

BOS & VSC Work Session: April 8, 2013

Introduction

I would like to begin by introducing my colleagues who have been working on the Village Study Committee -- many for the past two years. All of them have committed to continue laboring on it for the foreseeable future. Here tonight are: Christine Grimando, Stu Dawson, Scott Stevens, Lew Stowe, Gloria Gustafson, Peter Smith and Joel Lefever. Toni DeSoto is unable to be here.

Principal Goals of This Work Session

This is the fourth time we have met with you but this is the first time we have had an opportunity to hear from you with regard to the Village Study Committee and its work. We are not sure what goals you may have for tonight but we have our own goals in mind. We want to appeal to you to embrace three things:

- **The overall project.** You created this study committee in 2011, charging us to develop an approach that would make possible a more dynamic and vital Village center. We need to know that you continue to feel as strongly about the importance of that work as we do. We believe something must be done to revitalize the village. There is no standing still. To remain as we are today is a betrayal of the past as well as an invitation to stagnation.
- **Our collective vision.** The report we gave you in October 2012 details 25 recommendations which we believe will help promote the vitality and beauty of York Village, and will help make the village a more dynamic, safe and sustainable town center reflecting the history of this community. We want to know that you agree with the general direction in which we are heading.
- **The process we have proposed.** We believe it is critical to the success of the project and to the realization of the vision, that there be a public process that leans heavily on input from citizens, merchants and other stakeholders. We need you to continue to legitimate our role and to work with us to have open dialogue with the people of York who ultimately will decide what sort of Village they want.

Major Elements of Improvement

Many aspects of our vision for the Village are captured in the drawings you have seen in connection with ***Recommendation 9: Traffic in the area around the Civil War monument should be improved through a realignment of traffic flow and on-site parking.***¹ This recommendation refers, of course, to what now has become five options (thanks to a set of suggestions from Tim Cole):

¹ The existing Monument Place is approximately 1,600 sq. ft.

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- a. **Minimum Change Option:** [Traffic remains as it is, travel lanes better defined, shorter crosswalks, added broad walks, less asphalt, some loss of on-street parking. Monument Park = 3,500 sq. ft. (+/-).]
- b. **York Delta Option:** [Traffic modified a bit, travel lanes better defined, shorter crosswalks, added broad walks, less asphalt, more loss of on-street parking. Monument Park = 4,500 sq. ft. (+/-)]
- c. **Town Common Option:** [Traffic modified a lot, travel lanes better defined, shorter crosswalks, added broad walks, less asphalt, greatest loss of on-street parking. Monument Park = 9,000 sq. ft. (+/-)]
- d. **Roundabout Option:** [Traffic modified dramatically, clearly defined, travel lanes, shorter crosswalks, added broad walks, a lot less asphalt, loss of on-street parking (comparable to York Delta Option). Monument Park = 3,600 sq. ft. (+/-)]
- e. **One Way Village Option:** [Traffic modified dramatically, narrow clearly defined travel lanes, very short cross walks, broad sidewalks. This option loses the least on street parking among the 5 alternatives. Monument Park = 7,500 sq. ft. +/-]

You will recall that all options contain the main elements which we believe are essential to making the village work as it should:

- Utilities moved underground and drainage improved
- Narrower travel lanes
- Parallel parking without diagonal or perpendicular spaces
- Less asphalt and more green space
- Shared bicycle lanes
- Broad walks
- Sidewalk extensions for shorter crosswalks
- Benches and street trees
- Period lighting along with consistent and improved signage

Conclusion

Our study of York's history has helped us to understand that York was once a more dynamic and vibrant commercial place than it is now. Our vision hinges on making changes. To our minds, these are changes that will:

- Make York competitive with other towns successfully pursuing revitalization efforts (e.g., Kittery and Kennebunk) AND that will
- Take us back to an earlier period when there were aesthetic, commercial, social and cultural resources in abundance in the Village. We want York to be York -- a place where people and businesses and history will interact.

What we need from you now is your best advice. Tell us how you would like to see us move forward toward a revitalized York Village. We are happy to get into the weeds on any and all recommendations in the report but we think at this point it would be more useful for us to know if you think we are on the right path.