

TOWN OF WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT

Special Meeting Notice



AGENCY: Town Improvements Committee

DATE: January 26, 2010

TIME: 6:30 PM

PLACE: Town Hall – Ludlow Room

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3. *Discussion of Prospect Hill Road Reconstruction
4. *Discussion of Proposed 2011-2016 Capital Improvements Plan
5. Staff Reports
6. Approval of Minutes
 - a) *September 28, 2009
7. Adjournment

*Backup materials


Public Act 75-312 requires notice of Special Meetings to be posted in the Town Clerk's Office not less than 24 hours prior to the time of such meeting. No other business shall be considered at this meeting than that listed on this Agenda.

Agenda Item Summary

Date: January 26, 2010

To: Town Improvements Committee Members

Prepared By: Tom Lenehan, Town Engineer

Reviewed By: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Prospect Hill Road Reconstruction Project

Background

The purpose of this summary is to brief the Town Improvements Committee of the status of the proposed project and provide a summary of activities that have been recently completed.

Discussion/Analysis

In January 2007, with Town Council support, the town submitted the Prospect Hill Road reconstruction project to the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) for possible funding under the Surface Transportation Program (STP). At that time, the project limits were from the intersection of Poquonock Avenue to just east of Harvest Lane. This project was accepted by the DOT for funding under this program, which is funded with 80% federal, 10% state and 10% local funding. There is a maximum combined federal and state funding available of \$2,504,250 per project.

In May 2009, the Town Council endorsed splitting the project into two phases and reducing the scope of the project eligible for STP funding to include the reconstruction of the road from Poquonock Avenue to just west of West Street due to increased cost estimates provided by the state. The portion of the road from West Street to Harvest Lane is proposed as the second phase of the Prospect Hill Road Reconstruction project in the Capital Improvements Program.

On July 7, 2009 a public informational meeting was held at the town hall to discuss the proposed project with residents of the Prospect Hill Road project area. Residents abutting the length of Prospect Hill Road from Poquonock Avenue to Lang Road were invited to attend by way of letter. Additionally, notice of the meeting was published in the Hartford Courant.

A total of 39 persons attended the meeting, including property abutters, two Town of Windsor staff members and a representative from the Metropolitan District Commission. Some people spoke in favor of specific elements of the project, e.g. sidewalks and bike lanes. However, the majority of the attendees raised concerns with the impact of the project on their property and way of life.

Comments included no need for sidewalks, concern with additional truck and vehicle traffic, potentially increased vehicle speeds, proximity of some houses to the town's right-of-way, old houses with poor foundations, elimination of a strip of their land and the inability to get safely out of their driveway.

At its meeting on August 3, 2009, the Town Council approved an appropriation of \$5,000 for staff to utilize for planning and consulting services. Staff contracted with Milone and

MacBroom, Inc. who prepared additional schematic plans showing alternative roadway cross sections and possible traffic calming alternatives. Subsequently, staff established a focus group, comprised of four (4) Prospect Hill Road property owners and met twice with this group in September 2009.

On January 6, 2010, a second resident informational meeting was held at Northwest Park and property owners living along Prospect Hill Road and adjacent neighborhoods were invited to this meeting.

While a number of the residents' concerns are valid and will need to be addressed by town staff and its consultants during the design phase, this project is an important one for the full community. The existing section of Prospect Hill Road from the intersection of Poquonock Avenue (Route 75) and Harvest Lane is both geometrically and structurally deficient for the current and future traffic utilizing the collector roadway. Reconstruction of the roadway is needed to address these deficiencies. Furthermore, the reconstruction of the roadway will allow the town to incorporate additional elements into the project such as drainage improvements, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and street lighting that will significantly improve overall transportation efficiency of the roadway for vehicular, pedestrian and bicyclist traffic.

Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle circulation is also recognized as a town goal in the Plan of Conservation and Development. Providing sidewalks on at least one side of all collector roads is one strategy identified to reach this goal. It has also been suggested that road improvement projects should take bicycle circulation into account by providing measures such as paved shoulders or curb lanes and by making them as bicycle friendly as possible. Furthermore, the Regional Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan developed by the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) specifically recommends that Prospect Hill Road be part of an on-road bicycle network as well as adopting a region-wide "Complete Streets" policy which ensures that a street provides safety and convenience for all road users: pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists.

Financial Impact

The total estimated cost of the revised project is \$4,552,379, with the town share being \$2,048,129.

Other Board Action

None

Recommendations

There are no recommended actions for the Committee to consider at this meeting. Staff will brief the Committee on the preliminary features of the project to address residents' concerns, project benefits, and outline next steps in the planning process, which does include Town Council endorsement of the project.

Attachments


None

Agenda Item Summary

Date: January 26, 2010

To: Town Improvement Committee Members

Prepared By: Emily Moon, Assistant Town Manager

Reviewed By: Peter Souza, Town Manager 

Subject: Proposed 2011 – 2016 Capital Improvements Program

Background

The capital improvement program (CIP) is a multi-year plan used to coordinate the financing and timing of major public improvements for the Town of Windsor. It contains a comprehensive list of capital projects proposed for the town within the next six years. The plan reflects recommendations of citizens, boards, commissions and town staff. The CIP includes a description, cost estimate and financing method for each proposed project.

Discussion/Analysis

The CIP helps the community maintain a viable economic base and provide amenities that contribute to the overall well-being of the citizenry. The CIP provides a means for coordinating and prioritizing the capital project requests of various departments and agencies. The information the CIP provides regarding the short- and long-term financial impacts of undertaking capital projects enables policy makers to balance town priorities with the town's financial capability to pay for the desired projects.

As the town's General Fund operating budget's ability to fund asset management activities has been reduced over the last several years, staff is attempting to address some of the town's asset management needs through the CIP. The proposed CIP includes a number of multi-year asset management programs such as stormwater management, sport courts improvements, street sign assessment and replacement, tree replacement and streetlight replacement. Some of these assets do not meet the thresholds for annual capital projects. For example, individual streetlights are currently valued at \$3,300 each. However, collectively, they represent a significant asset and financial obligation for the town and their replacements are not easily funded in the town's operating budget.

Financial Impact

The proposed CIP includes debt financed projects whose principal and interest payments affect the town's operating budget the year following borrowing. Some of the projects that are proposed for debt financing will require voter approval, per the Town Charter. As staff prepared the proposed CIP, they attempted to keep anticipated debt service expenditures consistent with FY10's level through FY12 and then allowed debt service to increase 3% thereafter.

The debt service ratio in the proposed CIP, for projects that do not require voter approval, adheres to the town's debt policy goal of maintaining a ratio of debt service to total General Fund expenditures of 8% (using the Five Year Financial Forecast). The proposed CIP's debt service ratio ranges from 5.59% in FY 2013 to 6.17% in FY 2011. When the projects that require voter approval are included in the debt service calculations, the 8% ratio policy goal is still not exceeded.

The proposed CIP also reflects using cash to fund a number of projects throughout the six-year period. Fiscal Years 2011 and FY 2012 include approximately \$884,000 in cash-funded projects, in total. As

in the past, cash funding could come from three primary sources: the Capital Projects Fund balance (from funds that remain after projects are completed and closed out), the annual General Fund operating budget and the General Fund undesignated fund balance. In the later years of the plan, cash funding is proposed to a lesser degree as staff anticipates that the Town Council will have less of these potential revenue sources available.

Other Board Action

The Capital Improvements Committee, which is charged with reviewing years two through six of the draft CIP and advising the Town Manager on possible alterations, met to review the proposed CIP. The Capital Improvements Committee suggested two changes to the proposed CIP, which have been incorporated in the attached document. These changes were to move the Silver Birch Pond rehabilitation to the unscheduled projects list while staff performs additional evaluation and maintenance at the pond, and to remove center median lighting from the Route 159 corridor enhancement project. The Capital Improvements Committee's review of the proposed CIP concluded on December 9th.

The Town Planning and Zoning Commission is slated to review and comment on the proposed CIP, as required by *Connecticut General Statutes* Section 8-24, beginning on January 12 and continuing through February 9.

On January 4, 2010, the Town Council referred the CIP to the Town Improvements Committee for review.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the committee begin review of the proposed plan and provide desired direction to staff.

Attachment

Attached you will find exact copies of the six year project schedule which was provided in the bound copy (blue cover) but compiled in a manner which is difficult to handle / read.

Committee members are asked to remember to bring your copy (blue cover) of the full proposed CIP.

**TOWN IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
TOWN HALL – LUDLOW ROOM
September 28, 2009**

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

PRESENT: Councilor William Herzfeld, Chair; Councilors Matthew Marci and Robert Rispoli

STAFF: Town Manager, Peter Souza; Assistant Town Manager, Emily Moon; Town Engineer, Tom Lenehan; Director of Public Works, Brian Funk

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Bradshaw Smith, 23 Ludlow Road, commented that most of the near-term localized concepts for Windsor seem reasonable. He felt that the long-term improvements are interesting, but that the long-term improvements are designed to speed traffic to and from Bloomfield. For example, he is wondering why the traffic growth is projected to be so much higher than the Board of Education's enrollment figures (which show a decrease). He supports the short-term localized improvements and revisiting the long-term ones sometime in the future.

3. DISCUSSION REGARDING RULES OF VETERAN'S CEMETERY

Mr. Brian Funk, Director of the Department of Public Works, gave an overview of the cemetery's guidelines. Mr. Funk explained that non-floral tributes have been a problem over the last few years. Mr. Funk explained that some controls are needed to ensure that the cemetery keeps an acceptable level of decorum. Military cemeteries throughout the country have similar rules. With respect to cleaning the headstones, Mr. Funk explained that the marble stones are soft and the newer granite stones are a lot more durable and able to handle more vigorous cleaning. Mr. Funk explained the manual cleaning process that is needed and his department's attempts to recruit volunteers to clean the stones.

Councilor Herzfeld stated he was supportive of a traditional look to the cemetery and corresponding guidelines. He suggested that the town use a large, tastefully designed sign to explain the cemetery's rules, such as the sign at Riverside Cemetery. He also liked that the sign explained ownership of any materials left behind. He asked if we have publicized the dates for removing objects.

Councilor Rispoli made a suggestion to amend the rules to clarify that only disposable flower plants would be allowable.

Councilor Herzfeld like the wording on the Riverside sign concerning how long items will be held.

Councilor Rispoli asked if additional committee members are needed. Town Manager Souza explained that the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other organizations were contacted several years ago and no one volunteered. There are no significant issues now that would benefit from having more committee members' input.

Councilor Rispoli said he was hopeful there would be others who at least would want to help with cleaning.

Councilor Herzfeld wondered if we could use newspapers or other means to recruit volunteers. Town Manager Souza said staff would continue to try to find volunteers to help clean.

Town Manager Souza said staff could provide a copy of the revised rules to the Town Council. He said that the town will also try to distribute the rules to the family contacts, with the help of John Carmon.

Councilor Herzfeld asked how frequently the white fence is painted. Mr. Funk stated that it was painted three years ago and will be cleaned and painted again soon.

4. DISCUSSION OF ROUTE 305 CORRIDOR STUDY

Town Manager Souza stated that he could focus on the long-term improvements.

Councilor Herzfeld was concerned that we would not be in a good position to respond to more urgent needs in the future or would lose opportunities, much like what happened with the Griffin Line.

Councilor Rispoli asked why the motion could not be amended to state, "accept" but not "endorse" the study. Town Manager Souza explained that the Local Advisory Committee felt comfortable endorsing the broad range of the 20-year concepts. He explained that the bulk of the traffic on Route 305 is from the Day Hill corporate and industrial area.

Councilor Herzfeld asked the town manager to explain what multi-modal transportation options were explored. Town Manager Souza explained a few ideas, especially the possibility of using a shuttle bus system.

Councilor Herzfeld stated that he felt an endorsement was as much an endorsement of the methodology than anything else. He asked about when the long-term issues would be need to be implemented. Town Manager Souza explained that the state would not likely get involved until I-91 is too congested due to back-ups on Bloomfield Avenue. Apart from this, the town would have to advocate for any long or short-term improvements.

Councilor Herzfeld asked what would happen or not happen if the town doesn't accept or endorse the study. Town Manager Souza stated that CRCOG would be far more apt to incorporate the project into their regional transportation plan if it were accepted and endorsed. Bloomfield would also advocate for their needs. Town Manager Souza explained that one of the biggest downsides of not accepting the plan is that no publicly studied and debated alternatives to fixing the traffic Route 305 issues would exist.

Councilor Marci asked about residents' feedback about the plan alternatives. The town manager explained that the comments were varied and so were the desires to do anything, both short and long-term.

Councilor Rispoli pointed out an error on one of the PowerPoint slides. He also stated that he was concerned about changing the character of the road to a 4-lane road. He is concerned about all of the town's east and west roads becoming simply feeder roads for Bloomfield and that all of these roads will eventually have to be 4-lane roads.

The town manager offered that the motion could be changed to include additional support to pursue multi-modal options.

Moved by Councilor Marci, seconded by Councilor Rispoli, to accept and endorse the Route 305 Corridor Study and to continue to pursue multi-modal transportation approaches.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

5. STAFF REPORTS

Town Manager Souza provided a verbal update on current Capital Improvement Plan projects. These projects included Lang Road, Day Hill Road pavement rehabilitation, Day Hill Road capacity design, the town green, Rainbow Road traffic calming, Michael Lane, Timothy Terrace, Washington Park, Northwest Park, heavy rescue truck, the dog park and Wilson Library branch.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Councilor Marci, seconded by Councilor Rispoli, to approve the April 29, 2009 minutes.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

7. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councilor Marci, seconded by Councilor Rispoli, to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted by,

Emily Moon, Recording Secretary