

**Ipswich Historical Commission Minutes
Meeting April 21, 2020**

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members in attendance: Gordon Harris, Lee Hathaway, Linda Grimes, Laura Gresh, Steve Miles, Tess Schutte; Associate Members: Bill Effner, Tom Schutte.

Also in attendance: Kristen Grubbs of Planning Department, Kevin McHugh of Coneco, Rick Clark Ipswich DPW Director

Minutes March 9, 2020 meeting approved this meeting

High Street Renewal Project – Historic Neighborhood on High Street

Kevin McHugh of Coneco said High Street currently has worn surfaces with different widths, speeding is an issue, sidewalks are not ADA compliant, curbing is missing in areas, parking areas are not defined, the drainage system needs upgrading, and no accommodation for cyclists exists.

He said the goal is to make everything consistent and more uniform. Narrowing the width of the road will slow traffic speed. Sidewalks are to be 5 feet wide with 11.5 travel lanes. 8 feet needs to be set aside for parking. Cyclist lane is 24 inches wide. The grass strip between sidewalk and curb is an area that is flexible. There will be trees along the grass strip. The road will narrow in the area of the funeral home for traffic slowing measures. There will be ample parking for funeral home visitors.

Tom asked if the trees selected would be of the same species. Kevin said that was the plan. Tess inquired about guest parking.

Gordon asked if 6 inches could be taken from 11.5 foot travel lanes to widen cyclist lanes to 3 feet. Kevin said this was doable.

John said the planning seems thorough. He stressed that this is one of the most historic streets in the country and this street defines the historic identity of the town and plans should be sympathetic to the character of the street. He said making a highly standardized High Street that is too precisely engineered is not necessarily the best solution. He said the plan feels too rigid.

Steve agreed that it important consider John's comments regarding consideration of the uniqueness of this neighborhood.

Kevin said uniform sidewalks would make the neighborhood more pedestrian friendly.

Gordon inquired about the calming effect of raised crossings.

Kevin said raised crosswalks are often ignored by drivers and the noise is annoying for residents.

Incorporate Moving Power Lines Underground as Part of the Project

Kevin said the town is limited by right-of-way laws since the power lines would have to be buried on resident's private property. The cost to bury lines would fall upon individual residents. Steve inquired about the possibility of amortizing the cost to residents over a period of time. Additional cost added to the already \$4.4M project would be an additional \$1M to bury power lines.

Ultimately the town and residents of High Street would need to decide if they wanted to pursue this.

John asked if the APD was to be included in these planning meetings since High Street is a large portion of

the APD. Gordon said the APD was invited to the meeting this evening.

Rick Clark said funding for this project is only at 30% and that all town committees need to be involved.

Steve said the IHC should make a list of action items expressed at meeting tonight.

Kristen said it was important to get involved at this early stage.

Linda thought it would be helpful to get residents of the neighborhood involved at this early stage. Steve suggested a meeting inviting all the residents would be a way to include the residents in the decision making process. John also agreed that this it is important to get neighbors involved.

Tom suggested we add hosting a meeting inviting the High Street neighborhood residents and that we add this to our agenda for May next meeting.

Linda suggested an on-line survey be a way to inform neighbors with inability to have meetings in person right now.

Gordon mentioned the half-mile historic district in Deerfield MA. He said this is the closest model that we should aim for especially for traffic calming.

Changes to Demolition Review By-Law/ March IHC Minutes

Tess said the change to "and" would not include houses built after 1915 – Royal Barry Wills, bungalows, arts and crafts.... Laura agreed to remove this from the minutes.

Gordon motioned that the March IHC meeting minutes be approved striking this sentence. Linda seconded. All voted in favor.

Planning Department Summer Intern

Kristen said the position for intern has been posted and she has received resumes. The deadline for applying is May 1st with start date of mid to late May.

Gordon agreed to work with the intern regarding IHC projects – updating existing list of historic houses and initiate the work for National Register Application for Washington Street neighborhood.

Agenda Items for May IHC Meeting

Member should send any agenda items for next meeting to Kristen and Gordon

IHC compile a list of action item from meeting this evening regarding High Street Project

IHC Officers

John volunteered to step in as Vice Chair of the IHC. Everyone welcomed his decision.

Next IHC meeting will be the second Monday in May at 7 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Gresh
Secretary

MINUTES APPROVED JUNE 8, 2020