

Appendix C:

Ideas from Public Safety & Infrastructure Stakeholders meeting MAY 18, 2012

Introduction: Representatives from six Town services (Police, Public Works, Sewer, Water, Fire Department and the Ambulance Service) were invited to meet with the Committee. However, only Kevin LeConte (Police), Dean Lessard (Public Works) and Tim Haskell (Sewer) were represented. Still, it was a lively and informative discussion with information about most of the six areas of concern being offered by those who were able to meet.

Underground Utilities: The maze that is the network of underground utilities in the Village was made clear to the committee. People don't see the assortment of water pipes, sewer pipes, drainage pipes, and fiberoptic cable conduits that lie at various depths below the surface. There are standards for keeping these utilities separate from one another. Work on the roadways is further complicated by the fact that the exact location of older utilities is not known with any degree of precision. We are fortunate that the below surface infrastructure through the 2-minute Village is relatively new, dating from 2000-01.

- **Sewer:** The Sewer District owns the mains that run under the streets in town. Private property owners have responsibility for connector pipes connecting their buildings to the mains. The age and condition of these connectors is unknown. The entire village (up to and beyond the perimeter of the 10-minute Village) is on sewer with the exception of two homes still on private septic systems.
- **Water:** The Water District was not represented at the meeting so there was no in depth discussion to reveal their point of view. We did learn, however, that the water mains belong to the Water District and that the District is responsible as well for the connector pipes up to the private property lines. Beyond the property lines the water pipes are the responsibility of the property owners. The condition of these lines is unknown.
- **Fiberoptic Cable:** Encased in pipes below the surface is an extensive network of fiber optic cables. These cables, running through the heart of the Village, connect service between Portland and Boston. Disruption of this service would have serious impact on a very large number of households and businesses.

Overhead Utilities: In addition to the utilities people cannot see are several they can see. These are the utilities belonging to Central Maine Power (CMP), Fairpoint Communication (Verizon), Time Warner, as well as some private service for such institutions as the York Public Schools and York Hospital. Moving the poles on which lines are supported even for a short distance would be very expensive. The pole at Organon Road is being relocated eighteen inches and in order to accomplish this between

3,000 and 5,000 paired wires have to be spliced one-at-a-time in order to maintain connection. Moving overhead utilities in the Village would be very costly.

- **Utility Poles:** It is possible to put overhead wires underground but the cost of doing this may be prohibitive. The different utilities mentioned above must be kept at a prescribed distance from one another and, as noted, the exact location of any given service is not always known. Placing underground the wires that run through the Village would require removing at least seventeen poles and burying the wires these poles now carry.
- **Expense:** The cost of such an infrastructure project is unknown and probably unknowable until it is attempted. Safe to say, it will require serious money. As an example, the cost of burying utilities along Railroad Avenue has been estimated at \$1 million. The distance of that project would be less than 1,200 feet. Further, the service on Railroad Avenue is single-phase power. The cost of burying power lines between the Union Bluff and Main Street/Railroad Avenue has come in at \$130,000 but this is for relatively inexpensive single-phase power. By contrast, because of the institutional users along York Street in the 2-minute Village require more power than typical households, the power requirements dictate 3-phase power lines. There would be a need for several transformers along York Street and the cost of the project would be much higher than at York Beach.

An argument can be made that there would be a savings in terms of repair from storms, outages, and tree maintenance if utilities were to be buried. At the same time, while buried lines would be more stable (and more aesthetically pleasing), they also would be much more expensive to repair in the event that repairs were necessary. There also are safety issues with people working in manholes as well. Ledge is another problem we would likely face as we attempt to bury power lines. There is no easy solution. Safe to say, burying utility lines would require financial support from beyond the Town of York.

The issue of future technologies was raised. Many households are abandoning their landline phones for cellular technology. Will the next twenty years see the advent of wireless telecommunications for businesses as well? Many felt that businesses would always require land lines so we would always need utility lines whether above or below ground.

Streets and Traffic: The discussion next turned to traffic and ways to address speeding through the Village. Police studies show that traffic is not really as fast as people claim; below the speed limit, in fact. The validity of the claim that traffic needs to be regulated by a greater police presence was discussed. It was pointed out that putting a police officer in the Village throughout the day would be both costly and unnecessary. Rather than policing to control traffic, it was suggested that roads need to be constructed so that people feel uncomfortable driving above the posted limit. This is best accomplished by narrowing roadways. Developments at Organug Road and York Street suggest what could happen within the 2-Minute Village. The travel lane is being narrowed to eleven

feet on either side of the median. Beyond that will be a five foot paved shoulder for bicycles, a curb and paved sidewalk for pedestrians.

In the Village a more appropriate separation would be two to three foot shoulders and a ten foot travel lane. Paved sidewalks on both sides of the street are possible. The kind of bump-outs (also referred to as PSZs or pedestrian safety zones) being built at York Beach would be appropriate for the Village as well though there is some concern about the difficulty of plowing these areas in winter and the threat of damage as cars encounter the curbing at the PSZs.

- **Parking:** We talked about meters -- “pay and display” and about the possibility of a parking garden at Coventry Hall. The bottom line is that parking management systems can be configured any way the Town wants. The goal of discouraging employee on-street parking was affirmed as something to be pursued.
- **Shared Roadways:** Where paved shoulders are not wide enough to support formal bikes lanes, “sharrows” will be painted (on York Street) to indicate the shared roadways. It was widely agreed that sharing roads requires education and courtesy from cyclists and drivers alike.

Village Fire Station: We learned that news from our first stakeholders meeting (January 2012) may have been understood to mean that the VSC is recommending closure of the Village Fire Station. While we have talked about this in the past, we have made no recommendation about it. It was noted, however, that the Comprehensive Plan calls for moving the fire station to Route 1 but the time line on this is not specified. It well might be on the 10-20 year horizon. The VSC may want to reach out to Chief Balentine to clarify these points.

Conclusion: The Committee needs to decide whether it is necessary to meet with the agencies unable to attend today’s meeting. We may have to schedule something outside our normal meeting times if we are to accommodate the calendars of Fire, Water and Ambulance. Alternatively, representatives from the VSC could be charged with meeting these agencies. Notes from this meeting will be sent to those who attended as well as to Chris Balentine (Fire), Don Neumann (Water), and Karen Tucker (Ambulance) who were unable to attend.