

**COVENTRY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER**

By: Jobbagy

Time: 7:13 p.m.

Place: Virtual

**ROLL CALL:**

		<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
<b>REGULAR MEMBERS:</b>	Steven Hall, Secretary	X	
	Bill Jobbagy, Chairperson	X	
	Ed Marek		X
	Christine Pattee, Vice Chairperson	X	
	Darby Pollansky		X
<b>ALTERNATE MEMBERS:</b>	Bob Burrington		X
	Carol Polsky	X	
	Arianna Mouradijan	X	
<b>STAFF:</b>	Eric Trott, Town Planner	X	

Polsky and Mouradijan were seated.

**AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:**

No one wished to speak.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**1. South Street reconstruction and pedestrian improvements – Commission review and recommendation on improvements to a designated scenic road**

Todd Penney, Town Engineer/Wetlands Agent, began the presentation. In conjunction with this scenic roads hearing this is also the public information hearing as required under the LOTCIP program. This project is in the preliminary design phase of the project.

Letters were sent to the abutters including the links to materials and the Zoom hearing link. Two display ads were placed in the Willimantic Chronicle. John Elsesser, Town Manager, added all Town Council members received notice of this hearing. The Town has been looking at this section of South Street for some time with the road being in very poor condition. The commitment to fully fund the project through CROG was received earlier this year. This section of South Street has drainage issues, the road is in failure, and there is a lack of pedestrian items. The preliminary estimate of the project is 1.6 mil. Roadway, drainage, and pedestrian improvements are being addressed while being sensitive to the scenic road component. The section under design is ~2,500 linear feet from the roundabout to the northerly driveway of the Nathan Hale Homestead that provides access to the parking field. Approximately halfway from the roundabout the scenic road designation comes into play, roughly where the Sprague house is. The design is maintaining the scenic road corridor in that section. No curbing will be added and the sidewalk will have a gravel resin surface to stay in character. The consultant, BL Companies, is one of four preselected companies that CROG has approved for such projects. Penney said BL Companies has been fantastic to work with. There have been preliminary conversations with the owners of the Homestead and an early discussion had with the Historical Society.

BL Companies was represented by Project Manager Ken Radziwon, Partner Mike Fisher, Project Designer Nick Guardino, and Engineer Chris Mastriano. Ken Radziwon will present the project this evening.

Ken Radziwon said the Town of Coventry is paying of the design costs and 100% of the construction costs will be coming from CROG. This project has many components and unique design challenges with the drainage. The entire project is ~2,800 linear feet from the western limits of the Homestead to the eastern limit of the roundabout. There will be a full depth reclamation and reuse for the part of the road that was put down earlier this year. The remainder will be milled and paved. The walkway will extend from the roundabout to the Homestead. Soil and pavement testing shows the road needs full depth reconstruction. The corridor will be dressed up with new and upgraded drainage to replace the open channel flow there now. The project goals are to enhance pedestrian safety, respect the scenic road designation, create connectivity, beautify and revitalize the area, and restore the pavement life. The service life for a road is 20 years. The existing stone walls will be cleaned up as being paramount to the character of Coventry. The driveways along the corridor will be graded as needed. Along the Holy Grove there will be a wooden guiderail as a safety function to replace the current wood posts. Drainage will be along the guiderail into a catch basin and piped across the road to daylight on the other side of the stone wall, as it does today, eliminating water on the north side of the road. There are discussions with the Homestead about widening the driveway through the entrance and egress of the parking field. Existing monuments will be reset to perpendicular. On the south side of the road the design has been tweaked to save trees along the corridor. Some trees will need to be removed to construct the sidewalk.

Penney said there is a major emphasis to the Holy Grove and the significance of that to the Homestead and Coventry's history. There are a lot of tall, probably past their prime, white pines that likely should come down. The Holy Grove is in the right-of-way on South Street. Taking some of these trees down could open up the view of the Homestead from the westbound travel lane.

Radziwon said the design of the sidewalk is to keep it historic in nature. Concrete does not blend well in this area. A historical type pavement of gravel resin will be used on the 5.5' wide ADA compliant walkway. There will be a grass lined snow swale between the road and the sidewalk. A retaining wall will be constructed from station 16 to 19 on the plans with a wood fence on top near the wetlands. This will be discussed with the Inland Wetlands Agency. The impact to the wetlands will be permanent but the corridor will be enhanced with the mitigation of storm water quality issues. The grass lined swale treats or cleans storm water. The road will be maintained at 26' wide along the corridor. There will be no curbing on the portion of road designated as scenic to maintain the character. Water will sheet flow here. The No Parking signs will be reinstalled. A few boulders will be maintained along the corridor.

The milling and paving will begin near 2165 South Street and continue to the roundabout. The contractors will work with the homeowners when work is taking place near driveways and front yards. Bituminous curbing will be used outside of the scenic designation and the sidewalk will switch over to a bituminous surface as it typical throughout town. A few utility poles need to be relocated. A small retaining wall will be provided in order to make up some of the grade along one property. Curbing will be used on the back of the sidewalk to protect shrubs and arborvitae. There will be turf reestablishment where lawns are disturbed and mailboxes moved. A couple of boulders will be moved or shifted for this portion of the sidewalk to be constructed. The entire corridor will be compliant to ADA codes.

Jobbagy asked if the drainage grates in the grass lined swale will clog possibly creating a greater issue with getting rid of the water. Mr. Radziwon replied the grates are domed; flatter grates get clogged up more. With the dome shape water should be able to still get through. The Town will have to make sure they are free and clear of debris. Penney said this will improve upon the deeply scoured ditch you cannot recover from. There are multiple inlets so if one is clogged the water will bypass to the next inlet. This is unique in terms of the fact that it is a scenic road corridor. So there are more inlets than the standard catch basins. That is not to say this approach is fail-safe. The Soil Scientist deemed the existing swale as an intermittent watercourse. The swale is being recreated to be able to put the sidewalk in. With it being a scenic corridor there is a fine line to balance the water management with the health and safety of the walking public. This is the design at 30% completion. We are looking for ideas on how to approach this. This design might require maintenance one to two times per year. Jobbagy said it seems no worse than what we have now; it is maintaining what we have or making a slight improvement. Penney said this is a good design to facilitate the scenic road designation. There should be no sediment collection as there will be sumps to collect that. It is a better design but he can't say it will improve all of the issues.

Elsesser said the Town would like to keep ownership of the millings to be used for other projects; this should be indicated in the bid. Millings are valuable to us.

Penney said notice was mailed to all abutters giving them a quick overview of the project, Penney's contact information, and links to this presentation. Penney did hear from some of the homeowners. Everybody seems to be in favor of the project but maintenance of the sidewalk was of concern. They are in favor of the connectivity of the pedestrian amenity from the roundabout to the Homestead.

Pattee said white pines have a life span like all trees. She said it is probably appropriate that there needs to be selective culling of the white pines in the Holy Grove.

Elsesser said originally there were twelve elm trees in the Holy Grove to represent the twelve disciples of Christ. Jobbagy added sugar maples were planted in 1805 and the trees replanted with acorns from the Charter Oak. The remaining trees are not the original. Elsesser said the Antiquarian Landmarks have a plan to restore the Holy Grove which is a lifetime project. This would have twelve trees of the same species to indicate the grove was planted for a reason.

The design is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2021 with construction beginning in the Summer of 2021. The engineering/design is funded by the Town of Coventry. Construction funding is through CRCOG and LOTCIP.

The project would not be completed until late Spring or early Summer of 2022. The roadwork is pretty fast. The off-road work and drainage will take the most time which is prep work in advance of the roadwork. Penney said communication will be issued about a traffic management plan especially as it relates to the Homestead, the property owners, and with high sensitivity to the Farmer's Market. This will be vetted out and specified in the bid documents.

Road parking is not possible because of the road geometry. There are No Parking signs on the east side. Elsesser said the Market has been trying to downsize a little bit because it has gotten too busy making it too frustrating for the people showing up. That will continue for this summer; we cannot have 5,000 people there. The Market has become a victim of its own success. The traffic control has been better.

Jobbagy does not think it is necessary to consider if there are any alternatives. This design is sensitive to the scenic and historic values. Hall is impressed with this design.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission adds New Business, item 4 – Swamp Road Alignment Project – to the agenda.

By: Pattee

Seconded: Polsky

Voting:

For: Hall, Pattee, Polsky, Jobbagy, Mouradijan

Against: None

Abstain: None

## **1. Adoption of 2021 meeting schedule**

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission adopts the 2021 meeting schedule as presented.

By: Pattee

Seconded: Mouradijan

Voting:

For: Hall, Pattee, Polsky, Jobbagy, Mouradijan

Against: None

Abstain: None

**2. 8-24 referral resolutions: high school/middle school complex roof and fire alarm improvements; planning/design/renovations/ reconstruction and improvements to the Booth and Dimock Memorial Library**

Staff recounted this was in the CIP program from last year. The project is now moving forward. Bonding is to occur so an 8-24 recommendation must be made.

**RESOLUTION WITH RESPECT TO THE REPLACEMENT OF ROOFS AND FIRE ALARMS AT VARIOUS TOWN SCHOOLS AND THE HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL COMPLEX**

RESOLVED:

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Coventry, exercising the authority of the Planning Commission pursuant to §8-24 of the General Status, having reviewed the proposal for the replacement of roofs and fire alarms at various Town schools and the High School/Middle School complex, hereby approves the said proposal.

By: Polsky

Seconded: Hall

Voting:

For: Hall, Pattee, Jobbagy, Polsky, Mouradijan

Against: None

Abstain: None

**RESOLUTION WITH RESPECT TO THE PLANNING, DESIGN, RENOVATION, CONSTRUCTION, RECONSTRUCTION AND IMPREVEMENTS TO THE BOOTH AND DIMOCK MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

RESOLVED:

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Coventry, exercising the authority of the Planning Commission pursuant to §8-24 of the General Statutes, having reviewed the proposal for the planning, design, renovation, construction, reconstruction and improvements to the Booth and Dimock Memorial Library, herby approves the said proposal.

By: Pattee

Seconded: Polsky

Voting:

For: Hall, Pattee, Jobbagy, Polsky, Mouradijan

Against: None  
Abstain: None

### **3. Planning and Zoning Commission appointment of Alexa Gorlick as Zoning Enforcement Officer**

Staff introduced Alexa Gorlick who is on the call. She has been on board for a month.

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission appoints Alexa Gorlick as the Coventry Zoning Enforcement Officer and as Staff for the Senior Housing Alternatives Study Committee.

By: Pattee

Seconded: Polsky

Voting:

For: Hall, Marek, Jobbagy, Polsky, Mouradijan

Against: None

Abstain: None

### **4. Swamp Road Alignment Project**

Todd Penney, Town Engineer/Wetlands Agent shared a sketch he put together. This involves the taking of rights-of-way for the Swamp Road alignment project. This project is 90% into the design phase. There has been a total take of 16 Swamp Road to accommodate the realignment of Swamp Road to Bread and Milk Street. There are three other parcels that require partial takes. The right-in/right-out of Northfields Road was denied by DOT so Northfields Road will be realigned to Swamp Road. Penney has been working with the three property owners who are being very cooperative. We went through an arduous appraisal process to determine the value of these properties.

40 Swamp Road requires a partial take of 3,050 sq. feet and 2,472 sq. feet for an easement. A remaining portion of 16 Swamp Road would be quit claimed to 40 Swamp Road adding 2,594 sq. feet to that parcel.

2229 Boston Turnpike requires a partial taking. The total area of acquisition is 9,422 sq. feet and a sight line easement of 2,400 sq. feet. Extra land on both sides of this property, totaling 12,000 sq. feet, will be quit claimed to the owners of 2229 Boston Turnpike. A white vinyl shadow box fence will be installed in the back yard.

A small sliver of 177 sq. feet is needed from 39 Northfield Road for the road geometry. 960 sq. feet will be quit claimed to these owners.

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission recommends that the Town Council authorize the partial property acquisitions required for the Swamp Road Realignment Project, pursuant to the letter from Todd Penney, Town Engineer to the Commission, dated November 20, 2020.

By: Pattee

Seconded: Hall

Discussion: Hall said he is glad this project is moving along as it will benefit traffic safety at the intersection. Penney said this will go out to bid in the spring with construction beginning in the summer.

Voting:

For: Hall, Pattee, Jobbagy, Polsky, Mouradijan

Against: None

Abstain: None

### **DECISIONS:**

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission has considered the proposal of the Town of Coventry to reconstruct and incorporate pedestrian improvements along a segment of South Street that has been designated as a scenic road. The Commission finds that the proposed improvements are necessary to protect and promote public safety and that they have been designed to minimize impacts on the scenic characteristics of South Street.

By: Pattee

Seconded: Polsky

Voting:

For: Hall, Pattee, Jobbagy, Polsky, Mouradijan

Against: None

Abstain: None

### **ADOPTION OF MINUTES:**

#### **1. October 13, 2020**

**Motion:** The Coventry Planning and Zoning Commission approves the minutes of the October 13, 2020 meeting.

By: Pattee

Seconded: Polsky

- Page 4, Staff Reports, item 1 – correct the spelling of “Gorlick” throughout.

Voting:

For: Hall, Pattee, Mouradijan, Jobbagy, Polsky

Against: None

Abstain: None

### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

### **STAFF REPORTS:**

None

**ENFORCEMENT:**

None

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Jobbyg adjourned the meeting at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Yvonne B. Filip*

Yvonne B. Filip, PZC Recording Secretary

PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission at the next Commission meeting. Please see the next Commission meeting minutes for approval or changes to these minutes.