

**GREATER DOWNTOWN TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT
ADVISORY BOARD**

October 21, 2008

Buffet Room

Intermezzo Restaurant

MINUTES

Members Present: Chairman Cyrus Gregg, Rick Monahan, Peter Robinson, and Selectmen's Liaison Barbara Miller.

Also Present: Office of Community Development Director Carol Ogilvie, Administrative Assistant Laura Norton and Public Works Director Rodney Bartlett.

Merchants/General Attendance:

Chief Joe Lenox, Bob Edwards, Peter and Ann Harrison, Norm Makechnie, Karen Peterson, Kerry Peters, Bob Taft, Pamela Gleeson, Richard Fernald, Shelley Osborne, Michaela Chelminski, Hope Taylor, Pam Brenner, Ken Christian, Laura and Steve Mahoney, Chief Scott Guinard, Duffy Monahan, Joe Byk, Fash Farashahi, Georgia and Tony Scaringe, Richard Estes, Jack Burnett, Pam Crook, and Brian Clogston.

Ms. Ogilvie welcomed the group to the Greater Downtown Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Advisory Board Meeting at 8:10 a.m. The Board members were introduced and a special thank you went out to Georgia, Tony, Gerardo and Kate of Intermezzo Restaurant for their hospitality.

Ms. Ogilvie then gave a brief Powerpoint presentation of what a TIF District is. In doing so she reviewed why TIFs are created, how they are authorized, and the dedicated plans associated with them. She noted three TIF Districts in Peterborough: the Greater Downtown TIF, the West Peterborough TIF and the Monadnock Hospital Healthcare TIF.

Ms. Ogilvie showed the audience some examples of the improvement projects funded by the TIF funds. She explained that TIF funds were revenue-based and depended on new development projects. She also noted that after the restoration/renovation of Depot Square, "there has been very little activity downtown" resulting in the limited revenues in the District. She cited the sidewalk and crosswalk projects in the downtown area that had been paid for by TIF funds and that the balance in the fund was about \$19,000.00. Ms. Ogilvie acknowledged "that is not a huge amount of money but it will be used for public information, downtown outreach and awareness."

Ms. Ogilvie then introduced Rodney Bartlett, Director of Public Works for the Town of Peterborough. Mr. Bartlett reviewed the low-impact storm water drainage system that had been installed over the summer. He pointed out the new rain gardens in the Office of Community Development area of the Town House and explained how the new gardens help to recharge the groundwater system by infiltrating storm water back into the ground. He reviewed the cost of the

project (approximately \$176,000.00) and how the Town was expecting a reimbursement check of \$104,000.00 for the project. He went on to show pictures of the rain garden by the Gazebo in Depot Park and the porous paver strips in the public parking lot. He also explained the new leaching catch basins on School and Depot Streets and how they no longer had standing water in them, reducing the breeding grounds for mosquitoes and the potential for threats of West Nile Virus or Eastern Equine Encephalitis.

Mr. Bartlett then spoke about the Main Street Bridge, retaining wall and sidewalk project slated for 2011. He told the audience of his commitment to raise the importance of this in the Governor's Office and that the project "is a municipality managed project. We are the lead agency" he said. Mr. Bartlett reviewed a tentative schedule adding "there is no easy way to do these projects as stand alones" and "the best way to address them from a construction angle is to do them jointly."

Mr. Bartlett then reviewed the Content Sensitive Solutions approach that would be used for the project. He noted the use of the technique throughout the West Peterborough re-design project, that it is endorsed by NH DOT, and that "it starts with engaging the public and identifying the problems and concerns of a project before a design is devised." He added "that is difficult for engineers to do; they typically design a project without asking or knowing about the area." Mr. Bartlett went on to note that "we want to identify what is important to the residents of Downtown, in this case, the merchants.

Mr. Bartlett than generally covered the time frames involved with the tentative schedule adding "I expect we will be conducting public meetings throughout 2009." He stated he hoped the conceptual design for the repair of the bridge and the reconstruction of the retaining wall would be bid in 2010 "and construction would be completed in 2011. He acknowledged the construction was sure to impact the downtown merchants and said "that is why CCS is so important." He pointed out informational internet links, information sources on the town's website, and e-mails addresses for himself and Ms. Ogilvie.

Mr. Bartlett reiterated the downtown TIF District included the downtown out to the Peterborough Plaza at the intersections of Route 101 and 202. He also reiterated "the Main Street Bridge is a gateway to the downtown and defining the impact that the construction will have on your customers is a very important thing to address." Mr. Bartlett then added "we currently have no detour plan, we are not sure if the road will be open or closed, we are not sure of the width of traffic lanes or where we send traffic (pertaining to Old Street Road and Summer Street), and we have no design yet."

Mr. Bartlett reviewed the timeline for construction and the online services once again. He told the group the Main Street Bridge was "red listed" by the State and explained that meant while the bridge is safe to travel now "it is in danger of failure at some point and it needs to be fixed before an emergency or even a catastrophe."

Mr. Bartlett then opened the meeting to questions from the audience. Many merchants responded with questions about pedestrian traffic over the bridge during construction, the potential for a temporary bridge, and the demand for at least one lane of traffic moving during construction.

Mr. Bartlett reiterated that “it is highly unlikely” that there would be a temporary bridge constructed, or that the bridge traffic would be closed for any significant period of time. He reminded the group “the bridge is too important a link for fire and emergency services as well as transportation issues to have it closed.”

Other questions involved the work schedule and whether or not the construction would go on through the winter, and whether or not any thought had been given to widening the bridge. Mr. Bartlett reviewed the projected work schedule and talked about ideas that included moving the sidewalk to the outside of the bridge in an effort to widen the lanes. He noted that “any widening on Concord or Pine Streets “is toward the river.” He added “it all depends on what the technical solutions tell us and our ability to implement them.”

A brief discussion about traffic calming and accommodating larger tractor trailer units followed. One audience member asked about a traffic signal at the intersection noting there was “no room” for a roundabout at that location. Mr. Bartlett noted the potential for both a three-way stop and a traffic signal at the intersection adding “we are looking at what ever makes this intersection safe.”

Another audience member asked about the integrity of the wall behind the Library. Mr. Bartlett replied that it would be “looked at, as the structure of the bridge ties into the wall.” Mr. Bartlett then explained how a chemical reaction was occurring in bridges rebuilt after the 1938 hurricane that breaks down the concrete “and moisture gets into the rebar, causing it to rust, crack and expand.” Mr. Bartlett noted “they (the bridges) are headed down the same unfortunate road.”

A brief discussion about infiltrating concrete so as not to remove the cobble wall followed. Mr. Bartlett explained the measures needed to stabilize the wall “runs the gambit as it is all connected and it will depend,” he added “how all the small details come together will dictate how things turn out.” Mr. Bartlett also took a moment to describe the uniqueness of the Main Street Bridge (with the radius of the west side differing from the radius of the east side) and how that makes it eligible for recognition on the National Historic Register.

A member of the audience asked how the Contact Sensitive Solutions approach would be facilitated with Mr. Bartlett replying “the key is today, the public notice part and the long term effort to get public input, assimilate the information and come up with conceptals.”

Mr. Bartlett once again reviewed the projected schedule of the reconstruction noting “the funding does not stay there forever, we must stay on schedule.”

A brief discussion about the traffic options followed with ideas of how to keep the traffic levels flowing through the construction period. Mr. Bartlett remarked “you will have to educate your customers that the downtown is open, available and accessible for business.” He added “it has to be a very comprehensive approach; there is no one single solution here.”

A very brief discussion about the number of workmen as well as their needs followed. It was determined that at any time there would be 10 to 20 (possibly 30) workers involved in the project. It was noted that parking for their vehicles as well as material and equipment storage

would have to be identified. One member said “there will need to be a lot of planning, that is a lot of impact.”

A member of the audience warned about being weary of “slick” engineers that do not necessarily subscribe to the Contact Sensitive Solutions approach while another member inquired about the overall plan for dealing with the utilities (overhead wires and telephone poles) with a brief discussion following.

Mr. Bartlett thanked the merchants for attending. He reiterated that the public meetings would be an integral part of the process and reminded the group of the technical considerations posed by the project stating “this is the reason is (the bridge) has not been fixed before, it is because it is *not* an easy fix.”

Ms. Miller pointed out the graphics and maps used in the presentation were created in-house by the GIS/mapping specialist. She noted the professional quality of the work and how helpful the contribution was to the overall presentation.

Many of the members of the audience thanked Mr. Bartlett and Ms. Ogilvie for a very clear presentation. The meeting ended at 9:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant