

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 3, 2003

A meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee was held on Wednesday, September 3, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber

Chairman Brian S. McCarthy presided.

Members of the Committee present: Alderman Scott A. Cote, Vice Chair
Alderman Timothy B. Nickerson
Alderman Lori Cardin
Alderman Kevin McAfee

Also in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large David W. Deane
Alderman-at-Large Paula I. Johnson
Alderman Robert A. Dion
Todd Landry, Traffic Superintendent
Mike Lowe, Planning Board Liaison

COMMUNICATIONS – None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – ORDINANCES

O-03-195

Endorsers: Mayor Bernard A. Streeter
Alderman Timothy B. Nickerson
Alderman-at-Large David Rootovich
Alderman-at-Large Steven A. Bolton
Alderman Marc W. Plamondon
Alderman Brian S. McCarthy
Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner

AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE BY DELETING A STIPULATION
THAT
RESTRICTS ACCESS FROM TINKER ROAD TO LAND ZONED PI BY O-84-
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MOTION BY ALDERMAN COTE TO HOLD IN COMMITTEE PENDING A

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE NASHUA CITY PLANNING BOARD

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Cote

I believe we are waiting for a recommendation from the Nashua City Planning Board. Our traditional process is normally to hold until we have a recommendation. Is there any issue with that?

Alderman Nickerson

We do have Mr. Landry here who at the last public meeting or neighborhood meeting where this was discussed there was a comment about some traffic counts, and he does have data concerning those traffic counts. I am not sure if you want to have him go over them at this point.

Chair McCarthy

I would like to do that actually. Mr. Landry do you care to join us?

Todd Landry

After the last meeting I asked the Regional Planning Commission to put out some traffic counters for us and they also did some turning movement counts in the area. They put out some counters at 6 different locations one being the access road and one being north and south of the access road as well as one on White Oak, one on Thornton Road, and one on Tinker Road at the Merrimack town line. I have copies here if anybody would like a copy. Maybe that would be the best thing to do before I go over it so that it makes a little more sense to people (handout on file with City Clerk).

The cover sheet that you have before you shows you two dates one being August 7th, which is a date before the road was closed, and then also on August 14th, which shows you a date after the road was closed. The number after the date shows you the number of vehicles that were counted (VPD is vehicles per day). As you can see if you look down towards the bottom on the access road itself August 7th we had 2,151 vpd on the access road. That was roughly the same amount we had when it had been counted about 6 months ago of 2,200 vpd. If you look both north and south of the access road on Tinker Road – north of the access road you see a drop of just over 1,000 vehicles per day with the road closed. Basically you went from 4,479 down to 3,466. If you look just south of the access road of Tinker Road there was virtually very little change – there was a drop of 181, which is really insignificant. You really saw the major drop north of the access road, which is primarily traffic that was using the road I assume.

If you look over on White Oak Road as you notice August 7th we had 1,407, August 14th 1,297. There was a drop of a little over 100 vehicles per day, which likely was again people that were using White Oak as a cut through to get over to the access road. The magnitude there is

roughly 110. If you look over at the Merrimack town line we had a drop of 379. If you look at Thornton Road we had an increase of 398. I am not sure how to explain that one except that traffic that used to go Tinker Road to use the access road now is using Thornton Road to Amherst Street. In a nutshell that is a brief summary of the 24-hour count machines that were put out there. On the next few sheets you will see some actually turning movement counts, which were done by hand during the peak hours. You see a very similar pattern it is just that you actually see how many turned left, how many went straight and that sort of thing. It is the same basic pattern as the ATR showed.

One other thing on the front cover sheet – if you noticed I put some handwritten numbers on there. I also asked the Regional Planning Commission to do a projection using their regional traffic model. Their model is based on a future year of 2025 and they modeled it assuming that the Tinker Road in Merrimack would be upgraded from the existing 25 mph to a 30 mph design speed. You do see a significant increase in the amount of traffic on both Tinker Road and the access road. I just wanted to let people be aware that if we do open this road and design it to standards the model is showing a significant increase in traffic both on the access road as well as Tinker Road. I just wanted to make that point clear. That is all I have.

Mike Lowe

Is there any way of telling how many of those vehicles are trucks?

Todd Landry

No. They did not do a classification study. We have no way of knowing.

Alderman Nickerson

Not to reiterate what many of the members of the public have said, but obviously the closure of this road has a whole bunch of side affects with the increased traffic down by Pennichuck, the increased traffic on White Oak and so forth. Certainly there are things that need to be addressed if there were to end up being opened and even with the passage of this this certainly doesn't open it right away – there is the other portion that is being worked on at the moment, which is the negotiations with the United States Postal Service to deal with that land acquisition. If this were to pass it certainly wouldn't just be opened tomorrow or even once the legislation itself is passed. Certainly the side affects need to be addressed and they will be if this does actually pass.

Another thing that I wanted to mention is the issue that Mr. Burgess had brought up about having our city staff look at a piece of property that is not ours yet. The things that certainly follows through with any of the projects that we do whether we look at acquiring land or what have you we do some studies to determine what the current site is like and so forth so I certainly think it is consistent with the practice that we follow that we like to know what we are getting before we actually get it. The amount of work that has been done on this access road area certainly hasn't been extensive. I agree that the amount of money that is being spent here could

– or that could potentially be spent is certainly something that could be spent on road improvements, and as he had stated there certainly have been some issues with lack of road improvements in the past and I certainly agree with you. That has been under-funded over the last several years. I hope it will be addressed. There certainly are some issues that would come up as a result of this and I assure the residents that those will be addressed if this were to go forward. It is certainly something that we are keeping in our minds as this goes forward.

Chair McCarthy

Mr. Landry do we have an idea of what we might do about traffic on White Oak Drive?

Todd Landry

One resident called me and she had an idea. She wanted to actually close off White Oak Road at the intersection of Tinker Road, which was kind of a radical idea, but it certainly would prevent cut through. There probably are other ideas we could investigate such as speed humps and that sort thing like we have done on Mid Dunstable or other areas of the city. Certainly I think the neighborhood should maybe get together and brainstorm – I can certainly provide any guidance they need and maybe come up with some ideas as to what they think would be something they could live with in the neighborhood – maybe speed humps or that sort of thing would prevent cut through or speeding.

Alderman Nickerson

To somewhat address that I have had a couple of discussions with a resident in the area that lives on White Oak who has been somewhat the liaison to this issue or to city staff and I believe it is probably the same person that Mr. Landry had spoken to. I actually had a conversation with her on the way home this evening so we certainly are – I did mention some possibilities such as the speed humps or what have you. What we may want to do is also have a neighborhood meeting there to discuss some of the issues and some different possibilities. There really has not been a firm consensus at least my understanding is there hasn't been a firm consensus of the residents as to what they wanted to see on that road, but it is certainly worth it for us to have a meeting out there to try to look at that.

Alderman Johnson

May I ask Mr. Landry a question through the Chair?

Chair McCarthy

Please.

Alderman Johnson

How far have we gone into taking a look at what we could possibly do out there at this juncture?

Todd Landry

Just for clarification do you mean about the access road or are we talking about White Oak Road?

Alderman Johnson

Yes. First let's start with the access road. What exactly have you determined at this point in time if anything?

Todd Landry

The only thing that we have determined at this point in time is that the land is owned by the U.S. Postal Service and there is a meeting set up next Wednesday with Alderman Nickerson and our Legal Department as well as probably myself and city engineer to discuss how we might acquire the land or purchase the land – so we will negotiate that with the Post Office probably in the form of first of all sending them a letter to see what they are agreeable to and then once we can come to an agreement on the land then we would go through the whole permitting process, we would probably hire an engineering firm to provide some design plans, we would need some funding for that, and then there may be right of way issues and that sort of thing – once we go through that entire process and get all of our city board approvals and that kind of thing we could put a contract out for construction.

Alderman Johnson

Do we have any clue as to what the construction would probably cost us?

Todd Landry

There was a very conceptual estimate done two weeks ago and it is very bare bones, it assumes no turning lanes, no right of way, no design cost and we are estimating probably \$300,000 or maybe a little more than that for construction. Again that does not include other costs.

Alderman Johnson

Now White Oak Road – when this access road was closed we had more cut throughs on this road is that basically what you are saying here?

Todd Landry

We actually saw a decrease when the road was closed – just over 100 vpd.

Alderman Johnson

When we closed down the access road we have less vehicles going through White Oak.

Todd Landry

At least on the northern part where the counter was. Maybe the other end went up a little bit, but based on the data we collected it showed a decrease.

Alderman Johnson

Okay so we closed down the access road so right now we are having less traffic going through White Oak. Are you going to be putting a counter in on the other end to see how they are traveling?

Todd Landry

If that is what I am asked to do I can yes. Basically this is where we are right now. Now we can push in a further direction if --- I think Alderman Nickerson has a good idea of having a neighborhood meeting – maybe that would come out of a neighborhood meeting – getting some additional count information depending on what the neighborhood wants to do.

Alderman Johnson

I guess it is safe to say in some respects that when the road is open we use White Oak more as a cut through to get to the other cut through – the access road that no one is supposed to be on.

Todd Landry

That appears to be what is happening.

Alderman Johnson

When we closed it down we had less traffic on this road now. Thank you.

Mike Lowe

Does anybody know how big a piece of land the Post Office actually owns on the north side of that access road – if it is 10 acres or 15 acres or 3 or 2 acres? That affects the cost of doing this. If it is a large number of acres you are splitting their property, which means that they will want you to pay for the whole piece. I am just asking the question.

Todd Landry

I believe based on the assessing maps that I have been able to locate the actual access road forms the northern boundary of the post office's property. I am not sure if it is the northern edge of the roadway or if it is the centerline, but somewhere along there is the property line between Cornerstone and the Post Office. I am pretty sure the post office owns all of the access road and their northern boundary is the northern edge of that roadway.

Chair McCarthy

There is almost nothing that would be of theirs that would be stranded on the far side of the road if that is the question.

Mike Lowe

That is basically the question. It is a question that has to be asked.

MOTION CARRIED

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NEW BUSINESS - None

HELD IN COMMITTEE

R-03-212

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Steven A. Bolton
Alderman Kevin McAfee

DIRECTING THE MAYOR AND CITY DEPARTMENTS TO TAKE IMMEDIATE
APPROPRIATE
ENFORCEMENT ACTION CONCERNING PROPERTY LOCATED AT 449
AMHERST STREET

O-03-155 (Amended)

Endorser: Alderman Brian S. McCarthy

REVISING THE CRITERIA FOR ENCROACHMENT INTO THE
CONSERVATION
ZONE OF THE WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION DISTRICT

O-03-193

Endorser: Alderman-at-Large Steven A. Bolton

ESTABLISHING A PROCESS FOR REVIEWING CITY DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT
APPROVALS SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

DISCUSSION

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ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN COTE TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was declared adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Alderman Scott A. Cote
Committee Clerk