

A special meeting of the City Planning Board was held on Wednesday, February 23, 2011, in the City Council Chambers in the City Hall Annex at 7:00 PM.

Present at the meeting were Members Drypolcher, Swope, Dolcino, Foss (who arrived at 7:06 PM and was seated), Hicks, and Meyer. Messrs. Woodward and Henninger, Ms. Hebert and Ms. Osgood of the City Planning Division were also present, as was Ms. Aibel, the City's Associate Engineer.

At 7:00 PM a quorum was present and the Chair called the meeting to order.

1. Presentation on a **Draft Bicycle Master Plan** prepared by the CNHRPC.

Craig Tufts from Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission, Dick Lemieux and Pete Rhodes from the City's Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) Bicycle Committee, and Jennifer Kretovic from Concord 2020 were present to discuss the draft Bicycle Master Plan.

Mr. Rhodes introduced the team and reported that they hope this report will become a supplement to the City's Master Plan and that when the next City Master Plan is adopted the Bicycle Master Plan will be adopted as a chapter of that Master Plan.

Mr. Tufts reported that Concord had been designated as a Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. Concord is the first community in New Hampshire and only the fourth in New England to receive this designation.

He then made a PowerPoint presentation and explained this plan had been prepared by CNHRPC under the direction of the TPAC Bicycle Committee after extensive public input and close collaboration with the City's Planning and Engineering divisions. This effort was funded by Concord 2020.

He explained that, after hearing from the public, the Committee made a list and ranked difficult spots in the city for bicyclists.

(Ms. Foss arrived at 7:06 PM.)

Mr. Tufts explained that they found that people are particularly interested in signage as well as published information about routes and bicycle paths. There is also an expressed need for bicycle parking facilities. He reported they had developed standards and guidelines for parking arrangements.

They found a lot of support for a comprehensive transportation system which would include bicycles, pedestrians, vehicles, and public transportation.

The Committee's recommendations included developing a bicycle network that would connect neighborhoods and major destinations. They also recommended developing the so-called Merrimack River Greenway Trail.

2. Presentation on the feasibility study for a **Merrimack River Greenway Path** prepared by Fay, Spofford, and Thorndike.

Mr. Tufts explained that Concord 2020 had provided funds to allow the Committee to contract with Fay, Spofford and Thorndike to prepare a feasibility study for the Merrimack River Greenway Trail.

He explained the regional trail efforts so far and reported that there will be a 114 mile trail from Salem to Lebanon if this last link is constructed. He noted that the only gap now is in the Concord area and that should be completed. The ultimate goal for this trail would be for it to be continuous and off street. It would not be necessary to plow it in the winter so it could be used for snowshoeing and cross country skiing.

He reported that the consultants had determined that the concept was feasible. They had also researched the permitting that would be needed for this project as well as right-of-way needs and estimated costs.

Mr. Lemieux then asked for the support of the Planning Board by adopting this Bicycle Master Plan as a supplement to the Master Plan. Once adopted, they will start to look for funding for construction of the trail.

Mr. Swope asked if they had given any thought to parking areas. Mr. Tufts responded that there are a number of opportunities for parking, as well as benches and lighting, mentioned in the study. Mr. Lemieux also noted that they have opportunities for parking at both ends in the first phase.

Mr. Hicks asked how to go about making highly traveled routes such as Loudon Road safer for bicyclists. Mr. Rhodes responded that a community service video had recently aired on the local television station regarding safety responsibilities for both motorists and bicyclists.

Mr. Hicks asked about safety for people using the proposed Merrimack River Greenway Trail and whether the police department would be able to police it properly. Mr. Lemieux responded that the more the trails are used, the safer they are.

Mr. Swope asked about accessibility for emergency responders. Mr. Tufts noted that this path would be ten feet wide, which is wide enough for an emergency vehicle to access it if necessary.

Mr. Woodward explained that to amend the Master Plan, the Planning Board would have to have a public hearing to amend the Master Plan. The Board could integrate key references in the text of the Bicycle Section of the Transportation Chapter of the Master Plan for now and reference the study in the bibliography at the end of the Transportation Chapter.

Ms. Meyer moved that the Planning Board direct staff to prepare an amendment to the Bicycle Section of the Transportation Chapter of the Master Plan that would be set for public hearing. The amendment would incorporate appropriate references to the documents presented this evening. Ms. Foss seconded. Motion carried.

3. Continuation of the review of the draft **Site Plan Regulations**.

Mr. Henninger explained that Chapter 4 (Design Standards) contained most of the major changes to the Site Plan Regulations. Most of the other chapters were similar or identical to the recently updated Subdivision Regulations.

He explained that Section 27 (Landscaping and Erosion Control) was a complete rewrite. Much of Section 28 (Fire Protection) was drawn from the Subdivision Regulations but this is a new section in the Site Plan Regulations. He also reported that Sections 34 (Conditional Use Permit) and 35 (Technical Review Committee) are new sections.

The Board started the review of individual sections of the regulations that had been significantly revised.

Under Section 18 (Parking Lot Design Standards), Ms. Meyer asked why non-landscaped islands would be allowed to be as much as six feet wide. She felt that if the Board was going to encourage less asphalt, a maximum of six feet was too much. Mr. Henninger responded it would be necessary in order to accommodate signage, light poles, etc. He indicated that six feet is not considered to be wide for a paved median at a retail parking lot.

Ms. Foss agreed with Ms. Meyer and asked if the Board could require porous surface in a paved island. Ms. Meyer agreed that islands should be of pervious surface.

The Board asked that Planning staff review this section again and consider these suggestions.

In Section 18.14 (Tree Plantings), Ms. Meyer felt that a 50-foot perimeter for tree planting around a parking lot was too generous. She felt it should be no more than 10 to 15 feet.

In Section 18-16 (Curbing & Guardrails), Ms. Foss brought up the subject of sloped curbing. Using Steeplegate Mall as an example, the internal vertical curbing was not a concern to her, but the edge near the abutting wetland really should be sloped. Mr. Henninger responded that sloped curbing is easily mountable by vehicles, and people will pull up onto the sloped curbing and park on the landscape strip. Ms. Foss was concerned about the interface between the natural environment and the developed property. Small animals could leave the natural environment and not be able to return. Mr. Henninger indicated that the Regulations do not require curbing to be vertical in parking lots.

The Board directed Planning staff to review these suggestions.

In Section 18.18 (Snow Storage), it was determined that there is a need to define some realistic provisions for snow storage areas that are functional but without destroying landscaping.

Members scheduled a work session for March 30, 2011, to continue the review of Chapter 4 with attention to Sections 19, 20, 21, 22, and 26.

There was no further business to come before the Board and the meeting adjourned at 9:18 PM.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Douglas G. Woodward
Clerk

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