



**BOXBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD**  
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James Faulkner, Chairman   Eduardo Pontoriero, Clerk   Nancy Fillmore   John Markiewicz   Owen Neville

**Meeting Minutes**

**August 4, 2014**

**7:30 PM**

**Morse-Hilberg Room, Town Hall, 29 Middle Road**

Members present:

James Faulkner, Chair  
Eduardo Pontoriero, Clerk  
Nancy Fillmore, Member  
John Markiewicz, Member  
Owen Neville, Member  
Adam Duchesneau, Town Planner

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

**Meeting Minutes of July 21, 2014**

Mr. Pontoriero noted that the draft minutes indicated the Planning Board was suggesting the Town should simply move forward with the double span bridge option for the crossing of Guggins Brook if MassDOT action would not be immediate to repair the failing culvert on Route 111. Mr. Faulkner stated that no final decision had been made regarding this particular aspect of the project. Mr. Markiewicz suggested that perhaps the sentence should be reworded to state “the Town should consider moving forward...” or something to that effect. Mr. Pontoriero asked why the Town would be liable for the culvert if MassDOT is responsible for its maintenance. Mr. Markiewicz explained the situation that was discussed at the last meeting regarding the culvert. He noted that Places Associates, Inc. stated that MassDOT would require the Town to take full responsibility for the culvert should the Town decide to extend the culvert to create an adjacent pedestrian walkway over Guggins Brook.

Mr. Pontoriero stated that he felt two actions should be taken. First, the Town or Planning Board should get a professional opinion regarding the structural soundness of the culvert and then contact MassDOT with this supporting information, encouraging them to fix the problem. Second, if MassDOT will fix the culvert properly, the Planning Board should evaluate which of the two pedestrian crossing scenarios is the best option. Mr. Faulkner asked Mr. Duchesneau to adjust the wording in the meeting minutes which he did to indicate the Town “should consider a suitable alternative for a crossing....” Wording which all members of the Planning Board agreed too.

Ms. Fillmore then MADE a MOTION to approve the minutes of July 21, 2014 as amended. Mr. Markiewicz SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor.

**Route 111 Sidewalk Project – Next Steps Discussion**

Mr. Faulkner indicated that it may be a good idea to get political support to pressure MassDOT into repairing the failing culvert across Guggins Brook. He suggested that perhaps the Town

should hire a structural engineer and have a formal report completed to show that the culvert is in poor condition. Mr. Markiewicz stated that he would prefer to put the onus of repairing the culvert onto the State. He suggested that perhaps the Planning Board could work with Places Associates, Inc. to get additional information about the status of the culvert and then provide a letter from the Planning Board, perhaps in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen, reaching out to the Town's state legislators for assistance with the matter. Mr. Markiewicz went on to note that the letter should highlight the fact that the failing culvert is a serious safety hazard, especially for the school children who travel across it daily. At a minimum, perhaps the letter and political pressure could force MassDOT to provide a detailed status report regarding the culvert's stability. Mr. Markiewicz suggested that perhaps even the Department of Public Works could provide further information about the poor/failing status of the culvert. Mr. Duchesneau indicated he would find out if Places Associates, Inc. could in fact provide an engineering statement that could be used in the proposed letter.

Mr. Neville stated that State Senator James Eldridge and State Representative Jennifer Benson should be cc'd on the letter as well. Mr. Markiewicz agreed and noted that the Town and Planning Board were not getting the state legislators as involved as they should be at this point. Mr. Pontoriero agreed, but asked how the Town could ensure that they get an appropriate response from the legislators. Mr. Markiewicz noted that Representative Benson often has meetings out in Boxborough and the Town or Planning Board could also push for a meeting in-person with some of each legislator's staff. Mr. Faulkner agreed and felt that the Planning Board should attempt to coordinate an in-person meeting. Mr. Markiewicz stated that he supported the approach of gathering political support and writing a letter as opposed to hiring an engineering consultant to perform a study of the culvert.

Mr. Faulkner pointed out that Bill Murray from Places Associates, Inc. was clear that the Town would need to be prepared with information about the culvert to put into the letter and to emphasize the safety hazard that the existing culvert has created. Mr. Markiewicz agreed and noted that it is not just a safety hazard for those traveling directly over the culvert, but if the culvert collapsed it could also delay emergency response times for Boxborough's Police and Fire Departments which are just down the road. Mr. Pontoriero felt that someone with some type of engineering background should speak to the status of the culvert. Mr. Faulkner stated that the Planning Board should start with a letter and go from there, and also noted that this could be a twenty year project for MassDOT.

Mr. Neville indicated that he thought it was very odd that the Town would have to assume responsibility for the entire culvert if they extended it to create a pedestrian walkway over Guggins Brook. He noted that there was a sidewalk crossing over a brook in the Town of Acton on Route 27 which appears to be a similar situation where the sidewalk uses an existing culvert to make the crossing. Mr. Neville stated that the Planning Board should find out how this sidewalk crossing was able to be installed because he felt the Town of Acton would not want to take on the responsibility of that entire culvert either. Mr. Duchesneau indicated that he would reach out to the Acton Sidewalk Committee in an attempt to find out more information about this crossing.

### **Review of Draft MassWorks Grant Application Materials for the Route 111 Sidewalk Project**

Mr. Duchesneau explained the grant program and recapped the details of the application process. He noted that the Town would be requesting \$1,000,000 and that there is no funding match required by the Town. Members of the Planning Board then asked questions about the draft application. Mr. Markiewicz stated that he wanted Section 4.10 to indicate that YES, the project is expected to support future growth. In particular he noted how this sidewalk extension could help bring in new commercial businesses to the area, specifically in the shopping plaza where there are currently a few vacancies. Mr. Markiewicz continued on to note that the point of this response is to attempt to leverage positive elements of the application beyond the safety aspects. Mr. Pontoriero asked Mr. Duchesneau to please take another look at the proposed project budget for the design and engineering costs as it seemed rather high. Mr. Pontoriero wanted verification that the \$500,000 amount was accurate because it seems to be somewhat out of scale with the proposed construction budget. He also asked if the sidewalk was consistent with the Master Plan and Mr. Neville indicated that it was. Mr. Pontoriero then asked if the public meeting question of the application had been met and Mr. Duchesneau indicated that it had been by the numerous meetings the Planning Board had held regarding the project.

Mr. Pontoriero asked if being designated a Green Community would have been helpful to the application. Mr. Duchesneau stated that it would be helpful, but the Town not being designated would likely not hurt the application either. Mr. Markiewicz noted that the payback on solar panels in Boxborough takes much longer than on properties in neighboring Acton. Mr. Neville stated that there are components of the Building Code that already incorporate some of the Green Community designation items. He also noted that the Town's Energy Committee had looked into the Green Community designation about four or five years ago and decided against pursuing it. Mr. Faulkner stated that Littleton Electric Light and Water is trying to incorporate the ability to accept energy production back into their own grid.

Mr. Faulkner stated that he thought Places Associates, Inc. had no budget left to assist with the MassWorks Grant Application or do any further work in examining the sidewalk project. Mr. Duchesneau indicated there were still some funds available for a little assistance, but not enough money to do an extensive analysis of the Guggins Brook crossing. It was noted that a full engineering study of the culvert across Guggins Brook would cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

Mr. Markiewicz also had several suggestions for the draft Letter of Support from the Planning Board for the MassWorks Grant Application. He felt that the language should be reworked so that the person reading it takes notice of the safety issues that currently exist along this particular stretch of Route 111. Mr. Markiewicz pointed out that this project is attempting to increase safety for both the pedestrians and drivers who use the roadway and suggested some stronger themes should be used to help the request stand out as to why this project needs to be funded. He also felt that State Senator James Eldridge and State Representative Jennifer Benson should be cc'd on the Letter of Support to inform a reader who else received the letter. Mr. Markiewicz stated that the letter should also inform the reader that the Planning Board has been working very diligently on this project with a number of different groups, including MassDOT, since as far back as 2002. Mr. Markiewicz also felt that the letter should be addressed to someone specific if at all possible. Mr. Duchesneau indicated that he could address the letter to the Director of the MassWorks Infrastructure Program.

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

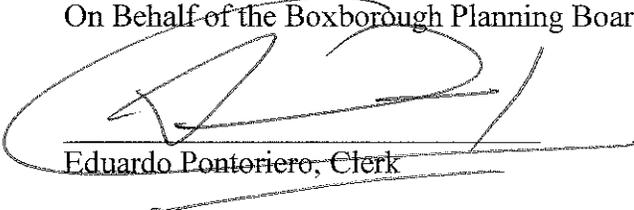
August 4, 2014

Page 4 of 4

Mr. Markiewicz stated that he will do his best to provide additional suggestions and comments on the next draft of the Letter of Support. The completed MassWorks Grant Application and Letter of Support need to be submitted to the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development by August 29, 2014.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM on a MOTION by Mr. Markiewicz, SECONDED by Mr. Pontoriero, with all members voting in favor.

On Behalf of the Boxborough Planning Board



Eduardo Pontoriero, Clerk