

TOWN OF FARMINGTON, CT
Gateway Committee Meeting
July 16, 2015

Present

Jeff Apuzzo
Amy Suffredini
Peter Bagdigian

Staff:

Kathy Eagen
Rose Ponte
Bill Warner

A. Call to Order.

The Meeting was called to order at 5:05p.m.

B. Open Meeting to Public

Chairman Apuzzo reiterated the open dialog format; comments from the public are welcomed throughout the meeting.

Barbara Taussig of 21 Main Street said since she is up all night due to construction noise from the Route 4 DOT project, she has had time to read all the plans multiple times. She feels the plans do not address the zero setbacks, nor do they include the historic district. She is concerned noise buffers have not been included in the draft report. Currently, the only noise buffer that exists in the study area is the town green. She is concerned that the plans show the town green will be used for parking. She feels it is very important to have trees and canopies. She used Brickwalk Shops as an example of what happens when there aren't any trees in the plans. Ms. Taussig also stated that DOT is creating havoc to the neighborhood and the situation cannot continue.

Amy Suffredini corrected Ms. Taussig, none of the options listed in plan calls for carving up the green to be used for parking. She further explained that all the discussions have revolved around saving the green and using it more effectively. 90% of those that participated in the charrettes voiced commonality and the plans reflect that.

Chairman Apuzzo further clarified that this committee is only focusing on planning for the study area; comments concerning the Route 4 DOT project are not for discussion with this committee.

Pat Karwoski stated that the committee is doing a fabulous job, making the most of a difficult situation created by Route 4 existing conditions. She inquired as to what has been approved for development on the new backage road and whether a recommendation to TPZ could be made. She also asked if the town will have the ability to acquire the former Parson's lot.

Kathy Eagen explained that we are working with DOT to add streetscape improvements, landscaping upgrades and other details for the Route 4 DOT project. She also announced that the town was successful in securing control

of the former Parson Chevrolet lot. When the State DOT project is completed the town will decide whether or not to purchase that property.

John Karwoski inquired whether anyone has reached out to the private property owners of the 2 gas stations, the Bank of American, and the cleaners.

Jeff Apuzzo said we have reached out but those details can't be discussed in order to keep negotiations moving forward.

Barbara Taussig does not want the town to buy property which would then diminish the tax rolls. She was assured the town doesn't have any plans to diminish the tax rolls. John Karwoski noted the town does not have a very good history of buying property.

Pat Karwoski expressed concern that the shops at Brickyard will be negatively impacted by the Route 4 DO project. The DOT project will not allow cars to make a left turn to the Brickyard businesses. She inquired if DOT has done any current traffic studies.

Barbara Taussig inquired which staff member is communicating with DOT.

Paul Kramer commented that Kathy Eagen did a great job anticipating that the future development on the Parson's property would need utilities. Kathy Eagen has arranged to meet with the various utility companies to incorporate that in the DOT plans for Route 4.

John Karwoski commented that the time table for all this is years away.

Chairman Apuzzo commented that the committee needs to communicate the timeframe for the Route 4 DOT project. The committee will be communicating a timetable in future emails.

Scott Coughlin expressed that he has not had time to review the plans and inquired if the committee had plans to review the different options at future meetings.

Jeff Apuzzo explained that the committee has made the plans available and would like residents to review the plans and give comment to the committee. The committee will meet again in August and September to garner comments from residents before the September 17 public meeting with the consultants. Since many in the audience expressed that a timeline would be beneficial, it was decided that in future emails a timeline will be included. He explained that the immediate goal is to ratify the public's preferred option,

Bill Warner explained that in phase 2 the town will issue an RFP to hire a consultant that will detail the necessary engineering that is required for the former Parson's lot. Other items to be included in the RFP would be a market study, design guidelines for the area and refining the public's preferred option.

Barbara Taussig expressed concern that while this planning is taking place there aren't any barriers in place that protects the larger development plan for this area. She noted that zero setbacks don't exist and that doesn't protect homeowners in the long term.

Bill Warner explained that setback requirements do exist but in the case that Ms. Taussig was referring to, the TPZ approved the plan without the setbacks. TPZ currently has the ability to deny a project based on setback and other variables.

John Karwoski needed clarification concerning who will decide which option will be chosen to move forward with in phase 2.

Kathy Eagen explained the committee will decide which option the majority of the community has chosen and will make a recommendation to the Town Council.

Bill Warner commented that once the Route 4 DOT project is completed it will be cost prohibited to change curb cuts and intersections.

C. Communications

There were five communications received concerning the draft report. Chairman Apuzzo summarized each one.

D. Minutes

Upon a motion made and seconded (Suffredini/Bagdigian) it was unanimously VOTED: To approve the June 18, minutes.

E. Review the Consultant's Draft Report

Committee members did not have anything new to review from the report.

I Old Business- None

F. Adjournment

Upon a motion made and seconded (Bagdigian/ Suffredini) it was unanimously VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

cc: Sub-Committee Members
Bill Warner, Town Planner
Kathleen A. Eagen, Town Manager
Paula Ray, Town Clerk
Deb Bull, Administrative Assistant