

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

September 26, 2007

Upper Hall of the Town House

MINUTES

Members Present: Chairman Jack Burnett, Luc Monzies, Todd Birkebak, and Joyce Caron.

Also Present: Carol Ogilvie, Director and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development; Rodney Bartlett, Director, Department of Public Works; Selectperson Barbara Miller; James Purdy, Joseph McKeever, Timothy Higginson, of the Louis Berger Group, Inc. and Jeffrey Hyland of Ironwood Design Group.

Call to Order:

The meeting was scheduled to be a public diner meeting beginning at 6:00 p.m. Chair Burnett gave the audience about 20 minutes to get their food and sit down and eat. Chair Burnett called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

Statement by Chair:

Chair Burnett introduced himself as the Chairman of the West Peterborough TIF Committee (WPTIF) and thanked everyone for coming. He introduced members of the WPTIF that were in the audience and mentioned Vice Chairman Mose Olenik, and Alternates Shelley Hulbert and Carter Judkins who were not able to attend. Chair Burnett went on to say that he lived in West Peterborough and that the majority of members, in accordance with the provisions of the TIF must be owners or occupants of property in or adjacent to the District. He went on to note that he was also present by statute. He explained the TIF regulations mandate a member of the Economic Development Authority (Jack Burnett) serve as Chairman and a member of the Planning Board (Mose Olenik) serve as Vice Chairman.

Chair Burnett directed the audience's attention to the agenda projected at the front of the hall, noting Ms. Ogilvie would begin with a brief overview of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts.

Ms. Ogilvie presented a PowerPoint presentation of the West Peterborough Tax Increment Finance District Plan. The main points of the presentation included:

What is it? The main point being the District is created for public improvements by new construction, expansion and renovations of properties within a designated part of town.

How does it work? The main point being it captures new tax revenues in the district and that the "captured value" is the difference between the assessed values at the time of the TIF creation and the any increase in those assessed values as time goes on. Ms. Ogilvie also noted that once the public improvement plan is completed and paid for, the TIF District dissolves.

How is it authorized? Ms. Ogilvie explained that the District is authorized by a vote at Town Meeting. She stated that prior to the town vote the Selectmen must hold a public hearing about it.

At the hearing the District border is delineated, the objectives are stated and the public improvement plan is reviewed. She noted that the School District and the County officials are notified of the intent of the TIF plan.

What are the valid public purposes? Ms. Ogilvie noted this includes construction or implementation of safety systems such as sidewalks, road repair and traffic calming measure as well as lighting, landscaping, signage, streetscapes and any other development consistent with the established plan.

How is it administered? Ms. Ogilvie noted a TIF Administrator is appointed and an Advisory Board is established. She reiterated Chair Burnett's earlier comments about the involvement of the EDA and the Planning Board as well as the Office of Community Development.

Ms. Ogilvie noted two other TIF Districts in town, the Greater Downtown TIF and the Monadnock Community Hospital TIF. She presented several slides to show improvements made with TIF revenues, noting the West Peterborough plan "is very ambitious, with many projects," but that a great deal of oversight has been built into the Plan. She went on to briefly review the Finance Plan for the district as well as the plan implementation process. There were no questions and Ms. Ogilvie introduced Rodney Bartlett, Director of Public Works.

Mr. Bartlett reviewed the warrant article from the March 2007 town meeting that appropriated \$170,000.00 for the purpose of preparing plans and specifications for infrastructure improvements within the West Peterborough TIF District. He reiterated that the appropriation was entirely supported by WPTIF funds. He told the audience that with the recent re-assessments in town the revenue has increased to \$236,000.00 a year and he anticipated the revenues to increase to \$407,000.00 a year by Fiscal Year 2011. He stated the majority of the improvements would be between Scott Winn Road and Route 101. Mr. Bartlett then briefly reviewed the TIF Plans that included sidewalk refurbishing and construction, utility and drainage upgrades, street lighting, streetscaping, traffic calming and parking. He also noted the potential for interconnected pathways through Legacy Woods, the MacDowell Reservoir and Nubi River Farm neighborhoods to Texiera Park.

Mr. Bartlett explained that the engineering process had begun and that requests for proposals on the engineering design had gone out. He stated "nine requests for proposals went out and we got four back." He went on to note "all the firms were experienced and qualified but one firm stood out" and the Louis Berger Group had been the successful candidate. Mr. Bartlett explained the "two envelope" bid process and noted the Louis Berger Group was \$20,000.00 under the bid limit of \$170,000.00 making it "definitely a win-win situation."

He noted the estimated cost of the improvements was \$2.5 million. He reviewed the general obligation bond process, and how the TIF would most likely be extended to the life of the bond. He pointed to the revenue projections and explained them. He noted the final figure with everything said and done, was a bond payment of \$236,092.00 a year.

Mr. Bartlett encouraged any questions with a woman in the front row asking him to clarify whether or not the plan was a flexible one specifically asking "can things be added in?" Mr. Bartlett noted the plan is subject to its original objectives as voted on at town meeting but "the objectives are pretty wide." He added "flexibility is important and some modification to the

improvements is a given.” He also noted that the duty of establishing the projects “is an extremely public process, so we know what you want the funds used for.”

There was a brief discussion about the Union Street Bridge. It was explained that the bridge was not part of the current WPTIF project, that reconstruction was scheduled for Fiscal Year 2012 or 2013 and that the town would be responsible for 20% of the cost with the NH DOT Municipal Bridge project covering the 80% difference.

A woman in the audience asked if that was “set and done” meaning, she said, “that the 20% contribution comes solely from the TIF revenue.” She clarified by noting the District would be paying a significant price for a bridge that everyone in town uses.

Chair Burnett stated that the TIF in layman’s terms consists of a certain percentage of area in a town, specifically Scott Winn Road to Route 101, and up Wilder Street in this instance. He noted tax revenue from the district as well as a portion of the School District and County is contributed to this reserve fund. He noted the difference between the Monadnock Community Hospital TIF and the WPTIF in that the Hospital’s TIF is proactive where we are reactive. We had the foresight in 2004 to see the potential and future development, and we are now able to capture the value to build the infrastructure.” He mentioned the Robbe Farm and Legacy Lane neighborhoods, the restoration and inhabitation of the Union Mill and the yet untaxed properties of Nubi River Farm. “We haven’t used the funds to build an infrastructure to cause growth; we waited for growth to happen and captured it. That is how it works.” Chair Burnett then noted the revenue is from taxes on new development and construction and accrues very quickly as it is supplemented by School and County taxes as well.

Al Sisco introduced himself and his wife Rita and asked about the status of the work to be done to a particular section of Old Dublin Road. Mr. Bartlett replied that the road work was in the budget but it had been held up due to the flood damage in April and the Town’s unknown status with FEMA reimbursements. Mr. and Mrs. Sisco appeared to be distraught over the news that they may have to go another winter with no road repairs with Mrs. Sisco stating “my car will never make it.” Mr. Sisco questioned whether or not his road would get attention because he is not in the TIF District; Mr. Bartlett explained that his road will indeed be addressed, but according to a different schedule.

Elizabeth Grayshan asked about the extension of the TIF with Chair Burnett replying the TIF was due to expire in 2010 and that the District would be back to town meeting to request an extension if the bond is approved. Ms. Grayshan then asked how the funds were invested and if they garnered interest. Chair Burnett noted that the funds are treated like all of the town funds and administered by the Finance Department.

Michael Justice asked about an increase in his tax bill given the fact the TIF revenues are to be generated from new development and construction and his house was 100 years old. Chair Burnett mentioned the recent reassessment of property but replied he did not know and the matter would be investigated.

Ed Dill introduced himself and noted some dilapidated buildings in the District. He asked about potential incentive programs that may be offered to assist the property owners with improvements. He added “and those improvements contribute to the fund.” He stated he would like to make improvements “but I cannot do it on my own.” Ms. Ogilvie acknowledged the unique circumstances that some property owners were in and that the WPTIF Administration had in fact been in contact with a banker “who has encouraged us to keep talking about it.” She added they would continue exploring the possibility and “hope to be able to offer something.”

Chair Burnett interjected “these are all good ideas; we are making a record of this and will create a checklist.” He did a quick review of the improvement plan highlights noting safety was the driving force for most of them.

Chair Burnett introduced Joseph McKeever, Vice President of Louis Berger Group. Mr. McKeever in turn introduced his three associates, James Purdy, Principal Transportation Planner and Timothy Higginson, Transportation Engineer of the Louis Berger Group, Inc. and Jeffrey Hyland of Ironwood Design Group. Mr. McKeever then handed the microphone over to Jim Purdy to answer questions from the audience.

Mr. Purdy explained the context sensitive solution or context sensitive design approach the firm will be using. He noted “it is creating an environment in harmony with those most directly affected by it.” He reemphasized the need for “good two-way communication and dialogue.” He explained that the process would involve a series of steps that would begin with a tour of the neighborhood followed up by a visioning session. He also re-emphasized neighborhood as well as community-wide participation. “From there we will go on to other workshops” he said. He said the objective in terms of the process is to get as many people involved as possible and hear what everyone likes. “Through the workshops we will talk about hopes and aspirations through the process and watch the end product emerge” he said.

He reviewed items that had already been identified as safety issues. A gentleman from the audience asked “what is traffic calming and are there any programs in place?” The gentleman, when asked, identified himself as Walter Bieniek. Mr. Bieniek added he had called the Town House to complain about speeders and dangerous maneuvers with cars on Union Street noting “nobody got back to me but they said they were working on it.” Mr. Purdy explained several different methods to encourage drivers to slow down. “Any plans for right now?” asked Mr. Bieniek. “Well enforcement is a piece of it” responded Mr. Purdy, adding “traffic calming has a toolbox of ways to make the street safer.” He went on to mention physical changes in the road including making it narrower, installing sidewalks, making them wider, or adding a bend or island.

Mr. Waitkins noted “another fact is that the cars coming off Route 101 are coming off a highway and are going fast, the real transition to a neighborhood look is around the curve. I have already heard the issue of traffic calming three times tonight, the problem is that you don’t get the sense of a neighborhood coming up.” He added that adding sidewalks would help.

Mr. Bieniek interjected that the cars speed by his house, a woman in the audience added “and there are no street lights, God help you if walk your dog at night because you are really in trouble.”

There was a brief discussion about the drainage across the area of the curve in the winter months that freezes and is very dangerous. A gentleman in the audience asked “where is the real estate coming from?” (in reference to the aspect of widening the street) with yet another gentleman suggesting a toll over the bridge may calm the traffic. (Laughter).

Mr. Higginson noted a survey will be done and property lines will be evaluated. He noted the road currently varies between 22 and 24 feet in width “so some of the traffic calming will depend on the area of the road.” He added “we will have to work within the confines we have.”

Luc Monzies introduced himself. He noted “they may not be popular but speed bumps work, and cross walks should be clearly marked.” Mr. Monzies also noted “on-street parking calms traffic, look at Grove Street.” He noted erecting signs like “Kids at Play” would help along with “making things look like they are taken care and putting out nice things for people to look at, there are a lot of possibilities.” Chris Justice suggested a bike path with another woman in the audience interjecting “and a dog path.” Michael Morse said it would be nice to have more access for putting kayaks and canoes in the water.

Mike Justice noted his concern about light pollution with Mr. Purdy assuring him all town ordinances regarding lighting would be adhered to. Mr. Monzies asked “will you go there at night? There are these high lights, it is weird; I hope we will lower them.” Mr. Monzies also mentioned the possibility of solar powered lights, and signs about the two hydro plants in the District. “Many residents of West Peterborough have no idea their power is coming from the river:” he said. Mr. Monzies also suggested a historic marker describing the mill district.

Todd Brackett introduced himself and asked a few questions about paving and run off. He asked about the use of impervious materials. Mr. Waitkins elaborated on the technology of pervious surfaces and how that technology has evolved. Ms. Justice mentioned the danger of children playing on Wilder Street, which has no sidewalks.

There was a brief discussion about the plans for interconnected walking trails and a pedestrian crossing across the river. Chair Burnett noted “there are issues to be worked out, but this is being talked about.”

Mr. Monzies stated it would be nice to add some trees to the district so it “looks less like an air strip” then added “and maybe a recycling can at the park, and benches, and a water bubbler, and bike racks.” Mr. Morse added “and parking at Texiera Park.”

Ms. Grayshan asked if Texiera Park “was finished.” Mr. Bartlett replied “yes, for the most part, the flowers and stonework are done. Anything further can be incorporated into this process” he said. Mr. Grayshan noted she would like to see more planting “outside the stone structure” in the park with many in the audience agreeing with her.

Chair Burnett stated that a contact list was being created and encouraged the audience to sign it. A gentleman in the audience asked “what is next?” Mr. Purdy referred to Ms. Ogilvie who concluded her PowerPoint with the last slide entitled “Next Steps” which listed a Union Street Corridor Assessment meeting scheduled for Friday, October 12th for 9:00 to 12:00 p.m., Public Meetings and Workshops, a Newsletter, and a dedicated website. A gentleman in the audience interjected “at 9:00 a.m. I am at work.” Ms. Ogilvie acknowledged the gentleman and explained “we wish to capture and accommodate as many people as possible” so that another assessment may be scheduled on a Saturday. She went on to note that the Committee and the Louis Berger Group “want to keep everyone informed and involved.” Another gentleman asked when the process would start. Ms. Ogilvie replied that the process had started and that this meeting was a part of the process. She went on to explain the \$170,000.00 voted on at town meeting was the first step, and that public meetings and workshops would steer the design and preliminary engineering stages. “We are spending that \$170,000.00, that is what we are doing now” she said. She explained that work would begin after the May town meeting vote to approve the bond for the actual construction of the plan is being developed now. Mr. Bartlett interjected “once approved, we anticipate the work to be complete by the end of 2009.”

There were no other questions and the meeting ended with Ms. Justice thanking the Board and staff for having this meeting.

Meeting adjourned 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant