



Town of Middletown Planning Department

350 East Main Rd., Middletown RI 02842 (401) 849-4027

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

May 18, 2018

Special Meeting

Town Council Chambers, 350 East Main Rd., Middletown, RI

Board members present:

Paul Croce, Chair

Bill Nash, Vice Chair

Terri Flynn, Secretary

Liz Drayton

Art Weber

Jim Williams

B.J. Owen (joined at 3:30pm)

Ron Wolanski, Town Planner

Rita Lavoie, Principal Planner

*Mr. Croce called the meeting to order at 3:00pm (This meeting was **not recorded**)*

1. Consider recommendations to the Town Council regarding conceptual design plans for possible roadway and streetscape improvements in the Atlantic Beach District, lower Aquidneck Avenue.
 - A. Send Council: recommendations with 4/30: minutes, power point presentations, poll results
 - B. Town Planner 5/17/18 memo review:
 1. Is the proposed roadway alignment, including 11' travel lanes and 4' shoulders acceptable?
 - a. reduced road width:
 - i. traffic backup possible
 - ii. tradeoff for wider sidewalks, bike lane, landscaping
 - b. **Consensus: recommend 11' travel lanes and 4ft shoulders**
 2. Should the shoulders be marked as bike lanes?
 - a. Biking/driving laws, practice
 - b. Benefit to bicyclists
 - c. **Consensus: mark shoulders as bike lanes**
 3. Do you agree that additional crosswalks should be provided at appropriate locations? Suggestions? (Currently crosswalks proposed at Valley/Aquidneck intersection, Wave Ave., and Purgatory Rd. intersection.)
 - a. Distinctive sidewalks: raise, alternative material, bright signs, outline lights
 - i. Many signs driving distraction
 - b. Standards/reasonable, safe number for road length?
 - c. 6 Locations: design plans' 3, Briarwood, Cumberland Farms, Newport Ave
 - d. Options:
 - i. Recommend 6 potential locations, engineers decide
 - ii. Recommend design plans' 3 plus Newport Ave

- e. **Vote: 5-0-1 Ms. Owen had yet to arrive, Ms. Flynn abstaining: Recommend visually distinctive crosswalks: design plans' 3 plus Newport Ave (4 total)**
4. Should the plan accommodate transit stops? (There is currently no public transit service, but future trolley or shuttle service could be considered.)
 - a. Reduce cars: Future shuttle options, integrate bus service; different destinations/beach, Newport tourist spots
 - b. **Consensus: Accommodate transit stops; engineers determine best location(s)**
 5. What is your preference for sidewalk materials? (Public input indicates concrete is preferred)
 - a. Low maintenance desired; shells, aggregate concrete aesthetically pleasing
 - b. **Consensus: Recommend 1st choice: a form of concrete, 2nd choice: exposed aggregate concrete**
 6. Do you prefer a grass strip between the curb and sidewalk?
 - a. Mr. Wolanski
 - i. 2004 Council resolution supports esplanade sidewalks, "where possible;" Subdivision Regs contain this language
 - ii. Board may recommend either way, but if against, must explain why
 - b. Discussion
 - i. 5' sidewalk is minimum
 - ii. Strip benefits: plantings, pedestrian safety
 - iii. Mr. Nash: Granite curbs-durable, protects infrastructure, stands out/safer
 - c. **Consensus: Recommended esplanade sidewalks where possible with granite curbs**
 7. Do you prefer decorative street lights to the standard "cobra head" lighting?
 - a. Mr. Wolanski: Town request; DOT not offering
 - b. Dark Sky compliance required
 - c. **Consensus: Recommended Dark Sky compliant decorative street lights**
 8. Do you support the potential undergrounding of utility lines? With/without use of town property tax dollars?
 - a. Questions: Undergrounding timing (before sidewalk?), location; current plans incorporate undergrounding of utilities; goal to avoid duplicating roadwork
 - b. Mr. Wolanski: poll: 42% support using property taxes; 38% support using TIF (Tax Increment Financing); 20% support if other funding
 - c. Discussion:
 - i. Idea well received by public
 - ii. Building connections increase/double rough cost (\$2mill->\$4mill)
 - iii. TIF
 - Council speed determines potential (hundreds of thousands of dollars)
 - "New development" taxes used-not taking money from Town
 - Only for time it takes to pay for project; longer if add projects
 - Consider concept-West side
 - Investment in area by area
 - d. **Consensus: Recommend undergrounding utilities; consider TIF approach to funding**
 9. Should Crescent Road be one-way? (Potential compromise option is to allow two-way traffic on Crescent Rd, but no entry from Aquidneck Ave.)
 - a. Mr. Wolanski:

- i. 2/16/16 Council meeting minutes/Council's recommendation to make Crescent Road "one way from Purgatory Road"
- ii. RIDOT recommends 1-way; potential compromise accommodates business owner's deliveries, eliminates "cutting-through" concern

Ms. Owen joined the meeting

- b. Discussion: liquor store using Town right-of-way, police enforcing do-not-enter sign violations; liquor store access; turning vehicles delaying traffic
- c. **Consensus: Recommended Crescent Road be one-way going north**

- 10. Should the project limits be expanded to the Newport line? (Currently ends at Purgatory.)
 - a. Mr. Weber: if extend, add crosswalk
 - b. **Consensus: Recommend extending project limits to Newport Town Line**

C. Mr. Nash: Signage

- 1. Consider alternative signage to DOT standard (green sign, metal pole)
- 2. Character, including language
- 3. **Consensus: Recommend road signage be designed with village motif consideration**

D. Ms. Flynn

- 1. Newport Ave intersection
 - a. 3 lane configuration prevents backup on Newport Ave
 - b. **Consensus: Recommend Newport Ave have right turn and left turn lanes onto Aquidneck Ave**
- 2. Topics to cover: Stone wall preservation; reservoir pathway connection; public parking
 - a. Middletown's stone wall ordinance
 - b. Pathway outside project scope; involve Open Space and Fields Committee for walking paths' discussion
 - c. Parking outside project scope; public transit could address
 - d. **Consensus: Recommend stone walls be preserved**

E. Mr. Scott Davis; 299 Aquidneck Ave

- a. Recommend crosswalk at Briarwood; St. Georges' students high use
- b. Not hung up on undergrounding utilities right away; probably more than \$4mill

F. Based on review of the concept designs, and considering public input, does the board wish to recommend to the Town Council that the project proceed to the 30% design phase, subject to the items discussed above?

- a. **Motion** to recommend Town Council proceed to 30% design phase subject to above discussion/recommendations, made by Mr. Nash, seconded by Mr. Weber
- b. **Vote: 7-0-0**

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Weber, seconded by Ms. Flynn **Vote: 7-0-0**

Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm

Respectfully submitted: Terri Flynn
Planning Board Secretary