



Office of the Board of Selectmen
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NEWTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
PUBLIC HEARING INPUT ON ROWES CORNER
DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2020
TIME: 7:00PM
ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL
PUBLIC HEARING MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Burrill called the Public Hearing to order at 7:01pm. In attendance was Selectmen Matthew A. Burrill: Chairman, Lawrence B. Foote: Vice-Chairman, Kathryn Michaels, Charles R. Melvin Sr., Nancy J. Wrigley: Town Administrator and Diane M. Morin: Selectmen's Secretary. Excused this evening was Selectman Lisa L. Gonyer. The meeting was videotaped, and the minutes transcribed and typed by Secretary Morin.

As Chairman of the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Newton NH, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe or listen contemporaneously to this meeting which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are: Utilizing Zoom Conference Call for this electronic meeting.

All members of the Board have the ability to communicate during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone #646 876 9923. Meeting ID number is 9040457732. Or using the link provided here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9040457732>

We previously gave the notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the conference call via phone.

If anyone has a problem, please email BOSSecretary@newtonnh.net. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Chairman Burrill read the following:

The Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 beginning at 7:00pm via Zoom Conference Call for the following. To take public input on the DOT's proposed options to improve the intersection at State Route 108/Amesbury Road/Maple Avenue. Please see the Town's website for links to the video where the DOT reviewed the 2 options at their public meeting that was held on August 13, 2020.

The Board of Selectmen will make a recommendation to the DOT upon conclusion of the public hearing.

Chairman Burrill explained that the purpose of this public hearing is to gather input from residents. He stated that the Board can make a recommendation to the DOT, but they do not have to follow it. Ultimately the decision is the DOT's.

Secretary Morin addressed the Board. She stated that her preference was a 4-way stop with the possibility of having traffic lights installed in the future if needed.

Selectman Melvin is in favor of a 4-way with traffic lights. He stated that it is less expensive than a rotary.

Selectman Michaels would be in favor of a rotary. This type of intersection is quieter, pedestrian friendly, safe and produces less pollution. It would be a high end option.

Selectman Foote prefers the 4-way stop option.

Mr. Robert Dezmelyk addressed the Board. He provided his opinion on how the current traffic flows through the intersection. He stated that the intersection should be re-configured to be a true 4-way stop. He would prefer the rotary as a better solution.

Selectman Michaels stated that the option is a roundabout which is different than a rotary. A roundabout is designed to slow traffic down whereas a rotary is designed to keep traffic flowing quickly.

Mr. James White stated that in his experience a roundabout is just as confusing. He would recommend the 4-way stop.

Mrs. McCarthy as a member of the Conservation Commission stated the Commission concern was for the impact on the wetlands. The DOT addressed the concerns and will be fixing the culvert that runs under Amesbury Road as part of the project. The Commission has no opinion on the 2 options the DOT provided.

Secretary Morin stated that the Town would be responsible for maintaining the berm in the roundabout. Mr. Pivero stated that currently the Town does not need to maintain the road. He is concerned that a roundabout would need more maintenance. He did not provide a definitive answer on which option he would recommend because of the uncertainty of maintenance that the Town would be responsible for.

Selectman Michaels asked what the maintenance would be for a 4-way stop. Mr. Pivero stated that maintenance would be less than a roundabout. The Town would be responsible for line painting.

Mr. Ron Skovron addressed the Board. He is concerned that the southwest corner of the intersection be re-forested to eliminate the effects from lights. The telephone pole in the middle of Goulds Hill Road should be moved and the entrance to Goulds Hill Road be narrowed. His other concern was what the lighting would be and signage for the intersection. Chairman Burrill stated that those questions would be best answered by the DOT.

Chief Jewett stated that any improvement will help. He has concerns with the 4-way stop signs in that the speeds are higher if drivers do not stop. The impact would be more direct versus the roundabout where the impact is not direct. In his opinion, the roundabout is a safer option.

Selectman Michaels would like to verify the maintenance would be the responsibility of the Town for a roundabout. She reviewed accident statistics for both options.

Chairman Burrill stated that the Board will be sending a letter to DOT with the recommendation from the Town. The DOT does not need to heed the recommendations the Town provided.

Selectman Melvin moved that we do a 4-way stop with traffic lights and signs informing drivers of the traffic light. Seconded by Selectman Foote for discussion.

Selectman Michaels stated that traffic lights were not one of the options.

Chairman Burrill stated that he believes Selectman Melvin meant to state that this was a recommendation.

The motion failed. Melvin – aye, Foote – aye. Burrill – nay, Michaels -- nay.

Chairman Burrill moved to recommend to the DOT the 4-way stop option. Seconded by Selectman Foote for discussion.

The motion passed. Burrill – aye, Foote – aye, Melvin – aye. Michaels – nay.

A letter will be sent to the DOT with a copy of the minutes stating the outcome of the public hearing.

Chairman Burrill closed the public hearing at 7:38pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Morin
Board of Selectmen Secretary