Selectboard Meeting Minutes May 18, 2021 8:30 am Via Zoom

**Call to Order**: Andrew Baker, Chair called the meeting to order. Others present included Robert Manners, Margaret Payne, and Town Administrator, Terry Narkewicz.

**Bridge Street Construction Project Phase 1** – Linda Overing from Breezeway Farm Consulting hosted a preconstruction “kick-off” meeting on Bridge Street on May 12, 2021. Representatives from GCG Associates, Inc., A. Martins & Sons (contractor), town officials, business owners, and residents of the community attended. The two most prevalent items discussed where the removal and replacement of the trees and the construction schedule (starting the week of May 24 and ending in July). Given the concerns raised at the “kick off” meeting, the project team requested a meeting with members of the Selectboard to discuss the town’s options.

Attendees: Mike Carter & Lucas Brinkman, GCG Associates, Inc., Linda Overing, Breezeway Farm Consulting, Inc., Ken Eisenstein, Phil Pless, and Crystal (owner of Bridge Street Bazaar).

Chairman Baker opened the meeting seeking comments from the individual businesses in attendance. Ken Eisenstein, owner of Boswell Books indicated that the overall timing of the project was terrible particularly if, the project lasts throughout the entire summer. He was concerned with the overall disruption to the downtown as well as the parking challenges. Crystal felt that starting the project the week before the Memorial Day weekend would be very damaging to businesses. Phil Pless felt that the combination of road construction and tree removal would turn people away from the Village. Each of the individual business owners in attendance hoped that members of the Selectboard would consider delaying the project until the spring or, allow the water main replacement, and return in late Fall for the tree removal and sidewalk replacement.

GCG Associates, Inc. representative, Mike Carter provided members of the Selectboard with information relative to the trees which included a highlighted plan illustrating the location of the trees to the installation of the water main, service connections, and why it makes sense to remove and replace the existing trees. In addition, Mike provided four options for the Selectboard to consider with regards to the overall project. The options included: move forward with the project as planned; terminate the contract, seek a grant extension, and rebid the project next year; start the project in the Fall after the foliage season; install the water main and tree wells and have the contractor return in the fall for sidewalks and paving; or request that the contractor work longer days to minimize the construction period.

Linda Overing stressed that the town has a legally binding contract with A. Martins & Sons. Penalties for cancelling the contract would be costly to the town. She noted that the contractor has 70 days to complete the project.

Margaret Payne was sympathetic to the business owners and the need to complete a very necessary infrastructure project. She agreed that the overall timing was poor and hoped that the Selectboard could find some kind of a compromise.

Bob Manners noted that there is never a good time to begin a road reconstruction project in a business district. He was most concerned about the costs and penalties associated with “dissecting” the project and recommended that the construction proceed as planned. Andrew then led a fairly extensive exploration into the options presented in a memo by the Engineer to see whether the compromise that Margaret expressed interest in might actually be feasible. The discussion, and consultation with the engineers and Linda Overing, revealed potentially large costs and several unknowns in the most viable alternative strategies suggested by the engineer which included phasing the project over three stages: water main in June, trees in the fall, and sidewalks and final paving in the spring. Linda indicated that any changes to the contract would have to be negotiated with the contractor. Mike Carter added that if the town were to dissect the project into different phases, it would cost an additional $50,000 to $100,000 each time the contractor had to leave and remobilize.

Bob presented a motion to move forward with the project as planned which included the water main replacement, installation of tree wells, and sidewalks; leaving the final paving and tree planting for the Fall. Margaret seconded the motion. During the final discussion, Margaret hoped that the Town could find a way to help mitigate potential impact and support the business community during the construction. The motion passed 2 to 0. Andrew abstained from the vote.

Adjournment: Bob presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 am. Margaret seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Narkewicz

Town Administrator