

# **Route 108 Corridor Study Committee Meeting Minutes**

**June 14, 2018**

**Municipal Center, Selectman's Meeting Room**

**10 Bunker Hill Avenue**

## **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Joe Lovejoy (Chairman and Selectman's Representative), Lucy Cushman, Michael Dane, Nathan Merrill and Richard Swett

## **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Maria Stowell

## **STAFF PRESENT**

Tavis Austin (Town Planner)

## **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

None

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Lovejoy called the meeting to order at 7:03PM

## **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the May 24, 2018 meeting had been previously distributed. A reading of the minutes was waived. Merrill moved and Cushman seconded a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Passed by unanimous vote.

## **Committee Discussions**

1. Chairman Lovejoy reported that Paul Deschaine had contacted Applied Economic Research requesting a proposal to update the Cost of Community Services Study and/or an Economic Model analyzing the costs and benefits of developing the Gateway Commercial Business District. A definitive proposal has not been received.
2. The Chairman Lovejoy reported that the Stratham Public Works Commission had not completed the report updating the estimated construction costs for a phasing in of the sewer and water infrastructure required to support the Gateway Commercial Business

District. The Baseline condition for cost estimates will assume the Town will act independently. The Town will not partner with another community.

3. Nate Merrill presented the final draft of the **ROUTE 108 CORRIDOR STUDY COMMITTEE VISION STATEMENT.**

The Committee discussed the Vision Statement draft and agreed to the following final version.

**Our mission is to move the Gateway Commercial Business District toward a higher density mix of commercial, professional, and residential buildings and features that return the highest value to the town for both quality of life and property tax revenue that supports vital municipal services. Enabling new development in the Gateway District will diversify and strengthen Stratham's tax base while preventing sprawl that would further harm the rural character of our outlying Residential/Agricultural community. We are "inspired by the past and committed to the future."**

Refer to Attachment A for a complete copy of the **VISION STATEMENT.**

4. Michael Dane presented the **STRATHAM GATEWAY COMMUNITY REVIEW SURVEY** to be placed on the Town's Monkey Survey Account.

The Committee edited each of the questions on the Survey.

- The Survey will contain 20 questions or less
- The Survey will have 3 sections
  - About "You" Questions 1-7
  - Relationship with Stratham Questions 8-14
  - Development & Changes Questions 15-19
- All questions on the survey will be mandatory.
- The estimated survey completion time is less than 10 minutes

5. Nate Merrill made the following motion seconded by Mike Dane.

To approve the Survey with revisions as discussed and to distribute the revised Survey to the Committee Members for approval but withhold distribution until a cover statement is written.

The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

6. The Committee discussed the distribution of the Survey.
  - a. The Selectmen's' email list
  - b. The Parks and Recreation email list
  - c. The Wiggin Library email list
  - d. Facebook – Stratham Talks
  - e. Chain Distribution – ask Survey participants to forward the Survey Link to their Stratham neighbors and friends
  - f. Article in the August Issue of the Stratham magazine
  - g. Article in the Exeter Newsletter
7. Follow up Items for the next Committee Meeting on June 28, 2018.
  - a. Revised Vision Statement            Nate Merrill
  - b. Revised Survey                            Mike Dane
  - c. Survey Cover Statement            Nate Merrill and Joe Lovejoy
  - d. Article in the Stratham Magazine and the Exeter Newsletter        Nate Merrill and Joe Lovejoy
  - e. Status of Applied Economic Research proposal to update the Cost of Community Services Study and/or an Economic Model to analyze the costs and benefits of developing the Gateway Commercial Business District.    Paul Deschaine
  - f. Status of the Public Works Commission updating the estimated construction cost for a phasing in of the sewer and water infrastructure required to support the Gateway Commercial Business District.        Joe Lovejoy
8. Chairman Lovejoy reminded the Committee Members to identify Stratham Town residents who would consider becoming a Committee member.
9. **NEXT MEEETING**
  - a. June 28 at 7:00 PM
10. **ADJOURNMENT**

Merrill moved and Cushman seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:27 PM. Passed by unanimous vote.

SUBMITTED BY

Richard W. Swett  
Acting Secretary

# **ATTACHMENT A**

## **ROUTE 108 CORRIDOR STUDY COMMITTEE VISION STATEMENT**

**Our mission is to move the Gateway Commercial Business District toward a higher density mix of commercial, professional, and residential buildings and features that return the highest value to the town for both quality of life and property tax revenue that supports vital municipal services. Enabling new development in the Gateway District will diversify and strengthen Stratham's tax base while preventing sprawl that would further harm the rural character of our outlying Residential/Agricultural community. We are "inspired by the past and committed to the future."**

Construction of new roads by developers as prescribed in the Gateway ordinance will create additional high-value frontage building lots within the existing commercial area; and will create a secondary transit network that would alleviate traffic woes on Portsmouth Avenue and facilitate safe pedestrian/cyclist travel.

New multi-story buildings with higher assessed values will result in a substantial increase in Gateway District property tax revenues, which will benefit non-Gateway (i.e. residential) property taxpayers in Stratham.

Development of water and sewer infrastructure is required to support multi-storied buildings with tenant diversity, to include retail shops, professional offices, and residential mixed uses. Water and sewer service is also necessary to free up land currently consumed by large septic systems and well radii for new development.

Phased Gateway District development will be carefully managed and financially self-sustaining. Considering that our existing industrial park and commercial zones are nearly completely built out, water and sewer infrastructure that allows higher value development of the existing Gateway area is necessary to mitigate ever-rising property tax burdens on town residents, without sprawling commercial development further north along Portsmouth Avenue.

We recognize the need to fully communicate with Town citizens the issues we face, the ideas we've developed, and glean their feedback throughout the process. We will also be working cooperatively with the Public Works Commission, Board of Selectmen, municipal staff, and professional consultants to pull together a comprehensive proposal for voters at a future Town Meeting.

## TOWN MASTER PLAN (1998) STATEMENT:

*It is the policy of the Town of Stratham to maintain a balance of land uses and development opportunities that results in a well-planned community with a diverse tax base.*

## GATEWAY MASTER PLAN VISION STATEMENT:

*Enhance the economic vitality, business diversity, accessibility, and visual appeal of Stratham's Gateway Commercial Business District, in a manner that is consistent with the landscape and architecture of the Town's agricultural tradition.*

## GATEWAY ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES VISION STATEMENT:

*These design guidelines were developed to illustrate the Town's vision and policy to encourage growth and development that is compatible with the community's history and character. This document provides design guidance and approaches that encourage development of a unified and cohesive district without compromising the potential of each individual landowner or business to develop a well-designed project. The following concept of Traditional Neighborhood Design is highly encouraged and integrated within these guidelines.*

*Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) is a planning concept that informs the creation of neighborhoods consisting of residential and nonresidential uses designed in the format of small, early 19th to 20th century villages.*

*Those traditional formats were characterized by residences on small lots, narrow front yards with porches and gardens, adjacent to commercial areas with shops lining the sidewalks, and public parks, town greens, and village squares. TND is intended to provide an alternative to suburban sprawl type development characterized by an orientation to the automobile, separation of land uses, and low intensity development.*

## GATEWAY ZONING ORDINANCE PURPOSE AND INTENT:

### *3.8.3 Purpose and Intent:*

*a. The purpose of the Gateway Commercial Business District is to enhance the economic vitality, business diversity, accessibility, and visual appeal of Stratham's Gateway Commercial*

*Business District, in a manner that is consistent with the landscape and architecture of the Town's agricultural tradition.*

*b. The intent of the GCBD is to foster development of a vibrant mixed-use district with a cohesive street layout and architectural character that includes commercial, residential, and civic uses and integration of open spaces, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian accommodations. The requirements of the GCBD are based primarily on building form, placement and function, site design, and the overall built environment including streetscapes, landscaping, and outdoor spaces and facilities.*

*c. Development in the Gateway Commercial Business District shall incorporate the following:*

*i. Wherever possible, natural infrastructure and visual character derived from topography, woodlands, farmlands, riparian corridors, and other environmental features shall be retained;*

*ii. Infill development and redevelopment shall be encouraged;*

*iii. Development contiguous to adjacent zoning districts shall be organized to complement and be compatible with the existing pattern of development and the natural landscape;*

*iv. Network of existing and proposed streets shall be designed for access to Portsmouth Avenue and local connector roads, disperse traffic to and from the District, and reduce traffic volumes;*

*v. Transportation corridors shall be planned and reserved in coordination with proposed land uses;*

*vi. Greenways shall be used to define and connect developed areas and provide public spaces and enhance view sheds to adjacent conservation lands;*

*vii. Development shall integrate a framework of transit, pedestrian, and bicycle systems that provide accessible alternatives to the automobile;*

*viii. Use of on-street parking shall be emphasized;*

*ix. Architectural and landscape design suited to a traditional New England appearance shall be applied; and*

*x. Public gathering and public use spaces shall be established and connections made throughout the District in a manner and location that will encourage use and promote safety and security.*

#### REFERENCES:

Gateway Commercial Business District Master Plan (2008) pages 4-5 and 7-

10. [https://www.strathamnh.gov/sites/strathamnh/files/uploads/gcbdmasterplan\\_11807.pdf](https://www.strathamnh.gov/sites/strathamnh/files/uploads/gcbdmasterplan_11807.pdf)

Gateway Commercial Business District Architectural and Site Design Guidelines (2010) pages

iv-v. [https://www.strathamnh.gov/sites/strathamnh/files/uploads/gcbd\\_design\\_guidelines\\_09-15-10\\_parts\\_i-iii.pdf](https://www.strathamnh.gov/sites/strathamnh/files/uploads/gcbd_design_guidelines_09-15-10_parts_i-iii.pdf)

Stratham Zoning Ordinance, sections 3.8.3, 3.8.4, 3.8.5 (pages 30-

31). [https://www.strathamnh.gov/sites/strathamnh/files/uploads/stratham\\_zoning\\_ordinance\\_draft\\_2017rev2\\_1.pdf](https://www.strathamnh.gov/sites/strathamnh/files/uploads/stratham_zoning_ordinance_draft_2017rev2_1.pdf)