

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

5:30 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

Janis O. Manwaring, Chair
Michael Giacomo, Vice-Chair
Randy L. Filiault
Bettina A. Chadbourne
Robert C. Williams

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager
Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney
Rebecca Landry, IT Director/Assistant City
Manager
Kürt Blomquist, Public Works
Director/Emergency Management Director
Steve Russo, Police Chief

Members Not Present:

Chair Manwaring called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and read the executive order authorizing a remote meeting: Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04. Pursuant to this Order, Committee members stated their locations and whether alone.

1) Relating to Speed Limits – Eastern Avenue
Ordinance O-2020-13-A

Chair Manwaring welcomed Police Chief Steve Russo, who recalled that the City Council asked Staff to look into lowering speed limits on Eastern Avenue after communication from residents. Based on resident feedback and data showing a slight increase in speed on Eastern Avenue since speed data was collected there last in 2016, this Committee voted unanimously to lower the speed limit from 30 to 25 miles per hour (mph) on Eastern Avenue, which received unanimous Council support, and so Ordinance O-2020-13-A resulted.

Councilor Williams noticed that the text of the Ordinance referenced speed limit to 93rd Street as opposed to Church Street, with regard to Railroad Street. Chief Russo said an error was discovered in the Ordinance that referred to Railroad Street being 25mph to Church Street, but Railroad Street does not connect to Church Street, it connects to 93rd Street. Without the correction the Councilors saw in the Ordinance, the speed limit on Railroad Street would have reverted back to 30mph. Councilor Williams said the correction made sense to him. Chair Manwaring added that correcting the aforementioned error is why there was an "A" version of this Ordinance presented.

There were no public comments.

Councilor Filiault made the following motion, which Vice Chair Giacomo seconded.

On a roll call vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee recommended to full Council the adoption of Ordinance O-2020-13-A.

2) Verbal Update – Deteriorating Conditions on Thompson Road – Emergency Management Director/Public Works Director

Chair Manwaring welcomed the Public Works Director Kürt Blomquist, who updated the Committee on the deteriorating conditions on Thompson Road, an issue that concerned residents brought to Staff and discussed before this Committee.

Kürt Blomquist recalled that both the City Engineer and residents identified the road as Deteriorating. Going north from RT-101, on the east side of Thompson Road, there is a steep slope going down and away from the roadway and on the west side a steep slope going up the hill. The eastern slope has begun sloughing away over time as trees have failed and drainage issues occurred, resulting in the pavement there beginning to fail. The Public Works Director recalled residents also raising concern about conditions at the bottom of the hill on Thompson Road, where it connects to RT-101. He said that the Public Works Department hired a geotechnical engineer, who provided a preliminary report on the roadway conditions and slope stability, and the Public Works Director reported those findings to this Committee at a prior meeting. The geotechnical report found that the slope is stable at this time and at no risk of imminent failure, though it would continue to slough and fail over time. As a result of these conditions, the Public Works Department placed barricades along the east side of Thompson Road that narrowed the already constricted roadway from 12-14 feet to approximately 10 feet, which is insufficient for two cars to pass, and so the Public Works Department installed stop signs to keep traffic from going up and down the hill at the same time. The Public Works Department also performed some asphalt repair work at the base of Thompson Road at RT-101 to improve conditions there. The consultant presented options to stabilize the slope in question and what the Public Works Director called a *very* preliminary report was submitted to the City Engineer, Don Lussier, estimating costs to stabilize the roadway between \$1.05 million - \$1.2 million. The Public Works Director recalled other challenges posed including the fact that all land on the eastern downslope side of Thompson Road is owned by Antioch University as a conservation easement. Repairing Thompson Road would require the City to purchase some of that land and the Public Works Director was unsure of the cost in acquiring conservation land for development. There is an additional steep slope on the west side of the roadway composed of bedrock and so any proposal to keep the road at 14 feet in width would require removing some of that bedrock as well.

The Public Works Director recommended accepting this update as informational until the City Engineer could present more details from the very preliminary geotechnical report to the

Committee and the public at a January meeting. Chair Manwaring requested at that time a broader view of the project. The Public Works Director added that ultimately this project would need to go into the Capital Improvement Program and the Council would have to decide where to place it in the program and if it is placed in the upcoming several years, what project(s) would be pushed from the program to allow for that more than \$1 million likely solution.

There were no public comments.

Councilor Filiault made the following motion, which Vice Chair Giacomo seconded.

On a roll call vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee recommended accepting the report on deteriorating conditions at Thompson Road as informational.

There being no further business, Chair Manwaring adjourned the meeting at 5:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katriona Kibler, Minute Taker
December 10, 2020

Additional edits by
Helen K. Mattson, Executive Secretary