

Town Land Use Committee

Minutes

February 13, 2023

Present: Tim Fiske Chairman, Christine Robidoux, Kathy Boot, George Willard, Allan Pickman, Lilliane LeBel, Scott Hecker

Absent: Gail Cromwell, Paul Quinn

Guests: Connie Kieley, John Kieley

Tim called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. The Draft Minutes of January 27 were reviewed and approved, with one abstention (Robidoux).

Some comments on the recent mailers were shared with the group.

On the safety mailer:

Parents who attend the library Storytime were surprised to see that issues with “children nearly getting hit by cars” on the flyer. Those parents in attendance had not experienced any issues. There were questions about the photo on the bottom left that shows cars parked on Main Street on both sides of the road in front of the church. When was that picture taken? It was reported to be just a normal weekday night.

Why weren’t the charrette recommendations on safety listed on the flyer? They should be part of the conversation. We agreed but there wasn’t enough room on the flyer and safety will be a separate issue. The “move highway department” statement felt like a set-up. Like “safety” was being improperly used as a justification for the highway move. If safety is an issue, we should be doing something now. The committee agreed that safety should be addressed as soon as possible but it isn’t the primary justification for wanting to move the highway garage.

Highway Department mailer:

Detailed information on this flyer was really helpful, however it sounded like a decision had already been made. The majority of the committee does recommend moving the highway department. The perception was that this mailer was biased because there was no “invitation” to problem solve together. The statement about not being able to hire employees because of the building conditions felt disingenuous. There are many reasons why it’s difficult to hire highway employees. This is a problem all over the state. It may be one reason, but it’s not the only reason. The committee agreed but it is a very important reason for Temple.

Tim has heard talk about hiring out private contractors to do all of the town’s road work. He doesn’t know of any towns that are contracting town wide work out to private road contractors in lieu of a municipal highway department. He pointed out that several towns

have already upgraded their highway department facilities as needs have grown. Contracting some work out has been done if a town lacks adequate equipment (like for hauling large amounts of materials), or if it's more cost efficient to a one-day project versus a multi-day project. Generally, it will be more costly if we have to hire out to a private contract for all road maintenance.

Funding Research to Date

John Kieley had been asked to research grant potential due to his connections with our federal representatives. Generally, we know that a project needs to be "shovel ready" and that there is a process to follow when applying for grants. He spoke with someone at Annie Kuster's office, who confirmed that there is funding available, and agreed to do a little research. There were a couple of potential funding sources mentioned:

- USDA is a source of funding for rural municipal infrastructure projects, like highway department facilities.
- There is an office in congress that works with towns to navigate different grant opportunities. The rep will reach out to them and get back to us in 2-3 weeks.

Generally speaking, funding is cyclical. One cycle just ended in January. Planning for future cycles will be important.

We may be required to match or put in a percentage in order to receive grants. We should be tracking all monies spent so far, including volunteer hours, as they can be included in the match for some grants.

Review of Summary Report

Lilliane asked how this document will be used and shared with town residents. It is intended to be shared prior to the forum, and as a foundation for the slides that will be presented at the forum.

Connie Kieley volunteered to work with Gail Cromwell on the text and formatting of the document, based on discussions at previous TLUC meetings.

Christine suggested some changes based on the public feedback received so far. She will make the changes and get the document back to Connie for updating. Allan Pickman noted that the survey drawing was distorted, probably due to formatting and resizing when it was added to the document. Connie will try to fix it, and add a note that the drawing is not to scale.

We should try and get the document out by the end of the week so residents have an opportunity to review it before the forum next week.

Other Business

There was a question from legal about creating a "back lot" for the highway department on lot 7A-36 with an easement through lot 7A-36-1. Allan Pickman suggested a lot line

adjustment could be done, or more simply a lot merger. It was pointed out that since these are both town owned lots, zoning regulations do not apply, so we may not need to do either. More research is needed to clarify and determine the best solution, should the site be approved by voters at town meeting.

Public Forum Planning

What is the best set-up for the room, taking into consideration that we expect a large crowd and some remote participants. Some TLUC members should plan to meet at 6 for a test run and to set-up the room. Christine will ask Carole to create a zoom link. Christine will work with Tim to draft some slides to use as a guide for the discussion.

There was some discussion of how much time to devote to safety and how much to highway, given the public feedback already received. We will start with safety, and acknowledge concerns received to date, before moving into more highway relocation specific topics. The purpose is to get public feedback and address any questions or concerns, particularly for those who may be hearing about these topics for the first time.

Tim asked everyone to be in attendance at the forum, and to be sure to talk to friends and neighbors about attending.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm with a motion made by Lillian and seconded by Allan. Unanimous approval.

Next meeting:

TLUC Public Forum Thursday, February 23

7 PM

Temple Town Hall Zoom option will be available