JOINT MEETING OF

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

AND

THE GREATER DOWNTOWN TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD

September 21, 2010

MINUTES

EDA and GDTIF Members Present: Hope Taylor, Rick Monahon, Craig Hicks, Jack Burnett, Peter Robinson and Susan Phillips-Hungerford.

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

EDA Chairman Craig Hicks (Mr. Hicks) called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and noted the purpose of the meeting this morning was to get an update from DPW Director Rodney Bartlett on the Main Street Bridge project. Mr. Bartlett began by reviewing the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen to the NH DOT. He noted the plan chosen "will create a bridge that is a mirror of what is out there today." He reviewed the phased approach to construction that would keep two lanes of traffic open on a consistent basis during construction and the modified oval roadway concept that was projected to improve traffic flow and reduce air emissions.

Mr. Bartlett went on to note "and then Peter (Robinson) presented his concept to the Select Board." Mr. Bartlett briefly reviewed Mr. Robinson's idea to place a temporary bridge north of the current bridge (between the Jack Daniels Motor Inn and the Strand Building) as an access to the Downtown while the Main Street Bridge was being constructed. He noted "Peter's idea would allow us to close the Main Street Bridge completely; there would be no traffic through the job site." He added "this should reduce the time and the cost of construction." It was noted the potential location of the temporary bridge would be approximately 6/10s of a mile further north.

A brief discussion about the actual and potential sites for a crossing that included impacts to wetlands, the width of the river and the taking of land followed. It was noted the cost of the temporary bridge would come at a cost of 1.25 to 1.3 million dollars and that 80% of that cost would be paid by the state "as long as it is a temporary bridge." Mr. Hicks interjected "that is before you have to buy a piece of property right?" with Mr. Robinson replying "yes." Mr. Bartlett added "the 1.3 million is a conservative number; we would rather see that number go down than up. I think it is safe to say that number may include the purchase of a property, it is a reasonable number. "

Ms. Ogilvie projected a graphic of Concord Street and the members spent some time reviewing several different potential sites for a crossing, eventually coming to the conclusion that the best

potential location was the Strand Building/Peterborough Paint & Decorating store area, in part because a curb cut and paved driveway was already in place.

One member asked "why a temporary bridge?" with Mr. Bartlett replying "202 is a limited access highway, we would need to go through state, federal and eventually Governor and Council to get a permanent bridge." He added "approval is a much easier process *because* the bridge would be temporary." Mr. Bartlett also affirmed the temporary bridge would be a "regular 2-lane, legal load bridge." Mr. Robinson interjected that his original recommendation was for a permanent bridge "but there is not any money for that." A very brief discussion of the fate of the temporary bridge once construction was over followed with some in favor of keeping the structure as a pedestrian/bicycle pathway crossing the river. Mr. Monahon noted "a Bailey bridge goes in and when it is taken out you are left with two abutments, this may be the foundation of a river walkway." Mr. Bartlett reiterated "the key, no matter what, is to keep the Downtown vibrant while this happens. Access to Downtown is the number one consideration." He added "so holding that in the fore-front, the north crossing bridge may be too far away for some to come Downtown."

A brief discussion about the fate of the Downtown followed. Mr. Bartlett noted "every discussion, every meeting, the merchants have told us access was the key consideration" adding "I don't want to get away from that consideration."

Ms. Phillips-Hungerford suggested thinking about the growth and density of the Downtown "*and* its limits." Mr. Robinson noted the potential for residential in the Downtown, adding he was planning on living above his Main Street store.

Mr. Hicks spoke briefly about the recent sale of a large portion of land in the General Residence District and the potential of creating a new TIF District but added "how far is too far?"

Mr. Robinson reiterated his idea that the temporary bridge would be built prior to the Main Street Bridge construction with no adverse impact to the Downtown. "That also gives us an opportunity to test drive it" he said. Mr. Hicks suggested the traffic on Summer Street might not be as bad as anticipated with the temporary bridge being used by the residents of the North Peterborough neighborhoods as well as those travelling to things like the (Peterborough) Players. The members briefly discussed the psychological impacts of change in general and the "not in my back yard" mentality.

Mr. Hicks noted "Rodney has a lot of homework to do; there are a lot of things going on." The members briefly discussed much of the "legwork" that had been done to date with Mr. Bartlett reiterating "the permitting depends on how much wetland we are getting into." One member mentioned it might be a good idea to eventually approach George Achille, the owner of the Peterborough Paint & Decorating building.

Mr. Robinson reiterated the benefits of cutting the cost and construction time, having the north crossing bridge built with no impact to the Downtown, as well as "not sandwiching the bridge project in between two construction zones." Mr. Robinson also noted patronage from surrounding towns, stating that there were five banks in town and not one was servicing just

Peterborough. Mr. Hicks concluded by noting "no matter what we do there is going to be an argument from the groups that will be affected." He went on to note "in a perfect world shutting the darn thing down and yanking it out is the best idea." One member went on to briefly note the near fatal impacts road construction inflicted on the Coll Farm Stand in Jaffrey a few summers ago. Mr. Hicks interjected "that is not the same thing. That is an apples and oranges conversation." Ms. Phillips-Hungerford disagreed noting "you may not know all the roads" with Mr. Hicks replying "well that is what signs are for." A brief conversation about the familiarity of shops and services by out-of-towners followed. Mr. Robinson concluded by noting "even with the temporary bridge, wherever it is located, the Downtown merchants will suffer" he asked "will they suffer for one year or two years?" Mr. Robinson then noted "if they suffer for two years I do not believe some of these businesses will survive."

Mr. Bartlett reviewed the bridge and retaining wall projects and confirmed they would be combined. He told the members "there is no decision on what goes first yet, that depends on how we will repair the retaining wall." He went on to review how the first phase of the new bridge would be in conjunction with the first phase of the new retaining wall. He reviewed the phased construction graphics submitted by Hoyle, Tanner & Associates, Inc.

A brief discussion about the Transcript Dam followed with the general consensus being "we breach it or it breaches itself." Mr. Hicks noted "the value of Downtown is the fact that we store that river" adding "we are going to have to fix it, it creates millions of dollars of value."

Duffy Monahon distributed a handout and gave a brief presentation on behalf of the Heritage Commission. In essence Ms. Monahon told the members that the Heritage Commission was not pleased to see the bridge with the proposed extra width as it would negatively impact the historical gateway of Main, Concord, and Pine Streets. She also noted the Heritage Commission was not in support of creating a round-about or oval at that location because it would visually impact the Library as well as the "historic setting of the brick Federal style building across the street." She noted a 5 to 6 foot retaining wall for the oval would overpower the special relationship between the two buildings.

In conclusion Mr. Robinson asked "so as a group are you *for* or *against* the temporary bridge?" Mr. Robinson went on to say "this is mainly for Rodney's benefit, are you for or against it?" One member asked if a vote was necessary with the others agreeing that the members were for it in the sense that they wanted to learn more about it. Chair Hicks concluded "we do need to learn more but another crossing, absolutely."

The meting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant