

Downtown Revitalization Committee
Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 18, 2010

5:30 p.m.

Newington Town Hall

- I. **Roll Call:** Members Present were: Chairman McBride, Mr. Banach, Mrs. Cohen, Mr. Lenares, Mr. Marocchini and Mr. Shields.

Others Present: Gary Fontanella and Dave Dickson Milone & Mac Broom project consultants; Town Engineer, Anthony Ferraro and Town Planner, Ed Meehan.

II. **Minutes**

September 20, 2010 Meeting: Mrs. Cohen moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Marocchini and approved.

III. **Public Participation**

Val Ginn, 56 Farmingdale Road Wethersfield speaking on behalf of the Annual Waterfall Festival - Reminded the Committee to keep in mind the need to design electrical power supply sources into the streetscape plan. Electrical power sufficient enough to service the event vendors, conveniently located will be very helpful and support the continuation of the Waterfall Festival.

Curt Homely – Expressed concern that the streetscape project will require more Town money; requested Committee to consider the impact on taxes.

Edwina Savoy – Submitted petition supporting one way angle parking, requested enforcement of two (2) hour parking limit. More parking is needed on street; many spaces are taken all day by nearby business employees, not available to customers.

Val Finch – Recommended keeping project costs down and simplify design. Plan should not reduce parking on Market Square, the two hour parking limit needs to be enforced for the benefit of customers.

Rick Simons – 140 Market Square, parking is very important to businesses. Crosswalks are blocked by parked vehicles, spaces are not painted, consider the need for occasional truck delivery to business.

Dave Johnson – Classic Car Show Chairman, this show is growing and is a popular event. Requested Committee to consider the need for keeping the show on Market Square, if the streetscape design is too limiting this event would have to move and the success of the event will be compromised. The direction of traffic flow is not a concern for this event. Electric power supply would also be very helpful for the Classic Car Show event.

Esther Eddy – Expressed opinion that one-way traffic will be too limiting and restrictive for businesses within the Constitution Square parking lot.

Walter Gualitiere – Roma Tailors, and president of the Downtown Business Association agreed that the two (2) hour parking limit needs enforcement.

Rose Lyons - Reminded the Committee that handicapped on-street parking should be considered when the design is presented.

Tony DeLucco – 91 Market Square business owner, parking is the most important component of the streetscape design, new plan should not reduce available spaces too much. Street trees have grown too large and need to be removed or cut back to show signage and for better lighting.

IV. Review of Municipal Parking Lot Budget

Tony Ferraro, Town Engineer, distributed a budget status report for the municipal parking lot, both west and east side improvements showing total cost to date of \$1,706,740 and a budget balance available of \$19,750.

V. Market Square Streetscape Options and Cost Estimates

Milone and Mac Broom representative, Gary Fontanella, P.E., presented eight (8) design options for the Committee's review and discussion. Four (4) design options for two-way traffic and four (4) present options for one-way east bound traffic control. One-way traffic will necessitate traffic engineering analysis of signal impacts and submission to State Traffic Commission (STC). This could add \$360,000 to the project cost and require up to a year to gain permits.

In addition to traffic flow is the important criterion of on-street parking counts for north and south sides. Each option was further evaluated based on roadway/sidewalk width and then estimated project costs.

Mr. Fontanella stated the purpose of the options chart is to help the Committee narrow down the designs they want to further consider in conjunction with property owners and Market Square businesses.

Dave Dickson clarified that "existing option" parking count of 66 spaces is based on linear dimension of the Market Square curb providing 22 feet per space. Because spaces are not painted, the real count would be impacted by multiple factors such as crosswalks, driveway, etc.

VI. Remarks by Committee Members

Consensus of Committee was to start getting the two (2) hour parking limit enforced; recognize businesses need to have as much on-street parking as possible; investigate possible acquisition of Keeney's vacant property for additional parallel parking spaces.

Chairman McBride recommended that the Committee take some time to carefully consider each option. Mr. Fontanella advised that the one-way option will require traffic counts and some assumptions on driver's preference and turning movements. The cost estimates include total improvement costs both public and on private property. The private property improvements are estimated at about \$80,000. Most of these private improvements are now shown on the north side.

Mr. Meehan suggested the committee sponsor a public workshop special meeting. Use the Town website and Downtown Business Association to publicize the workshop.

Chairman McBride requested the Committee review the options chart and by October 25th respond to Tony Ferraro with options you want to eliminate.

Mrs. Cohen moved that the Committee hold a special meeting November 8th for a public workshop on the options the Committee selects for further discussion. Seconded by Mr. Marocchini and approved.

VII. Public Participation

Tony DeLucco - Suggested three items for the project engineers to keep in mind: 1) Storm drainage on Market Square is limited and building leaders flow onto sidewalks – can this situation be addressed? 2) Will the additional sidewalk width also serve as a snow storage area? 3) The project should have a new pedestrian crosswalk aligned with the new walkway into the municipal parking lot at Steve's Place.

Esther Eddy - Public workshop on design options is a good idea, the limitations of one-way traffic could take potential customers from Constitution Square businesses.

Jay Amoruso – More handicapped parking should be considered and the accessible parking on private property better signed.

Rose Lyons - Property owners who benefit from streetscape improvements should be willing to cost share with the Town to stretch the budget and to do the best possible project.

VIII. Adjournment

The Committee adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Submitted,

Edmund J. Meehan
Town Planner

Town Clerk
Town Website