

**Village Core Planning Group
Organizational Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2007
5:00 PM**

Attendees: John Hettinger, Marilyn Sanderson, Tom Adams, Chester Kahn, Dennis Ducharme, Paul Kasianchuk, Ed Brisson, Mike Sabourin, Joel Bourassa, Rick Russack

John Hettinger started the meeting by distributing the agenda and describing what he believes to be the preferred route for the bike path and park. He also described an alternate route through the Rapids project whereby they would give the Town an easement that would turn north at the east end of the Fairways, then turn west along Bunker Lane through the Fairways Condominium Complex and then continue heading west along an easement on the north side of Bunker Lane to Cooper Memorial Drive. The western section of the trail would go over Mr. Ducharme's land, then Town land, and finish on Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) land near the visitor's center. Mr. Hettinger and Ms. Sanderson test-walked the path behind the treatment ponds, and found it to be at a moderately steep angle near the Visitors' Center, so that that portion may need to be laid out a bit differently. They saw the blue spots on trees that indicate that DRED owns that land, which may include some wetlands. They also felt that near the visitors' center, a ramp or fill might be needed, unless the path were to continue along the river and approach the – Center from the southwest, which is flatter terrain and takes advantage of nice river views, though may require two bridges.

The discussion turned to easements needed on other sections of the trail, with comments that both Ed Brisson and Mike Sabourin seem easy to work with on their sections. Ms. Sanderson cautioned that we couldn't do the work first and then apply for the grant and get credit for it as in-kind services, so we need to apply for the appropriate grants before telling the lawyers to get started on this project. She said that one State grant, the Recreational Trails Program, which is due in January, may cover the purchase of easements. If we apply we will need three quotes for the legal estimate. Mike Sabourin said that if Dennis Ducharme could get a scope of service worked out, we could get quotes from Mr. Ducharme's team, one from Mike Conklin, and Mr. Sabourin could ask his team, Orr and Reno. Chester Kahn also wondered if an engineer might need to work with the legal team to define where the easements could go.

John Hettinger next started a discussion on Phasing. One phase could be starting at the park and include just the western section of trails, which was estimated at about \$427,000. Ed Brisson felt it made sense to do all the easements as one study, and then phase construction, for grant purposes.

Ms. Sanderson went to a workshop on the State grant through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. They said that the grant could not be used for engineering alone or for any legal work. The project needed to be a combination of design and construction and result in a completed section of trail. The work had to be done on Town land. Both grants require upfront work including contacting the NH Division of Historic Resources,

The NH Natural Heritage Bureau, DES and Fish and Game. A USGS map was needed for the first contact. Mike Sabourin said that Steve LaFrance could help a lot with maps, and Rick Russack said that he could help with the historical aspects. Some grants will let you resolve issues during the course of the grant, not just before applying for it, too. Mr. Sabourin and Mr. Brisson both felt that the group should concentrate on easements first, for the whole project, and then phase the project afterwards. Ms. Sanderson felt we could apply for the easement piece first, then possibly do just a very small section of design and construction, as grants like to see the first small piece done before giving out larger funds. At this point, Mr. Hettinger distributed an 18-page document which was his 3rd revision of the Project Description. He commented that with some closer estimates, and adding in costs for a restroom facility in the Park, the cost remained about the same as the first estimate. He and Ms. Sanderson have met with Mary Deppe, of the North Country Council and gave her a copy of this last week. Ms. Deppe felt they were reasonably well organized for this date and time, and will help them find potential grants.

Ms. Sanderson commented that grants typically pay \$10,000-20,000, not \$100,000, so we need to keep that in mind. There really is emphasis on going in little pieces. She had met with LWCF and they said that we cannot do a separate design project and, that the design and construction must be combined in one project. They want to see a finished project even if it's only a small part of the overall project. Their grants go up to \$20,000 with a 50% match in cash or in-kind services. The Recreational Trails Grant can go up to \$30,000, with a 20% match needed, per information she found online from DRED. We could have someone come up and look at the property, but there was discussion whether it made sense to do that this year or next. Mr. Kahn and Mr. Brisson seemed interested in doing that, but the application is due January 18th. Mr. Kahn commented that one little section of trail would really explain engineering for the whole trail, and give a good cost estimate.

Mr. Brisson suggested that Ms. Sanderson make a list of each task that needs to be done, and send this to the group to see who can help with each step. For example, Joel Bourassa can work with DRED regarding their land by the sewer lagoons and visitor center, as he already has contact with them, while some of the others have already mentioned their connections. Mr. Sabourin, Mr. Brisson, Mr. Hettinger, Ms. Sanderson and possibly some others will plan to meet to walk the lagoon end of the trail on November 19th to see where the best route for the trail should be. Ms. Sanderson mentioned again how beautiful the views are along the river in that area.

The need for funding turned to Town Meeting. This year we will need to move the roughly \$10,000 from the White water Treatment Plant Fund to one for the Park and Trails. The hope was to add an additional \$10,000 per year to complement grants.

Mike Sabourin wondered about incorporating the Village Core Committee, i.e. VCC, Inc. Other communities have done that, like Littleton for its business park and the Main Street Group. If it becomes a non-profit, the corporation could go for grant funding as well. It would have volunteers that operate as its Board of Directors. The Town would need to charter it, but it would take the day-to-day management out of the Town's hands, so each

decision would not need a full meeting. It would also be easier to get donations from other companies as it can have tax exempt status, and would be a better way to manage income and expenses. The Board of Selectmen would suggest the creation of the corporation. Mr. Sabourin will get details on how to set it up, etc.

Tom Adams tried to clarify the email distributed by Dennis Ducharme and Paul Kasianchuk regarding their legal team's findings regarding easements so far. He said that an easement does not necessarily mean that a path has to be created. John Hettinger also felt that a level of comfort should be considered – i.e. hiking through the back yard of the Fairways versus further from buildings through the Rapids, so as not to make the walker feel they were intruding too close to homes. Mr. Brisson agreed, but also felt that how developed the trail seems would impact that comfort level too. Mr. Kahn mentioned that going through the Rapids would also mean only one easement versus seven of them along Bunker Lane.

The meeting concluded with the next meeting being set for 5:00PM, Tuesday, November 27th, at Pollard Brook. (Internal Note To Committee Members: However, the next day Town Manager Sutton, John Hettinger and Marilyn Sanderson spoke with Bill Gegas of the Trails System, and he, along with a motorized specialist and a non-motorized specialist will all be attending, so there will more room at the Town Hall.)