

VSC Presentation to the BOS: February 25, 2013

Introduction

Ron McAllister, Woodbridge Road. I'm here tonight as Chair of the Village Study Committee which this Board appointed in May 2011. As you recall, last October we presented our report to you and a month later we made a PowerPoint presentation of our various recommendations. Both the October 11 report and the November 19 presentation are available on the Town's Website for anyone who needs to be re-familiarized.

I don't want to take much of your time tonight so I WILL NOT be going over the Report's various recommendations -- though I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have about them. My purpose in coming here tonight is to express to you our eagerness to meet with you about the Report. The most important thing now would be to schedule a work session between you and the VSC; the sooner the better. The next most important thing would be to get your thoughts on the future work of the Committee. We see two complementary directions: the 2-minute Village and beyond the 2-minute Village.

Decisions RE: the 2-Minute Village

You will remember that the Committee worked with three concentric geographies of York Village: the 2-minute, the 5-minute and the 10-minute villages. Our report and our work to date has focused exclusively within the 2-minute Village -- roughly an eighth of a mile from the Monument in all directions. If we continue to drill down into that 2-minute Village, we will naturally get into implementation of the Report.

The last time I was here, I pointed out a dozen next steps for implementing the Report. The Committee met ten days ago and decided that it would be helpful if we were to prioritize those recommendations for you. Six items are seen by the Committee as logical first steps¹:

- REC 5 To strike an agreement with York Hospital RE: parking
- REC 11 To hold parallel and simultaneous public **and** Board conversations on the 4 (or 5) options in REC 9
- REC 14 To commission a Streetscape and Traffic Design Plan so we can be sure that the "chosen option" in REC 9 is feasible. We don't believe this can be done without professional help.
- REC 18 To revise the Comp. Plan & Zoning ordinances for the Village
- REC 22 To determine the needs of and options for our Town Hall
- REC 25 To appoint a Visual Identity Committee for Village signage

Some of these can only be pursued by this Board (e.g., the agreement with York Hospital) while others are the bailiwick of the Planning Board (e.g., revising the Zoning

¹ Our second order recommendations: REC 4 Inventory of available parking spaces
REC 15 Infrastructure survey of the Village
REC 16 Team to develop and implement the Master Plan
REC 17 Physical model of the redesigned Village
REC 23 Dialogue with Cumberland Farms
REC 24 Village Fire Station

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ordinances). Others will need outside consultants (e.g., the Streetscape and Traffic Design Plan) while others should be done jointly by this Board and the Committee (e.g., the public conversations around the options in REC 9). Still others we can do and are prepared to do on our own (e.g., a Visual Identity Committee). In fact, the Committee has begun preliminary conversations with some of the Town's non-profits in pursuit of a visual identity program.

Directions RE: the 5-Minute Village (and Beyond)

Another option for the Committee would be to broaden our reach into the 5-Minute Village and beyond. The Committee is aware of the Town's interest in possible uses to which the Davis Property on York Street might be put. This 100 acre site is within the scope of the Committee's wider geography. Some members of the Committee are interested in working on this.

I think it is possible for us BOTH to drill down into the 2-Minute Village AND to get involved in the 5-Minute Village provided that the Committee is expanded. I recently wrote to Rob Yandow and Mary Andrews with our thoughts on additional appointments to this Committee. That ball, like the October report, is in your court. At this point, we need your involvement regardless of which direction you think we should go.

A Word About Funding

We know all that implementation is going to take money but we also know that there is a lot money out there for just the sort of efforts we have recommended in our Report. The Maine Arts Commission, for example, has various grants programs relevant to our recommendations. One of their programs offers \$50,000 grants in support of cultural, economic and governmental interests working together for community revitalization. This is just one small example of the kind of money we think is available from agencies outside the Town (and beyond the wallets of the Town's taxpayers). We need to aggressively pursue such grant opportunities and we would like to see the Board of Selectmen AND Town Hall commit to securing outside funding for implementation.

Conclusion

The Village Study Committee's mission is "to establish a framework that will promote the vitality and beauty of York Village as a dynamic, safe, and sustainable town center reflecting the history of a community that is both welcoming to visitors and supportive of local businesses." That is what we are trying to do. We ask for your commitment to make it happen.

Thank you.