

**Hampton Beach Area Commission
100 Winnacunnet Road
Hampton, New Hampshire 03842
Selectmen's Meeting Room – Town Hall
Special Meeting – March 26, 2015
5:00 PM**

FINAL NOTES

In Attendance:

John Nyhan, Chairman, Town of Hampton Representative
Fran McMahan, Rockingham Planning Commission
Bill Watson, Vice Chairman-NH Department of Transportation
Michael Housman, Operations Supervisor, DRED (Seacoast
Parks/Recreation)
Chuck Rage, Hampton Beach Village District
Rich Reniere, Hampton Beach Village District
Rick Griffin, Town of Hampton Representative

Excused: Bob Preston, Hampton Chamber of Commerce
Dean Merrill, Citizen at Large

Other: Jason Bachand, Town Planner
Anne Marchand, Secretary

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Nyhan stated that this Special Meeting is an update and discussion of the HBAC Transportation Grant progress and that no motions will be made or votes taken.

HBAC Transportation Grant Progress Report

Present were: William Rose, DOT Project Director, Gordon Levy, VHB, and Dale Abbott, VHB

Mr. Rose reported that the paperwork is complete and VHB has been on board since the end of December working in earnest on the project. The intent was to take the CCSP Grant money in the amount of \$375,000 in 2012 and to update the 50 year Master Plan for Hampton Beach. Conversations were held in 2013 and 2014 and the project was divided into two parts: Updating the Beach Plan, and taking the concepts and bringing them as far as the funding will go for engineering and design.

Mr. Rose stated that he and the VHB consultants are here this evening to provide an update on the work they have engaged in, the on-time completed work products, and coming in within the budget.

Mr. Levy stated that VHB had notice to proceed in December and the existing conditions inventory that has been worked on includes: looking at pedestrian facilities, traffic counts and roadways. He said VHB plans to hit the ground running in May. They want to go through the public session process when people are at the beach and it is planned to engage in extensive public outreach during the summer of 2015. Following which, would be a second public session toward the end of the summer. Following that, VHB will work on producing a document that is the plan and work on implementation of that plan based on consensus and recommendations. He stated they expect to finish the process by the end of this year and the implementation strategy will then be ready for adoption.

He noted that traffic counts were performed in August of 2014 and the existing traffic networks are complete. Also the mapping/inventory of parking, roadways, and bike/pedestrian amenities is 95% complete. VHB is trying to optimize traffic options and increase safety including the safety of the bikes and the pedestrians.

Mr. Levy stated that VHB has met with RPC and they have a handle on existing studies that have been done to date. Data was received on the 2012 parking study which is being updated. He pointed out that private parking lots have not been inventoried and it is planned to integrate those into their study. He also pointed out that parking was not adequately accounted for on northerly part of Ocean Boulevard in the prior study.

The previous study dealt with the bridge to Church Street, the 101 connector, and lettered streets. Mr. Levy said that the RPC is looking at resiliency planning, and VHB needs to understand the issues in order to dovetail with the RPC work.

With regard to the 50-year Plan, Mr. Levy stated that he knows of no other instance that a 50-year Plan has been used and the reasonable planning time is 20 years. Resiliency planning is important in that in 50 years there could be a dramatic change in sea levels, whereas 20 years is potentially more feasible. He stated there is data available to map mean high water, etc.

Mr. Levy stated that RPC has a parking utilization plan, so now, it can be determined whether there is enough parking, is it a utilization issue, or a true demonstrated need for more parking.

Mr. Abbott stated that they will drive the streets locating signs for private parking which can then be reviewed. Mr. Rage pointed out that empty hotels have signs out for parking (private) during the off season.

Mr. Rage also pointed out that, re the bike lanes, a lane goes by his business but not Mr. Griffin's.

Showing an aerial view on the VHB PowerPoint, the bike and pedestrian routes were pointed out and a "shoulder" inventory showed a range from 2 feet to 12 feet.

Mr. Levy stated he could provide VHB files to the Town Planner who may have suggestions in that a lot of information has been captured and any assistance is welcomed if there are more issues to add. Mr. Levy also stated that VHB needs to hear from the community before making assumptions on issues. They have ideas, but there are many options. He also pointed out that during the past hearings on the State Park, they had a good outcome from interested parties. It is important for people to be heard.

With regard to public information and input, there will be a Web Site, Face Book, and Twitter accounts set up. Mr. Levy stated that the exciting part of the Web presence is that VHB has an arrangement with "Mind Mixer" which can be used as a 24-Town Hall. This is not an anonymous sign up and one has to sign in. Questions can be posted and feedback can come in from the public so voices can be heard. There will be

a number of topics. Mr. Nyhan said it would be interesting to get questions/comments from a different perspective such as tourists and visitors, not just people from Hampton.

With regard to scheduling, Mr. Levy reported the following:
The first public workshop, as a listening session, before Memorial Day;
Web site and other social media before the public workshop;
Mind Mixer will “go live” after the first public outreach meeting;
Second public workshop to present alternatives and priorities for after Labor Day;
Development implementation plan based on consensus priorities.

It was proposed to have the public workshop at the Seashell, perhaps on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday during the week of May 18.
Mr. Levy is deferring to the HBAC to determine a date, time and location.

Mr. Levy reported that Mind Mixer costs \$150.00 per month and VHB is looking at a 6-month period. He also stated that it is hoped that by November/December there will be a plan ready for adoption by the HBAC.

Mr. Rose pointed out that the VHB contract has two parts, and this is only part 1, with part 2 being the engineering and design.

General Summary/ Questions and Discussion.

VHB has a memorandum that outlines roadways in draft form and it is not ready for distribution as yet. Once VHB completes, it will be available to the DOT to accept as a final document. The Memo will be based off work from the existing conditions. The VHB summary memorandum will make crafting the plan document easier.

Are the relative sections of the Master Plan to be studied on target and should items be taken out? Mr. Levy said the intent is to wholly replace the transportation element of the Master Plan which would require adoption. Mr. Rose noted the bulk of the effort is on transportation, but lots of conversation bleeds over to other topics.

VHB has read the Master Plan and it is not in their scope to go through and revise every reference.

It was suggested the Route 101 – Route 1 interchange be acknowledged. VHB stated this is a regional aspect that plays into the transit portion. It was questioned if there should be public transportation at the beach. It was pointed out that pilot programs involving public transportation have not worked well.

VHB commented on the parking situation and whether there is adequate parking which is not being utilized well. A trolley system would make great sense. This may be something the Town or HBVD would fund.

There are days when there is a good amount of parking available, others not enough. There are convenience issues with people wanting to find the closest parking spaces. The idea of having a trolley or some type of transportation (people movers) would work.

What is the impact on plans etc. that are not taking place today, but will take place possibly tomorrow; i.e. the Warrant Article of the HBVD to buy property to provide a parking lot for 75 cars? As the HBAC becomes aware of these types of things, DOT and VHB will be notified.

One must be sensitive to the definition of the Hampton Beach area and people have a tendency to forget it goes north to Plaice Cove, North Beach, etc. This area from Church Street to North Shore Road has a variety of different parking options. It was pointed out this area is included in the Master Plan. VHB stated this is a significant expansion of what was originally in the Plan. Also, 90% of the parking issue is that people do not know where parking is available.

It was also pointed out that when there were private beach buggies, they went from High Street to the Casino, never to the State Park.

Mr. Levy said that this is a complex issue and he has observed a significant amount of traffic, sightseeing, etc., with others in a hurry to get somewhere. One issue is the congestion and people becoming frustrated. There is an issue of people staying away because of the congestion. One-way roadways were mentioned as well as a third lane. Mr. Rage noted that three lanes would work in that there would be a lane getting people on and off the beach which would eliminate a huge bottleneck. Mr. Levy stated that if both sides of Ashworth were widened, this would take parking away and will not solve the problem.

Mr. Griffin stated that Ashworth Ave was made wider because there was talk that the Town would switch with the State and the State would take over Ashworth Avenue and the Town could take the other area. This did not happen as people were in opposition and voted against the proposal.

Mr. Nyhan asked if the Web Site will be done by mid-April and whether the HBAC can review before it is finalized. Mr. Rose said someone would come in and sit with the Commission. Further, that everything that happens in the project will come before the HBAC for review.

Mr. Reinere asked how it is planned to let people know about the Web Site and workshop. Mr. Rose stated that information on the Web Site and workshop can be through the press, word of mouth and news media. There are ways to get the word to people and the HBAC will play a part. Mr. Nyhan asked if there is a marketing budget for a workshop. Mr. Rose will provide that information to Mr. Nyhan.

Mr. McMahon stated that stormwater management is an issue that keeps recurring and questioned if Ocean Boulevard is improved, what will happen to the water. This would be an engineering question. Mr. Levy stated there are policy statements which are important and one can talk about complete streets, the issue of infiltration of stormwater which should be a discussion topic, but VHB cannot address this nor adopt policy. Mr. Levy also pointed out that Seabrook has adopted new stormwater regulations.

Mr. Levy also noted there has to be 24 inches of asphalt on Ocean Boulevard, which is an issue that needs discussion between DOT and the Town. Further, the issue that, if there is a sidewalk, the State wants the Town to take responsibility. Mr. Levy also noted that DOT has a Memorandum of Agreement with DES which may be a Catch 22 situation.

Mr. Bachand stated he is impressed with the marketing plan, which will encourage better attendance at the Public Hearings. Mr. Nyhan stated that RPC is completing their Scenic Byway Plan and there are a number of references relating to transportation.

Mr. Nyhan thanked Mr. Rose, Mr. Levy, and Mr. Abbott on behalf of the HBAC for their presentation.

The meeting closed at 6:30 p.m. No motions were made or votes taken.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Marchand, Secretary

