

LAND USE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of January 8, 2015

Members Present

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Haak, Co-Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joyce Lenhardt
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ned Mitinger, Co-Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jean McCoubrey
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cynthia Brey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Andrew Moroz
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Gendler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry McEwen, VP Physical (ex-officio)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry Goldfarb	<input type="checkbox"/> Will Detweiler, President, CHCA (ex-officio)
<input type="checkbox"/> John Landis	

Others Attending:

Darin Gatti, Chief Engineer Street Department
Vadim Fleysh, Streets Department
Smitha Mathew, Streets Department
Many near neighbors of E. Bells Mill Road were present
Shoshanna Bricklin, representing Cindy Bass's Office
Celeste Hardester, CHCA Community Manager
Melissa Nash, recorder

John Haak, chair, opened the meeting at 8:05 p.m. It was moved that the minutes of the November meeting be approved. (There was no December meeting.) There is an error in the name of the head of Code enforcement. It should read George Altmeier. With that change the minutes were approved. The procedure for the presentation by the Streets Department and questions was presented. Streets will present, the committee will question and finally the floor will be opened for questions and comments from the audience.

Reconstruction of East Bells Mill Road

•Introduction: Darin Gatti, chief engineer, introduced the project and provided some background. This project has been around for a while; it was first shelved due to a lack of funding. Later it was shelved due to neighbor feedback. The resurrection of the project will result in continuing the project, modifying the project, or abandoning it. The ideal solution is to modify the current design and try to get full support for it.

•Presentation of Design: Vadim Fleysh of the Street Department presented the project. The project location is Bells Mill Road between Germantown Avenue and Stenton Avenue. There would be a complete reconstruction including reconstruction of the culvert. Current conditions were compared with the proposed design of 2005. The speed limit will remain the same as now at 25 MPH. The cartway will be narrowed from 20'-24' now, to 17-18' (23' at Stenton). The travel lane would remain the same at 11'. Currently, the shoulder varies; in the new design it would vary between 2' and 4'. There is no curb; the new road would have granite curbs. There are few storm water inlets; there would be 18 in the new road. (These outlets would go to the existing sewer pipe and to the creek.) The current culvert is a pipe under the road with Jersey barriers. The new would be a prefabricated concrete bridge. The average traffic count for Bells Mill was 3900 vehicles/day, for Hillcrest 6500 v/day, Germantown Ave 12,000 v/day and Stenton 13-14,000 v/day. V Fleysh presented sections of the design and various contours near Germantown and Stenton.

•Presentation of History: In 1994, preliminary drawings for the road were created. There was community-meeting input in 1996-1998 and in 2003. Historical clearance, section 106, was done in 1999-2001. The preliminary drawings were approved in 2001. The final design was completed in 2006. At that point the project was not advanced due to lack of funds and community issues. At that point a member of the audience commented that the historical findings should be challenged, as the initial information used was incorrect. These should be redone. V Fleysh noted that the change in grade has been modified and that there is no re-location of existing stonewalls. It was further commented by the audience that the survey plan was an inaccurate document, and that there were undocumented historical features. The Streets Department needs to verify and update all features. V Fleysh stated that the project is tentatively scheduled to begin in spring 2017 and would continue for one year. The road would be open to residents of the street during that time but would be closed to all other traffic. Hillcrest would be designated as the detour. The cost is estimated to be \$3.5 million.

•Committee Input: Larry Goldfarb asked how access to the houses would be maintained during construction. Construction would be staged with the contractor submitting a plan for that staging. Joyce Lenhardt noted that the design is from 2006 and suggested that it be subjected to community feedback before time and money is wasted. A member of the audience noted that the neighbor objection to the sidewalk was a major issue and that curbs were also a problem. The road has a rural quality and the right turn onto Stenton would require taking land from the property on the corner. Another audience member noted that Norwood has changed its traffic patterns since the 2006 plan – 100% of the car traffic is from Bells Mill. Cars cue up on the side of the road. Ned Mitinger asked if the sidewalk was a fixed-in-stone requirement. The city does not require it in all cases. Streets has asked for an exception from the federal government. Cynthia Brey noted that the sidewalk was an ADA requirement. L McEwen asked about the variation in the road width. This is due to limits of the right-of-way, mainly at the curves. The audience asked about the view of the culvert shown. D Gatti noted that view is from the culvert rather than the road. A member of the audience noted that the sidewalk would be impacted by utility poles that are located on the west side of the road, and curb cuts are numerous on that side as well. This is dangerous. D Gatti noted that the poles might be re-located. Norwood traffic would not allow regular traffic to pass at pick-up/drop-off times. Curbs will also prohibit parking on the street. It was suggested that the arrangement of the roadbed could be changed so that all the shoulder space be located on one side of the street. J Haak asked about the inaccuracies in the survey mentioned by the neighbors. More detail would allow these to be corrected.

•Audience Input: A member of the audience noted that the houses on the west side of the road are below road level; guests park on the west side of the road. Janice Manzi, a neighbor who identified herself, stated that the road is a country road in the city with a feel of history. These changes will destroy that history. Flattening and straightening the road is negative. D Gatti noted that the project is not just building a road but managing the right-of-way to balance all users. Bill Valero of Woodmere Museum stated that as the museum has restored the estate, the stone walls on the street have been preserved and should be retained and unharmed. He asked for total clarification for retaining wall preservation. He further stated that he opposes the sidewalk. Having a sidewalk would require the museum to maintain it including shoveling in winter. An audience member, who identified himself as a new resident, stated that the culvert needs repair and the barriers need a fix. He asked if a partial improvement plan is possible. D Gatti stated that there are many factors that determine the repairs. The culvert does not stand alone. Changing it would require a change of grade and correcting the road to meet safety standards. An audience member compared this project to road improvements done on Shawmont Street, which is a visual nightmare. D Gatti noted that the

project can be modified based on community input. An audience member suggested that the National Trust for Historic Preservation be contacted regarding how to treat rural roads. It should be kept in mind that there are no changes planned outside of the right-of-way. It was also noted that there are no pedestrians on the road. Janice Manzi asked to whom the cars that travel the street belong; most are not local. It was further asked where the storm water line is located. D Gatti stated that it is primarily under the roadbed. Changing the runoff will affect trees on the side of the road. Storm water work is needed to prevent storm water erosion of the road and shoulders. He asked if eliminating the sidewalk and curbs would provide an opening for the project to move forward. Neighbors expressed the desire to do only enough to fix the culvert. Potholes impact safety now. D Gatti suggested that potholes be reported using 311. An audience member noted that changing the width of the roadway was a problem, as quick right turns from Germantown Avenue to Bells Mill are tight now. Narrowing the road will cause more accidents. B Valero stated that the Historical Society would not support the project. D Gatti noted that they had attended a meeting with the HDAC prior to this meeting and the committee neither supported nor denied the project. It will issue comments after discussion. He further stated that it is not possible to just do the culvert. J Haak noted that if the community sees there is potential in the project, a design charrette could be done. An audience member stated that there is a conflict between the road design standards and the historical value of the road. It was also noted that it is imperative to close the road to allow a walk-through to better look at the houses and the historical features along the road. Another audience member noted that there was bad work done on West Bells Mill nine years ago. Shoshanna Bricklin, representing Cindy Bass's office, noted that C Bass supports the desires of the community within reason. She suggested that a checklist of what is needed to be done to keep funding was needed. The funding is 80% federal money. It was reiterated that the state and feds had been asked to make a judgment on the sidewalk and curb and that they are required to have no impact on the stone walls. An audience member asked about the purpose of the curb. D Gatti said it helps control storm water, provides a safely barrier between cars and pedestrians, and reduces erosion. Curbs may help houses with storm water runoff. It was asked if the road would have pervious or impervious paving. It will be impervious as it is a roadway. The audience asked about ground water movement. Water moved through the hospital and through Norwood into the ravine to Hillcrest. D Gatti stated that it is not possible to change the course of groundwater so the road would include a drainage system. The audience stated that the Jersey barriers should go away, as they are not aesthetic. The inlets on the street would go to the creek, which goes to the Swan Pond at the Arboretum. There is a problem with drainage. An audience member asked about asphalt berms in front of houses that help divert water.

- End of Meeting: J Haak asked that people remain open-minded about the road. Feedback will be taken and possibilities will be discovered. Then the project can be evaluated. The community could move forward or Streets could walk away. An audience member asked if the design drawings could be distributed to the community. D Gatti replied that they cannot. As he was not in charge when the design was created, he and his staff must first do a thorough review before the drawings can be released.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.