

**WEST PETERBOROUGH TAX INCREMENT FINANCE DISTRICT
ADVISORY BOARD**

October 12, 2007

Masonic Hall • Union Street • West Peterborough

MINUTES

Present: Carol Ogilvie, Director and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Fash Farashahi, GIS Specialist, Office of Community Development; Rodney Bartlett, Director, Department of Public Works; Selectman Barbara Miller; James Purdy, Joseph McKeever, Brian Clogston, Timothy Higginson and Lee Lane of the Louis Berger Group, Inc. and Jeffrey Hyland of Ironwood Design Group.

The meeting was scheduled to start with a breakfast at 9:00 p.m. Mr. Bartlett gave the audience time to socialize and eat, welcoming all in attendance at 9:30 a.m. and noting “this is the next step of the journey.” He briefly reviewed the mission of the TIF District and the improvement plans for West Peterborough.

Mr. Bartlett introduced Ms. Ogilvie who thanked the IOOF staff for a delicious meal. Ms. Ogilvie stated the original plan was to walk the sections of the TIF District and perform a Place Audit using Context Sensitive Solutions survey form. Place Audit is an exercise intended to be used as a tool to evaluate how well the streets and adjacent land uses are performing as places, and identify opportunities for enhancing them in the future. She noted the stormy weather outside, adding they were prepared to stay inside and perform this exercise. She emphasized that the group was not bound or limited by the questions contained in the survey form, and that “by using this approach we may even discover other things that should go into the survey.”

Mr. McKeever spoke briefly and reiterated the importance of understanding the process. “There are no plans on the walls, there are no plans for anything yet” he said. He went on to say “there is no pen to paper because we want to hear from you first, your issues and your dislikes. You are driving this process.” Mr. McKeever said his firm was excited about taking “a different approach to a typical infrastructure project, integrating what humans have built and the natural environment, and seeking out input from those living there. He introduced the members of the team from the Louis Berger Group.

Mr. McKeever also introduced Leigh Lane from their North Carolina office as a national leader on Context Sensitive Solutions. Ms. Lane spoke briefly about her background and complimented the TIF District Committee and audience for being courageous enough “to take this on.” She noted that quality of life was at the heart of Context Sensitive Solutions, and that the group would develop transportation solutions in a way that protects, preserves and enhances their quality of life. She stated that “not everyone will always agree 100%, but you will listen to one another, build a consensus, and agree on something.”

She noted that “as members of this community you are the experts. You need to make sure you communicate your needs and interests.” She added “then our job is work with the staff to insure we listen to those values and translate them into infrastructure solutions.”

Jim Purdy introduced himself and explained the Place Audit exercise. He noted he had divided the District into 5 separate sections for the purpose of “mini teams” walking the each section of the District, but because the weather was poor “teams” may not want to go outside. At this point Mr. Bartlett suggested they take on the sections as one neighborhood group. Those sections were defined as Masonic Lodge at Windy Row to Overseers Row, Overseers Row to Union Mill Building, Altemont Street, Union Street Bridge to up Union Street to Legacy Woods and Wilder Street. The group noted they could effectively combine the first two sections as Mr. Purdy handed out evaluation sheets to the residents. Mr. Purdy explained the forms noting a separate evaluation would be done for the new sections of the District. Mr. Purdy noted the forms consisted of four sections, A through D. He went to note that Section A was evaluating the site (District). This included access, linkages, and information, uses and activities, comfort and image, and sociability. Each one of these corresponded to a “disagree to agree” scale of 1 to 4. Section B was Identify the Opportunity of this Place asking the questions:

- What do like best about this place as a whole?
- List a few things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot?
- What 3 changes would you make to this place in the long term that would have the biggest impact?
- What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements?

Section C consisted of personal interviews conducted while on the tour which Mr. Purdy stated could be done with general conversation amongst the group. Section D was a Problem Statement, where after completing the first three sections the group would discussion and reach consensus on a Problem Statement that was short in nature, included problems and needs related to transportation, community and environmental concerns, did not pre-figure solutions and was not mode-specific.

Mr. Purdy proceeded to lead the group through the evaluation of each section of the District, recording their responses numerically.

Many of things the group came up with had been mentioned at prior meetings. The creation of crosswalks, extension of the sidewalks, area lighting, creating bike routes, addressing traffic and parking problems, and improving the streetscapes and safety of pedestrians and bikers were among the issues discussed. Another important factor discussed was the concept of creating a gateway into the neighborhood that would transition drivers leaving a state highway and entering a residential community.

When the exercise was completed it was clear the neighbors liked the idea of being part of the town but somewhat “separate and unique” noting West Peterborough has its own personality as a mill village which is shown in the architecture of brick end homes along Union Street, the

renovation of the Union Mill, and the new business ventures locating in the area. They noted the McDowell Dam, a location to walk, hike, swim, fish, boat, and cook-out that offered a great deal to the area. The residents all seemed to agree the area was also unique in that it was neighborhood surrounded by the woodland and wildlife.

The group briefly discussed short term improvements, with Mr. Bartlett noting “short term goals are easy to achieve, I’d like to hear about the long term goals. Talk about where we want to end up in 15 to 20 years and work our way back from there.” Several of those goals included underground electrical and utility wires, an interconnected trail system with a foot bridge over the river, water system and storm water drainage improvements, and a play space for the children of the District, particularly on Wilder Street. There was a brief discussion of green construction and the use of recycled materials in the upcoming projects as well as alternatives to impervious surface treatments for the road.

It was pointed out that “the people who drive here will need to park.” A short discussion regarding parking issues with Texiera Park, The Union Mill’s café and store and a new brewery ensued. The group talked about pockets of parking along Union Street with Mr. Waitkins noting parking was necessary and “in an odd way street parking is a way to calm traffic.” He noted he would like to see it “done right, and in an acceptable way” with the group agreeing with him.

Mr. Purdy thanked the group for their participation. He stated his team would take the evaluations for the District and review them for the planning stage. He distributed a newsletter the Louis Berger team had created. Ms. Ogilvie noted the next meeting would take the group into the beginning of the planning stage, and was scheduled for Saturday, October 20th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the IOOF Hall in West Peterborough. She added that a Design Workshop meeting would follow, date to be announced. She mentioned the dedicated web site and how to link to it right on the Town’s home page.

Ms. Lane wrapped up the meeting by encouraging the audience to take the information they had gathered back to their friends and neighbors and engage them in the project. “It is very important to get as much input from as many people as we can” she said.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant