



**Stratham Technical Review Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 20, 2016  
Municipal Center  
10 Bunker Hill Avenue  
Time: 6:00 PM**

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Members Present: Lucy Cushman, Chair  
Tom House, Vice Chair  
Nate Merrill, Full Member  
Jeff Hyland, Full Member

Members Absent: Joe Johnson, Full Member

Staff Present: Tavis Austin, Town Planner

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**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

The Vice Chair took roll call.

**2. Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes**

a. August 30, 2016

Mr. Austin made a motion to approve the August 30, 2016 minutes. Motion seconded by Mr. Merrill. Motion carried unanimously.

**3. Public Meeting**

a. Review potential amendments to Gateway regulations

Mr. Austin said in response to the previous meeting's discussion concerning lighting and trees in the Gateway District, he had prepared some draft language to address that. The first suggested modification references bike lanes and the problems that could be caused when an emergency vehicle needs to turn. A multi-use lane may be better than individual lanes with a sidewalk. Mr. Austin said he has added language to the landscaping section, instead of having buildings from the 0 – 15' from the right of way line, he has suggested a minimum 30' vegetated buffer provided between the development on Portsmouth Avenue and its right of way. Areas shall include a minimum 5' walk parallel to the State right of way for the length of the property, frontage and connect wherever to adjacent properties. The goal is to encourage the Planning Board to hold to the sidewalk and this modification will achieve at least a 5' walk and possibly wider that could become a multi-use trail. It is a little more difficult to incorporate a multi-use trail if there is no Master Plan for multi-use trails, pedestrian connectivity and such related matters.

1 Mr. House asked if there was an area in the Zoning Ordinance for definitions in the  
2 Gateway District for such things as sidewalks. Mr. Austin said the 30' vegetated buffer  
3 may not be the correct dimension and at the last meeting the Weston Sampson images  
4 were requested by Mr. Merrill using the TD Bank frontage as currently developed as a  
5 measure as it has a front lawn dimensionality of approximately 30'.

6 Mr. Austin asked if 30' was an appropriate dimension and should that be from the edge  
7 of pavement or edge of right of way. Mr. Hyland said in places the vegetative buffer  
8 could end up being 60'. One concern discussed was what would happen if the State  
9 needed to build in their right of way. Mr. Hyland suggested 30' from the edge of  
10 pavement, put in a multi-use trail and street trees on the backside of that trail. Mr. House  
11 asked about the dimension from the center line of the road. Mr. Austin said it would be  
12 45' from the center line of the road to the edge of the right of way. Mr. House said if you  
13 were to have a 4 lane road that means it would be at least 80' wide. The ability for the  
14 Town to use the State right of way for future water and sewer means that area would need  
15 to be preserved for that without it affecting the sidewalk or vegetation.

16 Mr. Austin talked about street lighting and trees and said he simply added a super script  
17 as a footnote so that the Planning Board and qualified professionals could look at the  
18 number and location of either lights and/or trees in coordination with D.O.T. to achieve  
19 the lighting, spacing and landscaping requirements. Mr. Austin observed that Mr.  
20 House's comment to add definitions was a good idea. Mr. Hyland said that he is working  
21 on a project on Route 101 in Bedford and the State is actually putting in street trees,  
22 sidewalks, curbing and all kinds of improvements within the community in their right of  
23 way. Mr. Austin asked if that was because it is in the community's Master Plan. Mr.  
24 Hyland confirmed that it was. He continued that D.O.T. may need to do some  
25 improvements in Stratham and if that happens, it would be good to have a plan in place  
26 that could be utilized to push D.O.T. to do some improvements for the Town.

27 Mr. Austin said there is a Gateway Master Plan, but he is not sure if it calls out enough  
28 specificity. Mr. Hyland said it concentrates more on private property and leaves  
29 Portsmouth Avenue as a white area. The Committee agreed that they should have a  
30 Master Plan for Portsmouth Avenue with crosswalks, traffic lights, trees etc.

31 Mr. Austin asked what an appropriate number is for setbacks. He said developers do not  
32 like a 0' - 15' setback because the State can put snow 10' beyond their right of way.

33 Mr. House asked what the procedure was for revising the Master Plan before it goes to  
34 Town meeting. Mr. Austin said it wasn't manageable for this year. He didn't anticipate  
35 an immediate rush of Portsmouth Avenue getting developed.

36 Mr. Austin changed the topic to sidewalks and sidewalk funds. If developers put money  
37 into a sidewalk fund, it would have to be used within 6 years, but the language could be  
38 framed in a way that sidewalk could be built in the Town Center instead for example  
39 which would keep the sidewalks moving.

40 Mr. House asked Mr. Hyland if he felt 30' of vegetative buffer was reasonable. Mr.  
41 Hyland said he thought so. Mr. Austin said for him it needs to be significant enough to  
42 be able to preclude parking between the building and the road. There was much  
43 discussion around multi-use lanes and the best solution concerning cyclists. Mr. Austin

1 felt a multi-use lane for pedestrian cyclists was better than using the secondary road  
2 system. Mr. Hyland says he feels family members that might want to cycle to Market  
3 Basket for example will want to come out the neighborhood roads and a multi-use trail  
4 might be nice on one of the secondary roads rather than on Portsmouth Avenue. Mr.  
5 Hyland said it would be good if there was a cycle lane on Portsmouth Avenue that was  
6 serviced by D.O.T. and that would be better for serious cyclists.

7 Mr. Austin asked about the setbacks going from the central to the outer zone. Mr. House  
8 thinks the setback can stay at 0' for the secondary streets in the outer zone. Mr. Merrill  
9 said on Portsmouth Avenue green space should be required. Mr. Austin said he had  
10 added that instead of the setback going from the street line, it would be measure 0' – 15'  
11 for the structure from the buffer. If you are on the backside of those buildings, it would  
12 be 0' - 15'. He continued that going into the outer zone, design standards and roadways,  
13 it's 8' minimum and 25' maximum from the lot line as you head toward the Town Center  
14 which still allows for a 5' sidewalk.

15 Mr. Austin asked if one light per every 25' is too many. The committee thought this was  
16 too small a distance. Mr. House said 30' for trees and 60' for lights would be better.

17 *Ms. Cushman arrived at 6:54 pm*

18 Mr. Austin informed Ms. Cushman of the meeting so far.

19 Mr. House confirmed with everybody that they were in favor of a master plan for the  
20 Gateway corridor. Everybody agreed that there should be one. Mr. House said he can  
21 make the recommendation to the Planning Board at their meeting tomorrow evening. Mr.  
22 Austin said he anticipates the Planning Board meeting will be long, but he will refer to  
23 it.

24 Mr. Austin referred to paragraph e.i.2 which has been modified to say a minimum 20'  
25 vegetative buffer shall be provided from the edge of the right of way to the proposed  
26 development. This area shall include a minimum of 5' sidewalk parallel to the State right  
27 of way for the length of the property frontage and connect with when available to an  
28 adjacent property. Mr. Austin said he would add a comment to ensure consistency  
29 relating to street lights and trees.

30 Mr. House asked for an update on points discussed at the previous couple of meetings as  
31 he wasn't able to be there.

32 Mr. Austin asked Mr. Deschaine, Town Administrator if abutters are noticed, and the  
33 meeting duly posted, can a TRC meeting have the functional effect of a preliminary  
34 consultation of the Planning Board to avoid an applicant having to effectively do it twice.  
35 Mr. Deschaine thinks the answer is no.

36 Mr. Merrill questioned if the TRC was even necessary. Mr. Deschaine reminded the  
37 committee that their purpose is to decide if a project is Gateway compliant or not.

38 Mr. Austin updated the committee on the Autofair 2 project. He said they are attempting  
39 to have their approved site plan be considered vested as they have so many days from the  
40 date of recordation which didn't align with the Planning Board meeting; he believes it is  
41 late December/early January 2017 that it expires. The applicant would like to hire Jewett  
42 Construction to come in and remove the pile of hill, do all the underground utilities and

1 put in the septic and the lighting conduit. Mr. Austin suggested they move forward with  
2 a foundation permit. The applicant told him that they are not sure that is the building  
3 they want to build. Mr. Austin said if they change their building, he doesn't believe the  
4 vesting will help. Mr. Deschaine said if they remove the hill that will require an  
5 excavation permit.

6 Ms. Cushman asked when the next meeting should be. Mr. Austin said according to the  
7 website the next meeting would be October 25<sup>th</sup> which would be in conflict with Mr.  
8 Merrill. The Committee decided to try scheduling the meetings every third Tuesday of  
9 the month. Mr. Austin said he would change the schedule on the website to every third  
10 Tuesday.

11 Ms. Cushman made a motion to change the meeting to every third Tuesday of the month.  
12 Motion seconded by Mr. Merrill. Motion passed unanimously.

13 Mr. Austin informed the committee that an application from Stratham Hill Stone raised  
14 an issue about setbacks for lots that abut Route 33 and 108. The historic setback was  
15 100' and in 2011 it became 60' and in 2013 there was discussion about modifying the  
16 setback in the Town Center to 10'. The Table of Dimensional Requirements in the  
17 Zoning Ordinance, shows that in the residential/agricultural zone which is where  
18 Stratham Hill Stone is located, it states 30' footnote e. Footnote e states 10' from the  
19 State right of way or 20' from the edge of pavement; whichever is greater. Mr.  
20 Deschaine said they wondered if it was a typo and should have been 100' rather than 10'  
21 plus the footnote was showing "f" rather than "e". Mr. Austin explained that it should  
22 be "f" which happened because an extra footnote was added which bumped "e" to "f".  
23 Mr. Deschaine added that the unintended consequence of this amendment for 10' is that  
24 it refers to all lots along Route 33 and 108.

25

#### 26 **4. Adjournment.**

27 Mr. Merrill made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 pm. Motion seconded by Ms.  
28 Cushman. Motion carried unanimously.