

TOWN OF BENNINGTON

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the Meeting – September 11, 2007

Selectmen Joseph Cuddemi, Philip Germain, and James Trow were present as well as Town of Bennington's Transportation Enhancement Project Consultant Harvey Goodwin, Fay, Spofford & Thorndike (FST) Engineers Kevin Gagne and Peter Howe, and Assistant to the Administrator Kristie French. The group met on-site with Joan and Donald Schnare at the corner of School Street and Main Street at 5:30 p.m. to discuss the possible impact various traffic patterns might have on their 16 Main Street property.

The group referred to survey results compiled by Chas H. Sells, Inc. that include existing property dimensions, property boundaries, sidewalk locations, site distances, roadway markings, and Town/State right-of-way conditions. FST used DOT cab and trailer dimension measurements (in feet) for normal size box trucks/small tractor trailer units (WB-50), medium size tractor trailer units (WB-62), and large tractor trailer units (WB-67). The number associated with the WB reference refers to the length of each vehicle. Using each vehicle dimension and their appropriate turning radii, FST created maps that simulate the space needed for each vehicle to safely turn right from School Street onto Main Street without occupying oncoming lanes of traffic.

For a WB-50 vehicle, FST determined that based on the existing conditions depicted on the map, the downtown improvement project could affect up to 12' of depth of the Schnare's property. At the 12' measurement mark would be the back edge of an approximately 5' wide sidewalk. The approximate angle of the new sidewalk and roadway dimensions was depicted using road cones.

For a WB-62 vehicle, FST determined that based on the existing conditions depicted on the map, the downtown improvement project could affect up to 18' of depth of the Schnare's property. At the 18' measurement mark would be the back edge of an approximately 5' wide sidewalk. The approximate angle of the new sidewalk and roadway dimensions was depicted using road cones. The WB-62 measurement would accommodate most tractor trailer units.

For a WB-67 vehicle, FST determined that based on the existing conditions depicted on the map, the downtown improvement project could affect up to 21' of depth of the Schnare's property. At the 21' measurement mark would be the back edge of an approximately 5' wide sidewalk. The approximate angle of the new sidewalk and roadway dimensions was depicted using road cones.

Mr. and Mrs. Schnare viewed each option with the Board of Selectmen, Mr. Goodwin, Mr. Gagne, and Mr. Howe. Mr. Schnare stated that he had considered extending his existing picket fence along the Main Street portion of his property. The Board suggested Mr. Schnare hold off on the installation of fencing along Main Street until after the project is completed. Mr. and Mrs. Schnare stated that the granite monument that exists at the intersection of School Street and Main Street is theirs and that they would like it relocated to a similar location behind the new sidewalk after construction is complete; the Board agreed with the request.

Mr. and Mrs. Schnare stated that safety was their primary concern when considering which traffic pattern they might ultimately choose; the Schnares did not make any decisions but agreed to let the Board know their decision. Prior to the Board's departure, Mr. Schnare marked his property with stakes that would depict the impact of a vehicle fitting the WB-50 requirements.

Mr. and Mrs. Schnare asked several questions of the Board during the meeting. The following is a list of questions and the Board's responses:

- Was the Town going to address the parking situation on Main Street as it pertains to vehicle proximity to driveways? The current parking configuration and vehicle proximity location to driveways creates hazardous blind spots when backing from a driveway.
 - The Board plans on addressing the parking situation as it develops the construction plans and traffic design plans for Main Street
- Would Elizabeth Cashion's fence be affected by the project?
 - The Board stated that it is likely the fence may have to be removed during the construction process. However, the fence would be re-installed at the completion of the project. Additionally, if the Schnares' fence is impacted, it will be remedied at the completion of the project.
- Is the installation of street lights part of the project?
 - The Board stated that they are part of the project but at this time there are no specifics as to the type, number of, and planned location of the lights.
- What type of sidewalks will be installed? Will the sidewalks be edged with granite?
 - The Board answered that they would research sidewalk materials to determine the best quality material for the most cost-effective price. The sidewalks will be edged with granite curbing.
- Is the Town planning on any green spaces during the project? If so, has the Town considered any plans for maintaining those green spaces? Mrs. Schnare stated that she would like to see green spaces beautified with irrigation, flowers, and shrubbery.
 - The Board stated that the Town would like to incorporate green spaces into the Village Pedestrian Improvement Project. However, at this time the project has not progressed to that point yet.

The meeting with Joan and Donald Schnare ended at 6:15 p.m.

At 6:15 p.m., the Board of Selectmen, Mr. Goodwin, Mr. Gagne, and Mr. Howe met on-site with Joseph MacGregor at his 20 Main Street property to discuss the possible impact various traffic patterns might have on his property.

Mr. MacGregor explained the vehicle configuration on his lot. He explained that he utilizes the space along the School Street side of his building for vehicles awaiting extensive repairs, completed vehicles, employee parking, and vehicles awaiting pickup by their owners at the end

of a day. On the Main Street side of his building, spaces are used daily for customers who are dropping off and picking up their vehicles. The Cross Street end of the Main Street parking spaces is used for vehicles that are delivered by tow truck or flat bed. Mr. MacGregor stated that he does not use the School Street service door. The Main Street service door is functional; however, it is not currently in use. The Cross Street side of the building is rarely used to park vehicles, as that is the location where vehicles are brought into and removed from the garage bay areas.

The group referred to survey results compiled by Chas H. Sells, Inc. that include existing property dimensions, property boundaries, sidewalks locations, site distances, roadway markings, and Town/State right-of-way conditions. FST used DOT cab and trailer dimension measurements (in feet) for medium size tractor trailer units (WB-62); The WB-62 is the most typical vehicle measurement. The number associated with the WB reference refers to the length of the vehicle – the measurement accounts for a 62' long vehicle. Using this vehicle dimension and its corresponding turning radius, FST created a map that simulates the space needed for a WB-62 vehicle to make a safe left turn from Main Street onto Cross Street.

Based on the existing conditions and existing road markings depicted on the map, it appears that Mr. MacGregor's property extends approximately 14' into the Cross Street/Main Street intersection, which is approximately 66' from the Cross Street/Main Street corner of his building. This point was marked with a road cone. Using the WB-62 vehicle turning radius requirements, it appears that the vehicle is able to do so within the existing road markings.

The group discussed with Mr. MacGregor the existing sidewalk dimensions and goals for future sidewalk improvements. The sidewalk that crosses in front of the Main Street side of Mr. MacGregor's property is flush with the pavement, marked only by painted lines, and is approximately 4.5' wide. The ultimate goal for sidewalks in this area is to install new sidewalks that are flush with the pavement, slopes to accommodate the street drainage, and measure approximately 5' wide. Mr. MacGregor voiced his concern on the severity of any slope so vehicles can drive safely into the parking area in front of his building on the Main Street side.

Mr. MacGregor was asked if raised sidewalks could be installed the distance between the edge of the building and intersection of Cross Street. Mr. MacGregor replied that would not be feasible since vehicles that are brought in by tow truck or flat bed are delivered there for ease of vehicle delivery. Mr. MacGregor also stated that it would be dangerous for vehicles turning from Main Street into that parking area, as other drivers would anticipate the vehicle to continue driving on Cross Street. Mr. MacGregor also stated that flush sidewalks of a different material would work best for snow removal operations.

The group also discussed with Mr. MacGregor the safety concerns as they relate to site distance. Mr. MacGregor stated that he tries to keep the School Street/Main Street corner of his property free of vehicles so that School Street traffic has a better site distance. Mr. Howe pointed out on the map for Mr. MacGregor the site distances required from the existing stop bar on School Street; the site distances run parallel to the existing crosswalk in front of Mr. MacGregor's property. While on site, it appeared some vehicles may have been jeopardizing the site distance

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requirements. Mr. MacGregor stated that he generally tries to park vehicles in the Main Street parking spaces as close to the building as possible to allow for increased site distances.

Mr. Goodwin suggested that the Town might gain additional site distance from the School Street intersection by moving the stop bar closer to the intersection and/or might gain additional site distance by decreasing the grade of Main Street between the School Street/Route 47 intersection and the Cross Street intersection. The grade could be addressed by simply removing the layers of pavement; however, considerations regarding decreasing the grade must take into account the depth of the water pipes.

After some discussion, Mr. MacGregor stated that if he were allowed to keep his parking along School Street, reconfigure his parking arrangements at the School Street/Main Street intersection, and be allowed to continue using parking along the Main Street side of his property, then he would be willing to concede the 14' of property that currently encroaches into the Cross Street intersection. Mr. MacGregor stated that Main Street would need to be better defined to slow traffic. He requested that when considering the School Street/Main Street intersection, that consideration be given to allow for flush sidewalks and a flush sidewalk terminus.

FST will rework the plans to address sidewalk location and design, stop sign locations, and site distance scenarios for the School Street/Main Street intersection. The Board ended their meeting with Mr. MacGregor at 7:10 p.m.

The Board resumed their meeting at Town Hall at 7:15 p.m. to discuss the format for the September 18, 2007 Public Information Meeting for the Village Improvement Project.

FST agreed to make corrections to the conceptual map as discussed with Joan and Donald Schnare and Joseph MacGregor and return the revised map to the Board prior to the September 18th hearing.

The Board discussed with FST upcoming requirements and scheduled the second Public Information Meeting for October 23rd. Dependent upon the development of the plans, the Board will tentatively hold their third Public Information Meeting within the first few weeks of January.

The Board reviewed a list of the project's abutters and identified those specific abutters that will be impacted by the project so that they may receive specific notice of the September 18th hearing.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie French, Assistant to the Administrator