

Town of Pittsford SPECIAL SELECT BOARD MEETING – March 28, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: W. Joseph Gagnon, David Mills, Alicia Malay, Mark Winslow and Thomas Hooker.

OTHERS PRESENT: Jon Carrara, Chuck Charbonneau, Steve Belcher, Steve Shortsleeves, Sandy Conway, Betsey Morgan, Ann Pelkey, Rick Conway, Kevin Blow, Baird Morgan, Pete Wilson, Donna Wilson, Tom Markowski, Dr. Robert Hession, David Atherton – Town Manager, Kelly Giard – Recording Secretary.

The Select Board was called to order at 4:30 PM by Chair Malay.

Chair Malay stated that there was a need for Executive Session for Legal. Motion T. Hooker and seconded by D. Mills to enter into Executive Session for Legal. Motion passed 5–0.

Chair Malay stated that there was no need to amend the agenda. Motion by T. Hooker and seconded by D. Mills to accept the agenda as posted. Motion passed 5 – 0.

SELECT BOARD COMMENTS:

None presented at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None presented at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

None presented at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Planning Commission Bridge 108 Discussion:

Rick Conway stated that he is currently a member of the Planning Commission and is recusing himself from any and all discussions of the Planning Commission regarding this topic.

Mr. Conway read his history of driving in the area in question and stated that in his 40 years of operating a towing service that there were no accidents along the slip lane, however, there were many “close calls at the intersection of Routes 7 & 3. VTRANS has observed traffic at the Mobil station and are proposing 2 east turning lanes off of Route 7. This proposal will make exiting the Mobil station more difficult when adding the additional lane and will encourage passing at the hill on Route 7 south.

Kevin Blow, Chair of the Planning Commission questioned if the Select Board would be filing an appeal proposing the removal of the double lane on the bridge. The Planning Commission is also concerned about the historic village green that is in the path of this construction. Chair Malay inquired if there was any criteria for these concerns in Act 250, which Mr. Blow is not aware.

Dr. Robert Hession stated that this is a difficult intersection and he has had an accident coming off of Oxbow Road and states that he is in favor of the slip lane.

Chuck Charbonneau, a Planning Commission member, inquired if the Select Board had a copy of the petition that was signed by over 400 residents and citizens opposed to the new proposal. Chair Malay stated that the Select Board was given a copy of the petition. Mr. Conway stated that a copy was also available on the Agency of Natural Resources website, which also has the information on Act 250.

Donna Wilson, a Planning Commission member, read letters from Mike Norris, also a Planning Commission member who stated that the 2015 plan included leaving the town green as it once held the bandstand and was originally considered historic, however, at the Act 250 hearing that was held in October, this area is no longer designated as historic because it was disturbed, even though it was considered historic for Pittsford Mills. Ms. Wilson continued to state that this is in direct conflict of the Town Plan, an unsafe intersection for visitors and travelers who are not familiar with the area. Ms. Wilson stated that at the hearing, J. Gagnon pointed out that the slip lane was safer for tractor trailer trucks and that T. Hooker explained that the slip lane is safer for emergency services vehicles. Ms. Wilson stated that VTRANS is hoping to remove slip lanes statewide and referenced areas in IL. T. Hooker explained that this is a complex intersection. Ms. Wilson believes that this will be a stronger case if the Select Board and the Planning Commission come together. D. Mills inquired the conflict with the Town Plan. Ms. Wilson explained that this is a historic area. Mr. Blow added that this is a safety concern and is part of the Village Center, both of which are included in the Town Plan.

Mr. Charbonneau stated that the bridge does need replacing. Mr. Conway stated that the petition states at the top "Replace the Bridge Stop the Road Design".

Mr. Conway stated at the hearing the Act 250 final proposal was presented and replacing the bridge and keeping the road design. Mr. Conway showed the 2015 design layout, as well as the other design that shows the turning lane without the slip lane. The engineering designs were discussed and these show a painted island. Betsy Morgan inquired where the information for the slip lane vs the turning lane was obtained. Chair Malay stated that this is unknown as they looked at the accident information and statistics. Mr. Conway stated that the Level of Service (LOS) at the Route 3 and Oxbow Road intersection was rated at an E, which is the worst rating. Mrs. Conway stated that the slip lane would move an accident area from a non-accident area. Mrs. Morgan stated that she is concerned due to the number of close call crashes at the Mobil station. Mr. Conway stated that people are cutting through the Mobil station, which is an enforcement issue. Mr. Conway stated that the Mobil station is the only station in town that sells diesel, therefore, curbing is not an option.

Tom Markowski stated that it is illegal to go around vehicles that are turning onto Oxbow Road from Route 7. Mr. Markowski stated that the Kendall Hill Road intersection is not an issue and he is not opposed to the proposed intersection. Baird Morgan stated the concerns that were recently presented to the Select Board with regard to vehicles turning from Route 7 onto driveways on the eastern side of Route 7. Mr. Atherton stated that he has spoken with VTRANS to install a turning lane. There will be more investigation of options of installing a turning lane and reducing the speed limit to 25 mph. VTRANS will be performing a traffic study. Mr. Atherton stated that he spoke with Chief Warfle regarding enforcement in the area.

Mrs. Wilson stated that she agrees that the Kendall Hill intersection is a 90* turn. Mr. Atherton stated that this was a larger than 90* turn. Mrs. Wilson stated that removing the slip lane will push the traffic together. There were accelerating concerns and not braking/yielding at the yield sign. Mr. Atherton stated that the yield sign was ignored. Mr. Atherton stated that there have been 8 accidents since 2014. Mr. Conway stated that the accidents were in the area, not at the Act 250 area and this was stated in sworn testimony. Mr. Atherton has requested police enforcement during high traffic hours.

Tom Markowski inquired the status of the green. Donna Wilson explained that this was classified as historic until the night before the hearing when it was deemed not historic. Mrs. Wilson stated that there is a historic marker that is to be placed along the area of the green and has been waiting for state approval. Mr. Conway stated that there is a letter from the historic preservationist included in the 2015 scoping report.

T. Hooker stated that detouring traffic in an emergency situation that requires Route 7 to be closed down is easier with the slip lane and the green space helps bring traffic into 1 place. Mr. Conway stated that trucks headed to New York use the slip lane so they can get momentum to make the hill on Route 3. J. Gagnon stated that he utilizes the slip lane on a daily basis and feels that the way the intersection is set now makes the most sense. J. Gagnon continued to say that Route 3 can be icy and the slip lane allows trucks to get off of Route 7 without stopping and if the trucks will need to remain on Route 7 and slow down or stop traffic can cause issues.

Mr. Conway stated that it was stated in the hearing to remove the traffic signals at the intersection, which will also cause issues.

The Select Board adjourned at 5:19 PM.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

T. Hooker made the motion and seconded by D. Mills to go into Executive Session for Legal where premature knowledge could be damaging to the Town and may be jeopardized by public disclosure. Town Manager Atherton was invited to remain for Executive Session.

In accordance with 1 VSA 312 (b), where premature general public knowledge would clearly place the Municipality or person involved at a substantial disadvantage, the Board unanimously agreed to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of Legal at 5:19 PM.

The Select Board exited Executive Session at 5:53 PM.

Motion by D. Mills and seconded by M. Winslow to file an appeal on behalf of the Town of Pittsford regarding the Route 7/Route 3 intersection plan by VTRANS. Motion passed 5 – 0.

The Select Board adjourned at 5:55 PM.

The next Select Board meeting will be held on April 5, 2023

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Giard
Recording Secretary

Alicia Malay, Chair

David Mills, Vice Chair

Thomas Hooker, Selectman

W. Joseph Gagnon, Selectman

Mark Winslow, Selectman