

Rte. 108 Corridor Study Committee Meeting Minutes
August 24, 2017
Municipal Center, Selectmen's Meeting Room
10 Bunker Hill Avenue

MEMBERS PRESENT

Joe Lovejoy (Chairman, Selectman's Representative), Lucy Cushman, Nate Merrill, Maria Stowell, Dick Swett

MEMBERS ABSENT

Melissa Currier, Roger Groux

STAFF PRESENT

Paul Deschaine (Town Administrator), Tavis Austin (Town Planner)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No public in attendance

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:07

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Cushman moved and Swett seconded a motion to accept the minutes of July 27. Passed by unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION OF ARTICLES FROM NHMUNICIPAL.ORG

An article entitled *Field of Dreams: How Tax Increment Financing Can Help Development Dreams Come True* and an accompanying list of *12 Commandments* for TIFs were distributed and discussed. The articles highlighted how to reduce risks associated with TIF projects by taking a conservative approach. The Committee agreed that if the Town borrows money there will be some risk to taxpayers and we do not know if they want to assume risk. Previous votes have been inconsistent. Town voters should understand the potential benefits from the development of the gateway district and that the loss of this potential will impact the tax rate.

DISSCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS

Merrill moved and Cushman seconded a motion that The Route 108 Corridor Study Committee supports the vision laid out in the Gateway Commercial Business District Master Plan(GCBDMP), and previously approved by the Planning Board, with appropriate zoning regulations previously approved by Stratham voters. Discussion followed. Passed by unanimous vote.

Merrill moved and Cushman seconded a motion that The Route 108 Corridor Study Committee agrees with the GCBDMPP that municipal water and sewer are necessary for achieving the long-term goals laid out in the plan. Discussion followed. Passed by unanimous vote.

Merrill moved and Stowell seconded a motion that The Route 108 Corridor Study Committee acknowledges that the lack of Water and Sewer is significantly holding back our town's economic development potential and commercial land base valuations (ref: Arnett report). Discussion followed. Passed with Lovejoy, Merrill, Cushman, and Stowell voting yes and Swett voting no.

Merrill moved and Cushman seconded a motion that The Route 108 Corridor Study Committee feels that we should not go back to the voters with another bond authorization unless there is a comprehensive proposal that includes both municipal water and sewer. As of this date (Aug. 2017) we do not yet have a viable sewerage proposal to pair with the Exeter water agreement for presentation to voters at our next Town Meeting (March 2018). Discussion followed. Passed by unanimous vote.

Merrill moved and Stowell seconded a motion that The Route 108 Corridor Study feels that we need more direct guidance and leadership from the Public Works Commission (PWC) and the Board of Selectmen (BOS) regarding inter-municipal partnerships and/or independent Stratham solutions for water + sewer needs in the GCBD. We request that the BOS reopen communication with Exeter (and possibly Newmarket and Newfields) regarding a potential sewer contract. If the PWC has conceptual ideas for a way to handle sewerage on our own, those ideas should be fleshed out and cost estimates developed. Discussion followed. Passed by unanimous vote.

Merrill moved and Cushman seconded a motion that The Route 108 Corridor Study Committee endorses the concept of establishing a TIF district with the goal that new development in the GCBD will help to directly fund W+S and related public infrastructure. The Committee acknowledges that establishing a TIF district without authorizing bonding authority is an incomplete solution, and therefore recommends that the TIF have an expiration date in the event that a viable W+S plan is not approved by voters within a reasonable number of years. Discussion followed. Passed by unanimous vote.

Merrill moved and Cushman seconded a motion that The Route 108 Corridor Study Committee recommend to the BOS that they engage a professional to develop a TIF Plan. Passed by unanimous vote.

MEETING HANDOUTS

Field of Dreams and 12 Commandments

NEXT MEETING

September 28, 2017, 7:00 pm.

ADJOURMENT

Stowell moved and Merrill seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:09 pm. Passed by unanimous vote.

SUBMITTED BY

M Stowell