

**TOWN OF CASTLETON
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
(Pedestrian Accessibility Scoping Study)
Monday, October 11, 2021 6:00 p.m.
Castleton Fire Station Community Room
273 Route 30N, Bomoseen
In-Person & Virtual (Zoom)**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84411111111?pwd=MTk1ssHVqkV-DaUZaiB4MSYlOAFjO.aGcjvONj9y7PeFe?autoplay=true&startTime=1633990491000>

PRESENT: Jim Leamy, Chair; Richard Combs, Vice Chair; Joseph Mark, Parliamentarian and Secretary; Michael Holden, Member; Michael Jones, Town Manager (Via Zoom); Devon Neary (Via Zoom) & Eric Hall, RRPC; Nicole Fox & Alan Vomacka (Via Zoom), Fuss & O'Neill; John Baumgartner (Via Zoom); Wayne Pickett (Via Zoom); Jonas Rosenthal; Dr. Ken Flowers; John Rehlen; Julius Riemersma; Nancy Mark (Via Zoom); Laura Des Jardins (Via Zoom). Missing Robert Spaulding; Selectboard member.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Select Board Chair, Jim Leamy at 6:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Holden made motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Combs seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried 4-0.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY IN THE TOWN GREEN (VILLAGE) DESIGNATED CENTER - Nicole Fox (Fuss & O'Neill) and Eric Hall & Devon Neary (Rutland Regional Planning Commission) present a refresher on the task and purpose of the scoping study.

Eric Hall led discussion of the scoping study. This meeting is one of three meetings to address local concerns in order to guide the town in future developments. A 2019 traffic safety study was done to evaluate pedestrian safety concerns. The results: high risk for pedestrians and the recommendation is to conduct further analysis to extend the study. The Town chose Rutland Regional Planning Commission for municipal project management. Funding is provided through grant money and town funds. A Steering Committee was created and they reviewed proposals submitted by engineering consultant and selected Fuss & O'Neill for this project.

Devon Neary stated he is excited to work with the consultants and reach the end goal of attaining public funds for this much needed upgrade.

Nicole Fox provided overview: review project development process, project area existing conditions and feedback. The timeline is as follows: Project started in August 2021, Alternatives Presentation meeting in February 2022, Draft Scope in April 2022, and Final Scope in June 2022. Ms. Fox provided a slideshow of the project area.

Ken Flowers, resident, asked where the project area is located. Mr. Mark asked if the slides could be shown to those that are attending the meeting through zoom. Project area is Amtrak station to Sand Hill Road.

Eric Hall opened the floor for local input (slide of project area screen was shared with zoom attendees at this point):

PUBLIC COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

John Rehlen asked if sidewalks would be on both sides of the road. Ms. Fox stated no plans at this point,

needing public input. Mr. Rehlen expressed his concerns regarding the pedestrian crossings particularly in front of the school and the Post Office. In the past he has requested signage as there are real safety issues in those areas. Ms. Fox acknowledged this safety concerns as the pedestrian crossings are long. Some resolutions to this are: building curb extensions; move parking and create bike lanes, adding signs in the center of the road and adding bright flashing lights. Mr. Rehlen suggested maybe adding lights across the roadway that you can drive over, like those in East Hampton, NY.

Julius Riemersma shared his concerns. In the summertime he has no issues but in the winter the area is dark for walking, and he would like to see the design appealing and keeping a historical appearance. He did not have any thoughts on what type of materials could be used to accomplish this, whatever deemed best.

Dr. Ken Flowers had two comments, first, it might not be a necessity to have two crosswalks so close together now that the school is closing and second, he would much prefer to use materials not as modern such as concrete. He feels gravel would be fine but needs to be maintained at least every ten years or what is appropriate.

Nancy Mark lives in the village, raised family and loves to walk but finds it dangerous now because it is uneven, so she walks in the street which is not safe. Safety is important to her, and she welcomes any materials but whatever is chosen needs to be for all (handicap accessible).

Jonas Rosenthal presented two articles by Richard Armore, *People, Places and Transportation* and *50 Reasons Why Everyone Should Want More Walkable Streets*. Both articles he would like submitted for record. He shared concerns that gravel is difficult to maintain as plowing will tear it up in the winter and it make it not safe. Most important concern is uneven surfaces so he would caution against a gravel sidewalk. He would also suggest considering ornamental streetlight in the village center. Mr. Leamy asked him to submit the articles directly to Mr. Hall and Ms. Fox.

Mr. Holden strongly agrees with John (Rehlen). The intersection is a nightmare and as a commercial truck driver, he highly suggests the new LED lighting. It works well and you can see from quite a distance. He would also recommend keeping the school sidewalk in case another business may occupy that space and it would be needed.

Mr. Riemersma would like to see the speed reduced. Mr. Holden feels the lights would help slow traffic down more than speed reduction and police enforcement.

Mr. Combs agrees with Mr. Holden in that the LED lights would work well and is also in support of the curb extensions even though he knows it would be more difficult to maintain.

Mr. Mark also supports the curb extensions as his personal experience as a pedestrian has been that cars cannot see pedestrians until they are ten feet into the crosswalk.

Dr. Flowers feels that gravel is safer than concrete as frost heaves break the concrete up.

Laura Des Jardins asked what the vision for this project is. Is it a shared pathway, bike path or walking path? Ms. Fox stated they have no preconceived notions and are gathering information. Ms. Des Jardins shares that she walks the four-mile loop, mostly at night and in the winter chooses to walk on the street because the sidewalks are typically more slippery. She is also concerned about a shared pathway as she like to let her young children walk with her but uncomfortable with bikes on the path. She rides her bike in the street and feels safe.

Ms. Mark responded to concrete being less safe than gravel and suggested that brick may or may not be a feasible material. The library installed brick on their pathway, and they have not had any problems with it thus far.

Written comments on zoom:

John Baumgartner: Calming traffic is key. He appreciates the police presence and feels that visually narrowing the road would help.

Devon Neary: Questions can be submitted to Eric Hall at RRPC, eric@rutlandrpc.org.

ADJOURN

Mr. Holden made a motion to adjourn at 6:53 p.m., and Mr. Combs seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned.