

**Prospect Sidewalk Task Force
Regular Meeting
Unapproved Minutes
October 26, 2015**

Meeting started at 5:35 P.M. The meeting was held in the large conference room, Prospect Town Hall, 36 Center Street.

Members Present: Carla M. Perugini-Erickson, Jeffrey Holley, Ronald Laone, Jack Crumb, Mayor Robert Chatfield.

Members Absent: NONE

Discussion:

Carla advised that she planned the meeting so that the members of the sidewalk task force could come together, and each member has specialized knowledge, and the hope is that each will share their information with the group so we have an understanding of our plan and objectives will be moving forward.

Mayor Chatfield provided maps of the center of town, extending down Rt. 69, photos of current sidewalks in front of town hall, and marked up photo of area where recent STEAP grant was awarded to replace/install sidewalks on Columbia Avenue and Center Street to where it intersects with Rt. 68 and Rt. 69. Mayor also provided the Rt. 69 Traffic Operations Study that was completed by the COG of Naugatuck Valley showing recommended roadway improvements to Rt. 69 including the State's plan to widen Route 69 to provide 8' to 10' wide shoulders to allow motorists to bypass left-turning vehicles. Page 3 of that Study notes under OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS Pedestrian Improvements to consider provision of sidewalks in business districts of Prospect, and consider creation of "Village Center" areas with designated "centralized" parking lots and walkway linkages to nearby businesses. The roadway improvements were marked as "Moderate Priority."

Jack Crumb, P&Z, brings his construction knowledge to the table, and advised he will look into construction specifications, construction costs.

Ron Laone, Economic Development Commission, suggested we define a "sidewalk," designate one type and style of sidewalk for all sidewalks, and suggested Town Public Works install sidewalks to reduce costs.

Mayor Chatfield advised that the Town does not have enough PW employees to dedicate to such a task, and the installation would have to go out to bid and comply with prevailing wage requirements.

Jeff Holley, Prospect Business Association, a current resident of Cheshire, advised he will bring the issue of sidewalks to the PBA and confirm their position on the issue.

Mayor Chatfield suggested writing a letter to P&Z to add an amendment to the P&Z regulations requiring sidewalk installation in all new subdivision applications.

Carla advised she completed a significant amount of research on sidewalks, and shared copies of the power point she presented to the Town Council in March, 2015, which includes statistics on the benefits of sidewalks, as well as identifying several sources of grant monies available for sidewalks, LOTCIP, STP Urban Funds, LoCip, STEAP, Main Street Investment Fund and CT Safe Routes to School. Carla advised she had information regarding grant application requirements, as well as statistics on grants provided to other CT towns for sidewalks, including \$500,000 STEAP grant to Cheshire to design/construct 1,630 linear feet of sidewalks, and \$250,000 Main Street Investment Fund grant to Fairfield for new sidewalks to create pedestrian-friendly environment and \$450,000.00 Main Street Investment Fund grant to Canaan to construct "bluestone" sidewalk. Carla advised she would provide copies of the grants available and applications to all members.

Carla also reviewed the issue of creating an ordinance for sidewalk maintenance, which would be in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-163a, which would permit the Town to adopt an ordinance requiring abutting landowners to remove snow and ice from sidewalks and transferring liability to the property owners. Jeff Holley also spoke on this issue and described the creation of the ordinance as a simple process and permitted by state statute. Carla advised there are some states, like New Hampshire and Vermont where snow is commonplace, that choose to retain the responsibility for snow removal, as they want to ensure children have safe walkways to school. These towns either hire a private contractor as part of their snow budget, or the Town maintain a small Bobcat with a plow to clear the sidewalks.

Jeff Holley said that it would be important to adopt an ordinance as the Town would not want to have liability for sidewalks. Mayor Chatfield said the Town already has a street and sidewalk liability policy so it is not a big issue. Carla advised that the issue can be discussed, because it is important to support ensure that the issue does not deter businesses from coming to town, however, she felt the benefit of sidewalks which encourages pedestrian traffic to area businesses, would outweigh the burden of shoveling sidewalks. Jeff Holley said that since the businesses have to plow their parking lots anyway, clearing the sidewalk is negligible. Carla advised she would provide members with copies of the Cheshire sidewalk ordinance.

Jack Crumb brought up the issue of designing installation of sidewalks to minimize retaining walls and curbing and other costs that would increase the costs of construction. Mayor Chatfield suggested he have the Town's grant writer see if there is a grant available to hire a consultant for sidewalks. Carla advised that in all of the grants that she identified (6 sources) none provided for the costs of design/engineering. Mayor Chatfield stated he believed that to be accurate.

Carla advised that we need to consider setting monies aside in the budget for a consultant, and for design/engineering costs. Carla stated that these costs are generally 10-15% of the overall costs of the project. Carla advised she spoke with Sheila O'Malley from

Ansonia Economic Development Office who advised that Ansonia received a sidewalk grant from LOTCIP (Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program) through DOT and administered through the Regional Planning Organization (RPO) which would be our Central Naugatuck Valley COG. She advised that the cost for the design and engineering was 100% cost to the Town, but the grant paid for the construction of the sidewalk. She stated that the sidewalk grant \$500,000, and the design/engineering costs were 10-15% of that cost.

Carla advised she spoke with Sam Gold at the Central Naugatuck Valley COG and he stated that with a LOTCIP grant the Town has to pay for all design costs, but the project pays 100% for the construction of sidewalks. He stated that because Rt. 69 is already on the DOT list for expansion, the State knows it is a priority, so Prospect should apply for the grants.

Ron Laone and Jeff Holley expressed concern over implementation of the sidewalks on Rt. 69 since it is a State highway, and the State will be widening Rt. 69 and will impact the sidewalks. Jack Crumb stated we should know what the State will require for sidewalks on Rt. 69 since the State will have to approve them. Mayor Chatfield suggested that we meet during the day so he can bring a DOT representative to talk about the State's plan for widening Rt. 69, so we have an idea of what will be required and permissible. Ron and Jeff spoke about waiting for sidewalk implementation until State widens the road. Mayor Bob stated that State approved the expansion of Scott Road in 1970's, and they are just doing it now, so who knows how long it will take the State to implement the widening of Rt. 69.

Carla suggested that we meet with the DOT person to obtain the State's plan, but we need not wait for the State's expansion of Rt. 69 if we design/construct sidewalks 10 feet back from the roadway, which will appeal to the rural nature of the town, as Mayor stated was the case with sidewalks in Colchester, and it would be a safer option, as the sidewalks would be set back enough off the highway, where there are distracted drivers who can easily swerve onto roadside sidewalks. Ron Laone agreed with this suggestion, and preferred sidewalks set back off the highway.

Carla mentioned that she had some information that suggested sidewalk installation costs at anywhere from \$5- \$9 per square foot. Jack Crumb stated that State will probably require 4 foot wide sidewalks, and the cost, with excavation, grading and curbing, and prevailing wages, is probably closer to \$80 per linear foot. Carla mentioned that Prospect's Current Open Space Plan that has been incorporated into the Plan of Conservation and Development provides that "greening along the Rt. 69 corridor would significantly enhance the visual appeal of the commercial area and showcase the rural character of the Town. This can be accomplished through encouraging or requiring tree plantings and landscaping, and by placing sidewalks and creating pathways and/or driveways between the businesses in densely developed areas." Jack mentioned this was coming up for Public Hearing and he would let us know the date.

The meeting came to a conclusion at 6:45 p.m. and Mayor Chatfield said he would contact DOT to come to a potential meeting on either December 2nd or 9th in the afternoon. All members expressed they would do their best to attend an afternoon meeting on those dates. Jeff Holley stated he would look into the requirements of the specific grants available, i.e., what is needed to complete and file the applications. Jack Crumb advised he would get some more information on specifications and costs. Mayor Bob said he would have the Town grant writer look into the availability of grants for a consultant.

NEXT MEETING: DECEMBER 2ND OR 9TH, 2015, DEPENDING ON WHEN MAYOR CHATFIELD ADVISED DOT REPRESENTATIVE IS AVAILABLE.

Attachments:

Cheshire Code of Ordinances Sec. 10-4 Sidewalk Maintenance, Repair and Snow Removal

Main Street Investment Fund information and application

LOTICIP Memo dated November 1, 2013 with Guidelines and LOTICIP Regional Quarterly Status Report dated 12/31/2014

CRCOG summary on STP-Urban, LOTICIP, and STP-Urban Application

Summary of CRCOG approved STP-Urban Projects

LoCIP summary (Mayor applies/receives these funds annually and utilizes for paving)

STEAP Grant summary and Application deadline (exhausted – Mayor applied/received grant for sidewalk repair/construction in front of Town Hall)

CT Safe Routes to School Application

Submitted by:

Carla M. Perugini-Erickson