the landscaping which has created a blind corner. The landscaping should be removed before money is spent on changing the road.

Beth Gilbert-Bono, 139 Abbott Rd.- lives across from the Marx's and feels it is a speed issue. Pedestrians and children should be the priority and would like more attention to the eastern end of Abbott Road.

Bob Lamoureux, 7 Lincoln Rd. – questioned whether the buffer zone needs to be as big as it is and does the island have to be lined up with Forest Street. There are other options to consider.

Andrea Higgins, 105 Abbott Rd. – money could be saved if the shape of the island is changed.

Vicki Keiser, 38 Inverness – fire trucks going to Babson have a difficult time making the turn. Supports moving the island back. The landscaping doesn't affect it either way.

Richard Baum, 84 Abbott Rd.- the safety issue can be rectified by removing shrubs and suggested speed dips would solve the safety issue.

Kien gave some comments on traffic calming.

Marla Robinson, 33 Windsor Rd.- thanked the Board for it's taking time on this issue.

Roberta Francis, 165 Forest St. – if any reconfiguration is made she would like to make sure fire trucks can make that turn.

Kien said fire trucks can make the turn.

Doug Irwin, 121 Forest St. – feels it is a dangerous area for pedestrians.

Alex Marx, 164 Forest St., - owner of the property in question. They are willing to relocate some of the landscaping and would like the Board to consider a stop sign, as the intersection is very dangerous due to speeding cars. His main issue is about safety of his and the other children in the neighborhood.

Monday, September 08, 2008

Eric Brown, 5 Berkshire Rd., - in favor of the changes.

Mary Beth Sandman, 93 Abbott Road, - thinks the landscaping is the issue and should be corrected.

Mandy Hoar, 129 Abbott Road, -appreciates the island being moved and feels the road needs a double line and the speed reduced to 25 mph.

Kien said any changes to speed limits have to go through Mass Highway and they have to be justified. Mass Highway would come out and do a speed study which could take several years to complete. As to the double line, the volume of traffic would have to be determined and it has been found that some neighborhoods don't like double lines as it lowers the value of the houses on the street, which indicates it is a busy street and a more urban setting.

Deputy Chief Brooks went over the traffic enforcement on the street.

Linda Ceremsak, 140 Abbott Rd.- has seen an increase in cars speeding due to Babson being in session and would like something done about the speeding.

Karen LaPointe, 155 Forest St. – is fully in support of the changes and would like a crosswalk installed on Forest St.

The Chairman would like to work with the property owner to remove some of the landscaping as a first step. Once the landscaping issues are addressed we can work on the speed and safety issues.

Ms. Warshaw feels we need to consider the speed issue as well as the sight issue. Just by removing the landscaping does not address the speed issue. We need to move one way or another.

Ms. Babson never realized how much landscaping was in the Town Right of Way and feels there is no strong consensus. She feels the landscaping should be removed now.

Mr. Dugan feels the landscaping should be removed in time for the winter season.

Ms. Searle said the landscaping should be removed and the BETA proposal is a first step. We need to address the larger issue of speed issues.

The Chairman directed the property owners to remove the landscaping in two weeks and to contact Mr. Larsen when it has been completed. This issue will be put back on the agenda in two weeks after the plantings are removed. The Board will then do a walk-thru and consider the geometry changes and come to a resolution at that time.

Mike Pakstis briefed the Board on the status of the Rt. 9/Rt.116 bridge. The target date for the completion of the project is fall of 2009

#4. Special Town Meeting Warrant

The Executive Director walked the Board through the Warrant.

Ms. Babson noted Article 4, 4th line – substitute the word school instead of education.

Dugan moved, Searle seconded and the Board voted (5-0) to approve the Warrant for Special Town Meeting dated October 20, 2008 as presented this date September 8, 2008 as modified (Article 4)

The Board signed the Warrant.

Monday, September 08, 2008

Old Business/New Business

Fire Chief Search Mr. Larson said that we have received the first response on the Fire Chief Search RFP from Municipal Resources, Inc., Meredith, New Hampshire and the proposal seems to be in order for a lump sum price of \$22,225.

Warshaw moved, Dugan seconded and the Board authorized the Executive Director to proceed with entering into a contract with Municipal Resources, Inc., to perform this work consistent with term of their proposal.

WHSBC Ms. Babson said that this week the SBC is filing a submittal to the MSBA consisting of the budget and schematic's to date. She showed slides of where we are in the process and gave the dates of several up coming meetings.

Sprague Fields Mr. Dugan gave an update on the fields and noted that the whole area should be completed shortly.

Senior Center Ms. Warshaw said that the committee has interviewed three architectural firms this week with the goal to make a decision by next week on who will do the feasibility study. They plan to report to Annual Town Meeting rather than the up coming Special Town Meeting.

Original Town Hall Mr. Mills said the focus has moved to a very select group of items that are the most historic elements of the building. Selective samples of the post and beams and framing and examples of the joints of the post and beams. The 2nd floor might be used in the renovation of the Community Center.

The Board was polled all aye to adjourn