

Whitcomb Avenue and Bruce Street Improvement Projects
Town of Littleton, Massachusetts
Preliminary Hearing / Local Concerns Meeting
Meeting Minutes

Date: November 17, 2010
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Littleton Electric Light Department (LELD) Conference Room, Littleton, MA
Attendees: Jim Clyde (JC) Operation Manager, Littleton
Abutters from Whitcomb Avenue and Bruce Street (see attached sign-in sheet)
Ko Ishikura, P.E. (KI) Green
Erik Atkins, P.E. (EA) Green
Wing Wong, E.I.T. (WW) Green

A preliminary hearing / local concerns meeting was held at the LELD conference room in Littleton, MA for the Whitcomb Avenue and Bruce Street Improvement Projects.

Green opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of the meeting which was to describe the Whitcomb Avenue and Bruce Street projects; present a preliminary design for each roadway and; record abutters comments and concerns to be addressed in the 25% Design Submittal. The existing conditions of each roadway were then presented and the design objectives explained to be: design each roadway to the posted speed limit (25 mph for Whitcomb Avenue and 30 mph for Bruce Street); improve the failing pavement structure with full depth construction; improve substandard horizontal and vertical alignments and; provide a consistent 20-foot wide traveled way. These design objectives would be met while maintaining the scenic character of each roadway; minimizing impacts to abutting properties, wetlands and habitat and retaining all stone walls and the stone chamber on Whitcomb Avenue.

The Preliminary Design for each roadway was presented to the attendees. The following summarizes the Preliminary Design for each roadway:

Bruce Street:

- Full depth reconstruction
- 30 mph design speed
- 20-foot pavement width
- Minor improvements to horizontal and vertical alignments
- Reduce Harvard Road entrance
- Replace existing drainage
- Replace non-crash tested rail with crash tested weathering steel guardrail.

Whitcomb Avenue

- Full depth reconstruction
- 25 mph design speed
- 20-foot pavement width
- Remove ledge to improve horizontal and vertical alignments
- Shift roadway north in areas where ledge was removed
- Replace existing drainage

Green indicated that once comments are received the design will proceed to the 25% Design level and incorporate the comments to the extent possible. Green stated that construction is anticipated to begin in the Spring of 2011 and the estimated construction cost is \$800,000 for Bruce Street and \$400,000 for Whitcomb Avenue.

Upon completion of the presentation Green opened the meeting to comments and questions. The following is a brief summary of the questions, concerns and suggestions received from by the abutters and corresponding responses to these comments organized by topic:

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Utility Improvements

- It was noted by a resident that the proposed roadway improvements on Bruce Street provide an opportunity to extend the existing water main to Harvard Road and it was requested that the water main extension be included as a part of this project. *Jim Clyde indicated that this project does not have the funding to support the extension of this water main. He also indicated that the water main extension is no longer a priority as the new development which is proposed on Harvard Road is much smaller than the original development and no longer needs a Town water supply. Jim Clyde stated that it would be up to the Water Department to decide if the water main extension cost could be run through them and he indicated that he did not think they would bear the cost because they just finished the Goldsmith Street project and did not have the funds to do this project. However, he will confirm with the Water Department. If the Water Department declines to do the water main extension it would need to go before the Board of Selectmen for them to decide if the costs would be borne by the reconstruction project.*
- There was a question regarding the condition of the existing gas line along Bruce Street and whether there are plans for replacement in the future by the gas company. *Green indicated that the Town had contacted the gas company and they have no plans to replace the gas main. They did request to be notified before construction begins in areas near their gas line so that they have the option to observe the work. Green will provide the 25% Design Plans to the gas company for their review. Jim Clyde indicated that he was not aware of any leaks in this line.*

Speed/Safety

- The current posted speed limit of 30 mph along Bruce Street was questioned; the residents believed that the speed is too high. There was a general concern for pedestrian safety and the high speeds of vehicles currently travelling along Bruce Street and what effect the new roadway would have on the speeds. There was a discussion as to what would be the best method to limit speeds including increased police enforcement.
- It was noted by a resident that there are visibility issues along Bruce Street at night which result in safety concerns for pedestrians. It was requested that street lighting be provided along the roadway as a part of this project. *Jim Clyde indicated that at this time lighting is not a component of this project. If lighting is desired he suggested that the residents approach the Board of Selectmen.*
- It was suggested that sidewalks be provided as a part of this project to increase pedestrian safety along Bruce Street. *Green and Jim Clyde noted that providing a sidewalk would increase impacts to surrounding trees and potentially walls, increases construction costs and increased right-of-way impacts.*
- Questions were raised over how much clear space is available behind the berm for pedestrian refuge.
- Some residents suggested speed bumps and rumble strips as a method of traffic calming. *Jim Clyde indicated that these are generally effective initially but in the long term are not effective means of controlling speeds. Cars will slow down over the bump then speed up to the next and repeat the process.*
- It was mentioned that a dangerous driving condition occurs when on occasion a vehicle is parked along Bruce Street.

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- It was mentioned that there is limited sight distance for an existing horizontal curve located between Fox Lane and Laury Lane on Bruce Street and vehicles travelling at excessive speeds were observed passing through this curve, which result in an unsafe condition for pedestrians and drivers.

Increased Truck and Vehicle Volumes

- There was a question whether a vehicle weight restriction is still in effect for an old culvert that has since been replaced on Bruce Street. Residents stated concerns that truck traffic will increase upon project completion. It was requested by the residents to retain the existing truck restrictions or impose new restrictions if the existing restrictions are no longer in effect. *Jim Clyde indicated that any new restrictions would need to be approved by the Town and then the State.*
- Concerns were raised regarding the anticipated increase in cut through traffic using Bruce Street once the roadway has been improved.

Scenic Roadway Concerns

- There were mixed opinions regarding the proposed roadway width of 20-feet on Bruce Street. There were some abutters who thought the proposed roadway width is too wide as it reduces the aesthetics of a scenic roadway and suggested widths between 16-feet and 18-feet. There were other residents who thought the proposed roadway width is sufficient or needs to be even wider to provide for increased pedestrian safety.
- Some abutters were skeptical that the proposed roadway width would not impact existing stone walls and mature trees.
- There were concerns that the use of bituminous berm would not be characteristic of a scenic roadway. In addition, concerns were raised over the difficulty of walking or biking over the berm. *Green and Jim Clyde indicated that the proposed berm tapers from flush with the roadway to 3" high over a width of 1-foot. Jim Clyde noted that Crane Road uses similar berm.*
- There were concerns regarding the aesthetics of the proposed weathering steel guardrail at Bruce Street. It was suggested that photos of the guardrail options be provided.

Other

- It was suggested that the geometry modifications at the Bruce Street and Harvard Road intersection should consider campers and other similar larger vehicles travelling to and from the Minutemen Campground which is located adjacent to the Bruce Street.
- The abutter at 44 Bruce Street had concerns that in the winter, salt used along the roadway would go down his driveway and into his well. *Green indicated that proposed design will include provisions to prevent stormwater runoff from the roadway from going down depressed driveways.*
- There was a question regarding pavement cores and whether old wood logs were found within Bruce Street as they were thought to be the cause for the heaving seen along the road. It was also mentioned that numerous boulders were observed to be removed during the installation of the existing gas line many years ago. *Green indicated that no evidence of wood logs or large rocks was observed in the pavement cores. The Contract will include provisions for the removal of these items.*

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- There were questions regarding construction duration and phasing. *Green indicated that other than for short periods, Bruce Street would remain open during construction and at all times during off hours.*
- The funding source for the project was questioned.
- For Whitcomb Avenue, there is an existing roadway low point near the foundation remnants near the Smith Residence and there were concerns that stormwater runoff may get into the cesspool pool located on the south side of Whitcomb Avenue. *Green indicated that with the proposed berm, stormwater runoff will not be able to sheet flow off of the road and will be carried to a drain inlet.*
- Mr. Pickard indicated that access to his farm needs to be maintained for milk trucks. *Green and Jim Clyde indicated that language will be included in the Contract Documents that will stipulate the requirements. We will work with him to determine the requirements as the design progresses.*

Given the wide range of comments and concerns, Green suggested a subsequent meeting be held with the abutters to discuss these issues in more depth and to try to develop a consensus on the design before proceeding with the 25% Design. A second meeting will be scheduled and announced.

We believe this is an accurate summary of the items discussed at the meeting. Please notify Green if there are any comments, corrections, or additions within one week from the date of this meeting minute.

Meeting Sign In Sheet

PROJECT: Bow Street & Whitcomb Avenue

MEETING TOPIC: PRELIMINARY HEARING / LOCAL CONCERNS

DATE: 11/17/2010

TIME: 7:00 PM

PLACE: 1ST FLD CONF. ROOM

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