

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 4, 2011**

ATTENDANCE: Andrew Conroy, Chair; Fred Bondi; Douglas Hempstead;
Nora King; Kelly Straniti; John Tobin; Laurel Lindstrom (7:04 p.m.)

STAFF: Hal Alvord, Director

OTHERS: Robert Nagi, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.;
Richard Viera, James Street

Mr. Conroy called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

PUBLIC INPUT

1. Public input (Visitors to the Committee meeting may speak to any item on the agenda. Comments shall be limited to no more than five (5) minutes per speaker.)

Mr. Viera said that he was here to listen.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Status report – Transportation Management Plan.

Mr. Conroy explained that the consultant was here to meet with the Committee and bring them up to date. Mr. Alvord introduced Mr. Nagi, the lead consultant.

Ms. Lindstrom joined the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

Mr. Nagi gave a PowerPoint presentation. He said that it is a comprehensive plan of how Norwalk handles its traffic. The purpose of the plan is to attempt to develop a comprehensive transportation management plan for the City. The goal is to increase the safety of Norwalk's roadways for all users.

Mr. Nagi reviewed the project tasks and schedules. He said that they did an evaluation of the existing conditions and did extensive outreach. Two documents were developed. The implementation plan becomes a living, breathing document. He said that they are in the process of creating the implementation plan. The goal is to have it completed by

January 2012 at the latest. They are planning to host a public information meeting toward the end of this year. Mr. Nagi discussed the design and toolbox elements of the plan along with the actions of the plan. He said that they had well over 150 comments that focused on side street cut-throughs. He said that they want to make sure that the priority streets carry the through volume, which will reduce the volume on side streets.

Mr. Nagi explained that they are doing five demonstration intersections and that there are eight priority intersections. There are two demonstration roadways and ten priority corridors. He said that they spent time looking at the East Avenue corridor and made recommendations. He presented a simulation of East Avenue under existing conditions. He said that there are issues with cut through traffic in that area. He said that they took the City's design plan for East Avenue and put it into the simulator plan. If it can free up the capacity in that corridor, people will stay on East Avenue. The plan that the City proposed is good, but they incorporated additional pedestrian amenities as well as a bicycle user lane.

Ms. King asked Mr. Nagi if they looked at the East Avenue plan without looking at eminent domain. Mr. Nagi said that they took the plan that was created by the City, to see if they could build on it. Mr. Alvord said that eminent domain and what gets improved was not a part of the consultant's scope. Ms. King said that his directive was to find a solution. She said that she was concerned that they need to look at what is there now.

Mr. Conroy said that the reason for the taking is that they want the trucks to go down this route. He said that it makes sense for trucks to go up and down this route. Mr. Nagi said that four lanes to the railroad bridge are needed or the effectiveness of the improvements will be shortchanged. If the bridge clearance is not fixed, the truck traffic will use side streets. Ms. King said that a lot of trucks go through residential neighborhoods and that these improvements will encourage trucks to get off of I-95. She asked what was going to be done about that. Mr. Nagi said that trucks will go to their destination using the most efficient route.

Mr. Bondi noted that Monroe Street was lowered and that will take a lot of the truck traffic off of East Avenue. Mr. Alvord agreed that trucks can easily access South Norwalk from I-95. Mr. Alvord said that trucks will not get off of I-95 unless there is a fatal accident. Ms. King said that it takes place all the time and that lowering the bridge and widening the roads makes them more attractive. Mr. Alvord said that the implementation plan is not finalized.

Mr. Alvord said that if the traffic is more efficient it will reduce traffic on side streets. Ms. King asked to see written proof. Mr. Nagi said that they are working with SWRPA to

create a regional plan. Additional intersections and streets are going to be added to the plan.

Mr. Hempstead asked if they had an idea how much truck traffic travels between 136 and Fort Point Street. Mr. Alvord said that they will not go through the neighborhoods unless they are forced off of I-95. Mr. Hempstead asked if there is any other kind of truck traffic. Mr. Alvord said that it depends on the type of counter used. They may have that information, if not, there is money in the budget to get those counts.

Mr. Conroy asked which streets and intersections were added to the plan today. Mr. Alvord said that Exit 16, North and Cross Streets were added. Mr. Conroy asked if there were counts from the lower end of Rowayton Avenue. Mr. Alvord said that there were and that the State counts included the type of vehicle.

Mr. Conroy asked about outreach. Mr. Nagi said that they included a Facebook page and a link through the City website. He said that he tried to post the Plan on both sites. They received about 75 comments and a lot of them echoed each other. He said that they got a lot of comments from Fairfield Avenue. In addition, they received about 75 comments at the outreach meetings.

Mr. Conroy asked about the large players. Mr. Alvord said that he will ask the City to provide a list of the 10 largest employers. A lot of the businesses talked about connectivity from the bus to public transportation. Mr. Conroy thanked Councilmembers Bonenfant and Lindstrom for attending the meetings.

Ms. King asked if footpaths were factored into the plan. Mr. Nagi said that one of the plan recommendations is to invest in upgrading footpaths.

BUSINESS PORTION

1. Approve the Minutes of the Public Works Committee meeting of Tuesday July 5, 2011.

Ms. King said that it was ironic that a particular e-mail was included in the meeting packet, but not the letter she requested. She said that she was not the person who moved item 8 on page 9 of the minutes.

Following a discussion, page 9, item 8 should read as follows:

MR. CONROY MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, RICHARD A. MOCCIA, TO SIGN THE RESOLUTION FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF ROWAYTON AVENUE AT METRO-NORTH RAILROAD BRIDGE

Ms. King asked that the minutes as corrected be re-submitted.

**** MR. BONDI MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2011 AS SUBMITTED
** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MS. LINDSTROM)**

**** MR. BONDI MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, RICHARD A. MOCCIA, TO EXECUTE AGREEMENT NO. 5.09-01(11) WITH THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FOR RIGHTS OF WAY ACTIVITIES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE REPLACEMENT OF BRIDGE NO. 04989 ON JAMES STREET OVER THE SILVERMINE RIVER UTILIZING FEDERAL AND MUNICIPAL FUNDS. STATE PROJECT NO 102-320 AND FEDERAL PROJECT NO. 6102-013.**

The objective is to be sure that the people who will have easement have been contacted. Mr. Alvord said that he spoke with all of the property owners. A FedEx was sent to the owner of 16 James Street. He said that he walked the property with him. He said that the only receipt he received was from Mr. Viera.

Ms. King asked why the letters were not provided. Ms. Straniti said that she does not see follow up responses. She said that she contacted residents on her own. She said that one resident had a hard time getting in touch with Mr. Linnartz. Ms. Straniti said that she was not sure she wanted to vote on this item until all of the residents have been contacted.

Mr. Alvord said that the State wanted to obligate the right of way funds before September 30th. He said that this did not happen because the City did not execute the agreement. If this is delayed the City may be at risk of losing these funds. Ms. Straniti said that the agreement did not come before this Committee until this evening and residents have not had an opportunity to learn about the impacts. This has been sitting at City Hall for three months. Ms. Straniti said that she is not comfortable with this procedure.

Mr. Hempstead said that the Common Council took action on this and sent it back to Committee. He said that the Common Council is not satisfied at this stage of the game.

Mr. Viera said that he knows his property will be involved. He attempted to contact Mr. Linnartz and they will meet on Friday. He said that his neighbors did not receive

certified letters. He said that his neighbor at Riverview Drive is equally concerned and asked if she could join him on Friday. Ms. King said that the process is not clearly defined. Mr. Alvord said that they follow the State process. He said that they will not know what the impact will be until the design plans are finalized.

Ms. King told Mr. Alvord that his job is to interact with the State and communicate it clearly to the public. Mr. Conroy said that the process is known to them. He said that they do not like the taking process, but if they do not do what the State wants, the City will lose the funds. He said that this is not that abstract. He said that he agrees with Ms. King about other projects, but this one is extremely defined and he would like the City to the funding. Ms. King said that if it is that simple, why is it not clearly defined to the property owners. Mr. Conroy said that it seems that it took the department a while to respond to them.

Mr. Hempstead said that he has some levels of concern; in a meeting with the neighbors, they said this was discussed with them in 2009 and he remembers there was not a lot of concern, but he said that he wants to know this is ok with them. Part of the discussion in 2009 was about how the bridge will look. There was a discussion about the design of the railing and he wants to be sure there is input from the neighbors.

Mr. Conroy said that when he talked with Mr. Sweeney, he said that he wanted input from the neighbors. Mr. Conroy said that he is concerned that the City will lose the funding and feels that this should move forward.

Mr. Bondi asked Mr. Viera when he received his certified letter. Mr. Viera said that he was not sure. Mr. Alvord said that it was sent before the last Common Council meeting. Mr. Bondi wanted to know why some of the neighbors did not pick up their certified letters. Mr. Alvord said that some people pick up their mail and others do not.

Ms. King asked why it took 2 ½ weeks for Mr. Viera to get in touch with Mr. Linnartz. Mr. Alvord said that as soon as he knew Mr. Viera tried to contact Mr. Linnartz, he asked Mr. Linnartz to respond, which he did.

Mr. Alvord said that a FedEx was sent on September 9th and a certified letter on September 12th. He said that Mr. Viera responded right away. When they did not get responses from the other neighbors, he decided to call or knock on doors to tell people what is going on. He said that he went by 16 James Street several times, but no one was home. When he finally saw the resident at home, he walked the site with him. On Friday, letters drafted with the Law Department will be delivered by a Marshall, but there is no guarantee they will be received. Mr. Alvord said that they made every effort to meet with the residents. He said that he talked to all four resident in the last week.

Mr. Conroy said that he would like to move this to the Common Council. Ms. Lindstrom asked how much funding is involved. Mr. Alvord explained that the State set aside \$300,000 and there is \$60,000 in the capital account. Mr. Hempstead said that he is ok with sending this to the Common Council, but wants assurance that all four people acknowledge that they understand what is being proposed. Mr. Alvord said that the condo association supports this project.

Mr. Alvord said that they will not know what the easement is until the State talks to the property owners. Mr. Conroy said that if the design is not completed, they will not know what the easements will be. Mr. Alvord said that three easements exist today.

Ms. Straniti said that there has to be a map showing how much property will be taken. She said that it does not matter that the State does not require the City to reach out to the residents. Mr. Conroy reiterated that he did not want to miss the opportunity for funding. Mr. Alvord asked the Committee what proof they needed that he talked to the residents. Mr. Conroy said that an e-mail would be fine.

Mr. Hempstead asked if there was a caveat if they do not like the design. Mr. Conroy said that this project is the right thing to do. Ms. King said that if this was your property, you would feel different about this. She said that if it involved 6 – 18 inches she wants to see it in writing. Mr. Conroy asked if Mr. Sweeney could send an e-mail showing the design. Mr. Alvord said that URS is the designer, but Mr. Sweeney provided oversight of their work. Mr. Hempstead said that he wants to be sure that if the State gets over aggressive that the City does not have to put up with that.

Mr. Tobin suggested voting to move this item to the full Common Council. He said that he was not happy with the process and that the department did not contact the neighbors. Mr. Alvord said that he invited the neighbors to meet at their convenience to go through the plan.

Mr. Alvord said that he will ask Mr. Sweeney for a memo outlining the key design elements and will ask the residents to provide an e-mail verifying that Public Works spoke with them. He will also ask for the return of service notices from the Law Department.

**** MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE (5) VOTES IN FAVOR (MR. CONROY; MR. TOBIN; MR. BONDI; MS. LINDSTROM; MR. HEMPSTEAD) AND TWO (2) VOTES IN OPPOSITION (MS. KING AND MS. STRANITI)**

**** MS. STRANITI MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, RICHARD A. MOCCIA, TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE AGREEMENT WITH TIGHE & BOND, INC. TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES, IN CONNECTION WITH THE DESIGN OF THE LOCKWOOD LANE STORM DRAIN IMPROVEMENTS, FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$12,500.00.
ACCOUNT NO. 0909 4027 5777 C0421**

Mr. Alvord explained that this is an amendment to the agreement. There were changes that were driven by the DEP, which will require Tighe & Bond to do design work. Mr. Bondi asked if this will involve Moody's Lane. Mr. Alvord explained that this will go across East Avenue to up Lockwood Lane and then behind Buckingham Place.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MS. LINDSTROM MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, RICHARD A. MOCCIA, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH HUGO KEY AND SONS, INC. FOR PROJECT NO. DPW 2011-1, NORWEST MARINE OUTFALL PIPE DREDGING, FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$49,520.**

**AND TO AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS TO ISSUE ORDERS ON CONTRACT TO HUGO KEY AND SONS, INC. FOR PROJECT NO. DPW 2011-1, NORWEST MARINE OUTFALL PIPE DREDGING, FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$4,950.
ACCOUNT NO. 0909 4027 5777 C0440**

Mr. Alvord explained that the City has an easement that exits out into the Harbor. They did some testing on the material and they will be able to combine it with Meadow Street.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. CONROY MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, RICHARD A. MOCCIA, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH GUERRERA CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC. FOR PROJECT NO. DPW 2011-3, 2 MEADOW STREET CHANNEL DREDGING/EXCAVATION, FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$169,250.**

**AND TO AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS TO ISSUE ORDERS ON CONTRACT TO, GUERRERA CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC. FOR PROJECT NO. DPW 2011-3, @ MEADOW STREET CHANNEL DREDGING/EXCAVATION, FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$16,925.
ACCOUNT NOS. 0909 4027 5777 C0440, 0910 4027 5777 C0440**

Mr. Alvord explained that the drainage system empties into a ditch. The ditch is blocked which causes Meadow Street to flood.

Mr. Alvord said that there was a challenge to the Guerrera Construction Company bid because they submitted a 5% bid instead of 15%. He said that he took this to the Law Department and received an opinion from Diane Beltz-Jacobson that it was not a large glitch. Guerrera Construction Company came in with the full 15% bid.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MS. STRANITI MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, RICHARD A. MOCCIA, TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS ON THE CITY'S BEHALF TO PROGRESS THROUGH DESIGN DEVELOPMENT FOR STATE PROJECT 102-329, STRAWBERRY HILL AVENUE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL.**

Ms. Straniti said that she was very excited about this. Mr. Alvord said that he was happy to move this along. Ms. Straniti asked about the public information meeting. Mr. Alvord said there was a lot of discussion about the concept plan. A lot of residents from Heather Lane attended. Ms. Lindstrom asked if a traffic signal is being proposed at Tierney Street. There were people who were opposed to this because they were concerned it would cause more people to cut through Heather Lane.

Mr. Alvord said that this is a scaled down project. Mr. Conroy said that the residents were not in agreement. Mr. Alvord said that this is not the final design. This allows the Mayor to execute the documents. He said that the project funds will not pay for anything on Heather Lane.

Ms. King asked why they continually get motions to authorize the Mayor to execute documents, but do not have the supporting documents.

Ms. Straniti said that she is happy they are getting the funding to move forward, but not happy that the project has been scaled back.

Mr. Tobin asked if there were any notes from the public information meeting.

Ms. King said that she was excited about the Safe Routes to School item, but asked how things are put in it without proper documentation.

Mr. Conroy asked if there was a timing issue. Mr. Alvord said that they are concerned. He said that the Law Department did not include specific documents. Mr. Tobin said

that he did not agree with their opinion; he said that items should come to the Common Council for approval. Mr. Conroy said that in other committees they get to see documents. Mr. Alvord said that it may be possible to get the numbers. Ms. Lindstrom said that her constituents are asking for traffic counts. Mr. Alvord said that he recalls residents asking for counts before and after.

Ms. Lindstrom said that if a roundabout is not possible, then she feels that a traffic signal will work and that it will not create more traffic on Heather Lane. She said that she would like a record that the Committee looked at the numbers before they voted. Ms. Straniti said that there is a second Council meeting in October. Ms. Lindstrom said that she would prefer to hold off voting, because she does not feel there is any urgency.

Mr. Bondi said that if a traffic signal is installed at Tierney Street, less people will go down Heather Lane. The only reason people use Heather Lane is if there is a back up on Tierney Street at Strawberry Hill Avenue. The light will make the traffic move out of Tierney Street quickly. He said that he would also like to see a traffic light at King Street and Strawberry Hill Avenue because that is a straight away where cars tend to speed. Mr. Tobin said that it is hard to get out of William Street and Dairy Farm Road.

Mr. Tobin recommended waiting for additional information and putting this item on the second Common Council meeting in October.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Project Status Report.

Five Mile River Study: Ms. King asked about the Five Mile River Study. Mr. Alvord said that it was a water quality study. Mr. Conroy said that it was not a flood control study. Mr. Alvord said that he was not sure if it was completed, but will ask Ms. Cherichettii to get in touch with Ms. King.

Ms. King asked for an update on Customer Service accountability. Mr. Alvord reported that he met with Ms. DelVecchio late last week and outlined the district reports. Her programmer met with Ms. Blair to extract the reports. The process has started, but currently the programmer is busy with the election. Mr. Conroy said that he was hopeful they would get a donation of time from GE Capital.

Ms. Straniti suggested thinking outside of the box to see if other corporations have customer service websites.

Mr. Hempstead asked if they were in the process of paving Strawberry Hill Avenue. Mr. Alvord said that they are paving from Fitch Street to the lower half of Strawberry Hill Avenue. They want to do more, but the water company will be out there digging.

Mr. Hempstead asked when West Avenue will be completed. Mr. Alvord said that it should be done by the end of the month. It has a lot to do with the State Inspector. Mr. Hempstead asked when North Water Street will open. Mr. Alvord said that it will open as soon as the City gets permanent access from the DOT.

Mr. Hempstead asked if the City was on target for East Rocks Road. Mr. Alvord said that it should be open to traffic by Thanksgiving. They encountered unanticipated conditions. Mr. Bondi asked about Rampart Road. Mr. Alvord said that it is moving along.

Ms. Straniti asked Mr. Alvord if he got the accident reports at 123 and Ponus Avenue. Mr. Alvord said that he will try to find time to have someone do that, but he does not believe it will have an impact. He said that the DOT agreed to do a left hand turn there. The State has a process they follow to do switches and signals. Ms. Straniti said that she is concerned that the State will think it is only a convenience to have a signal there.

Norwalk transfer station (August report).

There was no discussion.

**** MR. BONDI MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services