

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM  
March 6, 2017-4pm**

Committee Members Present:

Councilor Dale Sprague, Chair  
Councilor David Witham  
Councilor Denis Messier

Staff Present:

Bob Belmore, City Manager  
Mike Bobinsky, Dir. of PW and Utilities  
Scott Bourcier, PE. Contract City Eng., Dubois and

King

*Chairman Sprague called the meeting to order at 4pm.*

APPROVE PAST MEETING MINUTES

Councilor Messier moved, seconded by Councilor Witham a motion to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2017 meeting. The motion passed, 3-0.

INDIGO HILL ROAD PROJECT–Sidewalk Curbing Change Order Request

Bob Belmore outlined the requested change order and gave background on the request. Bob referred to the memo prepared by Scott Bourcier, Contract City Engineer which provided a summary of the request by the Conservation Commission to use slope granite curbing the portion of the Indigo Hill Road improvement project where a new sidewalk will be installed and curbing. The concern is the use of the vertical granite curbing and the impact on wetland animals/reptiles that cross from one side of the road to the other. The planned vertical curbing inhibits that access while slope granite would allow for it and make for more accessibility. Mike Bobinsky noted the lower cost difference with the slope granite curbing v. the vertical and how it would be installed, and that the installation would only be within the affected area of the wetlands. Councilor Witham appreciated the request by the Conservation Commission but raised key concerns about the safety of the road where this would be installed given past accidents in this area. The vertical granite would allow for improved visual awareness by motorist for driving within the speed limits while not shifting over the road and curbing due to the grade of the road at key locations. After discussion by the Committee members, the Chair offered appreciation for the request, but Committee members decided against making a change and took no action on the requested change order. The result is the current planned vertical curbing will be used by the contractor.

DRAFT TREE ORDINANCE

Bob opened the presentation and discussion about the proposed draft Tree Ordinance. He explained this has been drafted by staff and presented and reviewed by the Sustainability Committee and following further and edits, recommends approval to the PW and Environment Committee. Bob indicated the Ordinance reflects best practices with tree maintenance and replacement work, links in with existing development review regulations related to trees and landscaping and describes the establishment of a Tree Board. Mike Bobinsky offered that the proposed Ordinance is linked in to maintaining the City's status as a Tree City USA community.

Bob also indicated this Ordinance may have facilitated a different approach by Eversource in their recent tree removal work on Blackwater Road by the Armory property at Blackwater and at Maple Street. Committee members seem fine with the draft ordinance but want additional time to consider the establishment of the Tree Board. Committee members feel the City already has several committees and boards and is there a way to have the Board an element of one of the existing Committees or Groups such as the Conservation Commission. A motion to table for further consideration was made by Councilor Witham and seconded by Councilor Messier.

#### ROAD IMPROVEMENTS PLAN UPDATE REPORT

Staff provided the committee with a background memo on recommended streets for repair. The recommended streets were broken down by preservation, complete streets and local streets due to the cost and priority needs in the City. Bob Belmore advises the Committee that staff prepared the memo to begin a dialogue with the Committee on road repair priorities and recognized Councilor Witham's recent memo that focused on recommended spot repair for consideration. Mike Bobinsky and Scott Bourcier answered specific questions about the recommendations contained in the memo; Councilor Witham recognized the complete streets and other pavement repair streets listed but feels given budget limits and current road needs a shift to making spot repairs on high profile and traveled roads should be the priority for this year. He also indicated the need to consider Cemetery Road improvements since the TAP grant provides funding for a new sidewalk on Cemetery Road; other Committee members had similar views. Councilor Sprague also had several questions, including a discussion of how a portion of Congress St. got overlaid, and suggested that designing some of the complete streets to allow for "shovel ready" projects so that the City can be ready to go should a massive capital funding plan for roads and sidewalks become available to cities and towns under the Administration. All three Councilors supported the idea of doing spot repairs on key streets and also ask the City Manager to report back to them at their next meeting about bonds that may be retiring and allow the City Council to consider another bond for road improvements next year. Staff will follow-up on the questions asked and provide further information at the Committee's next meeting.

#### LED STREET LIGHTING UPDATE

Bob provided background on the proposal to convert all City Street Lights to LED for substantial savings in energy costs and greater service reliability than the current street lighting used which is High Pressure Sodium (HPS). Bob indicated several communities in the Seacoast are involved with evaluation if LED light conversion makes sense, most are showing a payback of around 2.5 years. Mike Bobinsky reached out to Affinity LED lighting, the vendor recently awarded the lighting bid in the Cities of Dover and Portsmouth and most recently in the City of Rochester. Mike also obtained a proposal to better understand the cost and return on investment for Somersworth. The Affinity proposal was the lowest bidder in the recent bid by the City of Portsmouth. The Cities of Dover and Rochester are using their unit prices for their project agreement. Mike has also been in discussions with Eversource who offers incentive monies to cities in the State to help offset the cost of this lighting upgrade and learned time was of the essence if the City wants to use incentive money this year. The payback for the Somersworth project is estimated to be slightly over 2 years. Bob sought permission to waive competitive bids in order to obtain a final proposal from Affinity and to obtain an endorsement of a

resolution to appropriate funds for the LED light conversion since this project is not in the current budget. Councilor Messier offered support in using current fund balance to fund this project. Councilor Witham moved and Councilor Messier seconded the motion to fund the LED street light conversion from the general fund balance. All three Councilors voted in favor of the motion.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

##### Sidewalk Tractors.

Bob included in the Committee members' packets a copy of a comparison summary of sidewalk tractor equipment for further review. The summary was prepared by the Public Works Department and compares traditional sidewalk tractors with mini loaders, like a Bobcat unit. Bob indicated that his proposed FY18 budget will include a request to fund a piece of equipment to enhance sidewalk snow clearing and would be an addition to the 2 tractors the Department currently uses. Bob explained the growth in sidewalk areas combined with greater expectations to clear sidewalks following a snow storm is driving the request and he would like to engage the Council in this decision before a purchase decision is made. Committee members will consider the information though feel an additional piece of equipment seems to be needed to better meet the sidewalk clearing needs. Some favored a skid steer/bobcat type loader with winter attachments. The additional sidewalk clearing equipment will be considered in the FY18 Budget process.

##### Bretton Cleaners Grant

Bob briefed the Committee on the latest with grant funding for removing the old building and work toward site clean-up. Bob asked if the Council will be willing to sponsor a resolution accepting a grant to demo the existing building; he plans to submit a resolution accepting the grant for the March 20, 2017, City Council meeting. Councilor Messier moved, seconded by David Witham to sponsor the Grant resolution.

##### Participation in the SE Watershed Coalition MS4 permit project.

Time ran out to fully discuss this item and will be brought up at the next Committee meeting. City/Town Members in the Seacoast Stormwater Coalition have been asked to contribute \$2,000 toward a stormwater improvement project that would benefit all members of the Coalition. The City of Somersworth has not made the contribution as of yet and staff wishes to brief the Committee on the background with this request.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Witham seconded by Messier made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed 3-0 and the meeting adjourned at 5:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted

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Michael Bobinsky  
Director of Public Works & Utilities