

PLAN UPDATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Room 104, Shelton City Hall

Shelton, CT

Monday, November 29, 2004

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Peter DiCarlo called the meeting to order at approximately 4:30 P.M.

Members Present:

Frank Osak, Chairman (arrived at 5:10 PM)

Peter DiCarlo, Vice Chairman

Fred Musante

Anthony Pogoda

Jim Tate

Tom Harbinson

Michael Adanti

Also Present:

Bill Mooney – Superintendent, Highways & Bridges

Richard Schultz

Marianne Chaya

Eric Barz – Planimetrics

II. Pledge of Allegiance

All in attendance pledged allegiance to the flag.

III. Approval of Minutes

Anthony Pogoda MOVED to approve the minutes from the November 15, 2004 meeting. Tom Harbinson SECONDED the motion. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

IV. Long Range Plan Overview: Highways and Bridges

Bill Mooney first stated that they very seldom have a long range plan, mainly because they are micro-managed. It is very difficult to do any long range planning. H&B is primarily a maintenance function. They maintain parking lots, maintain some of the Board of Education sites as requested, maintain police and H&B vehicles, plus the operation at the transfer station. There are 30 employees to serve 215 miles of roads. 15 years ago there was approximately 185 miles of road with more people and more money. At that time there was a percentage of the Grand List that was allocated for equipment and projects. That was changed

with the present administration. Every year we have to go through a budget process. Our budget seems to be getting smaller and smaller, and less accessible. Highway's and Bridges budget is the second highest, the first going to Board of Education.

Fred Musante asked if there is a road maintenance plan, a capital plan to cover road maintenance, say, over a 10-year period? Bill Mooney responded that they used to do that, and that is the way it should be. If we could do 20 miles of road a year, every 10 years we would have every road covered. There are some roads that now need major reconstruction, such as Walnut Tree Hill Rd. and parts of Meadow St. It was asked if this would be covered in the upcoming budget process and Bill Mooney answered that it would be requested. Our finished budget never reflects all of our needs. Every year there is a 6-year plan for equipment. Every year we do have requests for equipment. If you look at the equipment we use, it is a shame. We are doing a great job with the equipment we have.

Fred Musante asked if there is a vision for H&B in 2015? Bill Mooney said it depends on the growth. The expansion has to slow down. In terms of roads he could see another 10 miles of road by 2015. Fred also asked who has control over the road being done properly and Bill Mooney said that it is controlled by the City Engineer's office, which only has 1 inspector, who is over 70 years old. It is a terrific task, at any age.

Peter DiCarlo asked about snow removal. Bill Mooney said that snow removal is a part of their job and budget. There is money received as town aid from the State for purchase of salt and for equipment to maintain the roads. The money received is calculated probably on population and the number of miles of streets.

Jim Tate asked about the tub grinder that was just purchased for the transfer station. There used to be reimbursement for this but that money is no longer available. The tub grinder will be such a great help in the fact that it will reduce flow, which results in reduced costs. It should pay for itself.

Peter DiCarlo asked if the total facilities adequate now, and if not, how much do you think you need to expand? Bill Mooney responded that no, they are not. Currently the Myrtle St. location is about 10 acres, which includes the Parks Department. The facility is ancient and we had some serious issues with the labor depart. The building itself is from the 1950's. We have electrical issues. We have to go to all GFI. We have to replace the standby generators. If we get caught in a serious storm, we'll be limping. We have problems with the neighborhood in that we have vandalism. We can't put enough fencing in. To run the Highway's & Bridges area properly it should be probably doubled, to 20 acres. We had been told at some point that we would be transferred to the Constitution Blvd. area of the old Mas property, which would be ideal because they would be geographically centered in town. There are also satellite locations for the sand/salt storage at East Village Park and the Nike site.

Tom Harbinson asked about the communications system and if it is adequate? Bill Mooney responded that he feels it is. When they do receive new equipment it comes with a new radio. They operate on a low band and do not see the same problems the police do because they have to rely more on line of site and have a

higher frequency, but there are some areas that are “dead areas”, particularly in the Pine Rock area.

Fred Musante asked about regionalization – is there cooperation between towns? Bill Mooney said we have very good rapport with all the neighboring towns. They do share some of the snow plowing on some of the streets that they share and Trumbull passed on 2 old pickup trucks to us, which had more than 100K miles on them, but were better than what we have.

Anthony Pogoda asked about storage areas for impounded cars or tenant/building evictions. Bill Mooney responded that that building evictions presently goes to the “Pink Elephant”. That is located across from the water treatment plant. We may lose that facility when the water treatment plant expands. We have the responsibility by State law to store the items from the eviction.

Bill Mooney went back to discussion of the current facility and why it needs updating. One reason is that there are only 3 lifts in the garage, which are only capable of handling cars and pickup trucks. There are no lifts for large vehicles. It has to be done on the ground. Jim Tate asked what the cost would be for a maintenance garage to handle their needs. Bill Mooney responded that it could possibly run around \$2M, bringing the number of bays that they need to 6.

(Frank Osak joined the meeting at 5:10 PM)

The members discussed the hazardous waste area and if it would be charged at any time. They also discussed the cost of doing the hazardous waste event and the cost of waste disposal, which is a budgeted item.

Eric Barz asked about the regional trash authority and who handles what. The City manages the transfer station. Bill Mooney went over where everything is located and what each facility handles. Eric also asked, if money were no object, how many employees do you think you would need to do everything that you do where you would be comfortable today and then in 10 years? At this point in regards to the manning level for mechanics we are fairly comfortable today. We have a manning level for equipment operators and truck drivers. Each truck driver (20) has to deal with 215 miles. They have to cover about 10 miles in a storm. In a decent storm they are probably working for 30 hours. We should have 25 drivers. We also have to use an outside contractor to help with the snow plowing.

In regards to roads it is a nightmare for them on cul-de-sacs and the ones that have islands in the middle. Some of the new roads have been built at 24' wide. The roads need to be at least 30'.

Frank Osak asked about growth and how it affects Highways & Bridges. Bill Mooney said that single-family areas probably doesn't affect them too much as far as road maintenance or winter maintenance. Multi-family areas have created problems in respect to parking. We have to use smaller trucks in the downtown area.

Eric Barz asked what are the equipment needs at the garage, in the next 10 years? Bill Mooney responded that the basic equipment is there – it just needs to be replaced. There needs to be heavy lifts for the heavy vehicles.

There was discussion about the maintenance of the catch basins and sumps.

Bill Mooney also said that they are responsible for street sweeping and that they contract out for that due to cost. Eric then asked about needs for the transfer station. Bill Mooney said that it is probably the most inefficient operation that you would ever see. It is ancient – the design was probably from 1984 or 1985. That operation has to change. Frank Osak asked about how much money to build a state-of-the-art transfer station to which Bill Mooney estimated it would be, if there were enough room, probably \$1M. Frank Osak noted that some of the cost would come back because the cost of transfer per unit of weight would be less. With the new grinder there will be some reduction in bulk.

Fred Musante suggested a regional center so that the surrounding towns could benefit with state-of-the-art equipment. Bill Mooney did not think that it would work because no one would want to give up their control.

The discussion turned to use/misuse of the transfer station.

Eric Barz asked about what services they provide to the Board of Education. Bill Mooney explained and said that the services provided are an “in-kind” service.

He then explained how the procedure works for snow days.

They also asked about the State roads, route 108, 110 and 714 (Bridgeport Ave). Bill Mooney said that they are very well maintained and they have a good rapport with the State.

Eric Barz said that he may have questions for Bill Mooney later on and would like to call on him.

V. Issues and Progress of Project Report: Planimetrics

Eric Barz passed out the preliminary draft of the vision. He asked if the committee members would take it home and write down any questions that they may have. We are going to meet again next Monday, Dec. 6, to dive into the report. He asked if the meeting could start at 4:00 PM instead of 4:30. This document is going to create the framework for the Plan. The first page is the overview and the overall vision. The next page contains the core values and action themes. The core values are sub-visions or areas that help us to organize the structure of the plan. Underneath the core value is an action theme. They are illustrated on the chart and in more detail on page 2. The next page is titled Protect Important Resources, which is underneath the umbrella of the core values, created a sub-vision statement. There is listed a “very general” strategy on how that will address each issue. When we draft the plan, every one of the strategies that you see might have many policies and tasks to be undertaken to achieve the various strategies. There may also be some sub-strategies as well. This is just a general idea of where we are going to go. Page 11 spells out the plan organization. There are two alternative structures. The first section are ones that I call a traditional approach where everything is pigeon-holed into a neat little category, where for instance, Natural Resources has a chapter, Open space has a chapter, etc. That works in some cases perfectly well and in some cases, some of the chapters will be very brief. After you have gone through it all and consider the second section of the plan organization structure, where we will pull apart the components and reassemble them into a more meaningful way.

For example, when you look at downtown Shelton, you want pedestrian friendly strategies, you want mass transit strategies, you want residential development to support the commercial activities downtown, you want economic development strategies that don't allow vacant green land out in the suburbs and you have land that you want to see redeveloped in downtown. So we pull together all the different functions out of the chapters listed at the top of the page and we reassembled them into chapters that mirror those core values, such as protecting important resources and guiding appropriate development. There might be a sub-section on guiding appropriate development for downtown. You could break out the Bridgeport Ave./Shelton Research Park/Shelton Industrial Park as an area that has a comprehensive approach to address those needs in that area as well. Think about that and come prepared next Monday with any questions or concerns.

Eric Barz also noted that there are some things missing in there regarding transportation strategies. That was done until we have a transportation study is done. Eric asked if a decision on who is going to do the traffic study. Frank Osak said that we received the ok but it can't be billed until January. Rick Schultz said that P&Z Commission is authorizing the expenditure of the line item in the amount of \$15K. Chairman Cribbins is going to the Board of A&T December 16 to request for additional funding.

Eric Barz asked if they were done doing interviews? Valley Health is the only one besides the elderly housing. Rick Schultz said that Valley Health is moving next month to Seymour. Anthony Pogoda expressed the thought that there probably wouldn't be too much information that they could share that would be vital to the plan. Jim Tate said that they probably could put some information in writing and Frank Osak said that if they felt there was a need they would call them.

Eric Barz said the reason he asked is because from this point on they would start doing some telephone interviews and maybe book several people at once to come in for him to interview.

The committee members and Eric Barz continued discussing the preliminary vision and said that P&Z, the Board of Aldermen and the Mayor have been receiving the booklets as well as this committee.

VI. Other Business

Rick Schultz asked Peter DiCarlo to talk about the elderly housing. Peter stated we are not a municipal entity other than the fact that the Mayor appoints some commissioners. We report to the State and are governed by State Statutes. We are totally reliant on rental income to maintain and furnish services. We do pay taxes, which is 10% of our rental income to the City of Shelton for basically garbage service and little else. We don't even get snow plowing because we are at the end of the chain. We have to clear the sidewalks, clear the driveways and landscaping and all of that is done without subsidy. Our income per year is at the most \$380K for 120 units at Sinsabaugh Heights and Helen DeVaux. Most of the elderly housing is controlled by HUD and private enterprises. Frank Osak asked

if Peter DiCarlo thought there would be a need for another facility and Peter responded no, because of the changing demographics. We have vacancies at Helen DeVaux, primarily because of the size of the units and the lack of storage. Parking is also an issue because there are 40 units and only about 15 parking spaces. He described the units at Sinsabaugh. 50% of the residents are former Shelton residents and there is now a big push to take legally disabled residents, who are not necessarily elderly. It poses a problems in the respect that you have residents who are 62+ and then the disabled residents who don't have to be a senior citizen to live there. It has presented landlord/tenant issues. We can see the trend of the tenants going more towards the disabled than the elderly. Eric Barz stated that he has done some research in the demographic trend. It looks like in 15 years from now that over 35% of the population will be 55 and older. Peter stated that right now it is about 20%. He also noted that the elderly housing available is very limited in size. There is no statue stating that the City is required to provide a certain amount of elderly housing. The issue of affordable housing is a requirement.

Eric Barz stated that there is a niche for people who need affordable housing and what we are going to have built into the plan is a whole gamut of options, for example accessory housing, active adult housing, congregate housing, etc. Your regulations through the PDD's and PRD's are allowing these kinds of things but they are not really spelled out. There was discussion regarding congregate housing. Peter DiCarlo discussed the condition of the facilities.

VII. Future Meeting Times and Schedules

The next meeting will be on Monday, December 6, 2004 at 4PM.

VIII. Adjournment

Anthony Pogoda MOVED to adjourn, SECONDED by Tom Harbinson. All were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Plan Update Advisory Committee
1 tape is on file in the City/Town Clerk's office