

# Richmond Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2022

Committee members present: Cathleen Gent (chair), Chris Cole (vice-chair), Mark Damico, Jon Kart, Allen Knowles

Others present: Ravi Venkataraman (Town Planner)

Ravi Venkataraman was present at the meeting physical location; all other participants participated remotely.

A quorum was reached and the chair convened the meeting at 5:30 PM.

**1. Revisions to Agenda:** There were no revisions to the agenda.

**2. Meeting Minutes:** *January 11, 2022 minutes were moved by Knowles, seconded by Kart.* Gent added a sentence that Gosselin suggested committee members could review the VTrans engineering plans for East Main Street. *The amended minutes were approved unanimously.*

### **3. Discussion of S.222, RE: temporary Open Meeting Law procedures**

Gent briefly reviewed the basic provisions in the law, which has been signed by Governor Scott, called Act 78, and summarized Josh Arneson's email about the Selectboard's decision to hold their meetings without a physical meeting location. Venkataraman said he supports going fully digital for Transportation Committee meetings, since committee members and members of the public (when participating) are participating remotely. Knowles asked what the two forms of electronic notice will be for posting agendas and Venkataraman said they will be Front Porch Forum and the town's web site. Venkataraman said the posting of minutes can be extended as needed. No formal motion was made, but all committee members endorsed holding meetings without a physical meeting location until further notice this year, with meeting agenda posting done electronically.

### **4. Route 2 Repaving Update**

Venkataraman provided an overview of his assessment of the VTrans engineering plans, which staff received very recently. In general, the plans show what was expected. There are 350 pages to the plans, in an enormous file. He specifically discussed the Exit 11 area and portions of Route 2 between the Park and Ride and the village. There are generally 5 foot shoulders, however, there is a pinch point at Rod West's related to a culvert, with the shoulder width of 3' to 3.5'. Closer to the village, the shoulders are also reduced at points down to 3'7" and 2'4" past the Willis farm to the village line. To the Bridge Street intersection, there are largely 3' shoulders. The committee looked at the plans (on screen) and discussed the dangerous conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists with the narrow shoulders. *Motion made by Cole, seconded by Knowles, that it is the opinion of the Transportation Committee that the shoulder widths identified in the VTrans plans between the Park and Ride and the village are more than pinch points and present an unsafe infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists and vulnerable users of Route 2 for transportation. The Transportation Committee requests VTrans to minimize the length of the pinch points and ensure five-foot shoulders as much as feasible without incurring exorbitant costs. The motion was passed unanimously.* Venkataraman will coordinate with Josh Arneson to bring this feedback to VTrans. Venkataraman also said that there remain questions about the stormwater plans on East Main Street. The VTrans plans for East Main Street to not include sidewalks and curbing, as those are Richmond's responsibility.

### **5. Discussion of Highway Department Projects**

**a. Follow up from meeting with Peter Gosselin and Josh Arneson** – Jon Kart reiterated his willingness to explore options for burying utilities. Venkataraman said he is looking into lighting fixture options available through Green Mountain Power. At the next Transportation Committee, Venkataraman will present cut sheets for lighting options. Damico said it is important to differentiate between lighting fixtures and lighting design. Putting utilities and lighting underground can help foster good lighting design, which also involves light coverage. Knowles added that currently there is a limitation related to light poles and fixtures, which cast as big a lighting surface as possible. There was general agreement that getting underground utilities will take time, Kart adding

that is primarily because there is no funding and doing underground utilities is expensive. Cole pointed out any underground utility projects that involve a change in user rates must go through the Vermont Public Service Board for a certificate of public need, showing that underground is a less expensive user rate. A cost benefit analysis is required. Damico said that the improvement in aesthetics would be significant and could have an economic benefit for businesses.

b. Follow up from Selectboard Discussion RE: Pedestrian & Bike Safety at Bridge and Railroad Streets – Venkataraman said Peter Gosselin is talking with Dan Noyes about adding light(s) in the Railroad Street right-of-way. He said the town received \$1.3 million in ARPA funds and that committee is doing its due diligence and will soon be soliciting ideas for project funding. Knowles said the type of “yield to pedestrians” cone suggested for Railroad Street would be helpful. Venkataraman said a cone there would be difficult due to trucks turning on Railroad Street. Knowles suggested that a “yield to pedestrians” sign at the upper block mid block crossing would be helpful, since he recently was almost hit when crossing. Damico said all of the solutions are temporary, that the approach we are taking throughout the village is piecemeal and band aid solutions are not optimal. We should look at Bridge Street holistically.

## **6. UPWP FY23 Grants**

a. Richmond applications – Gent pointed out that Venkataraman sent out the two submitted final applications to committee members. He expects to learn if the grants are awarded in April.

b. Green Mountain Transit application – Gent noted that the Transportation Committee had recommended during the last meeting that Richmond apply for a third UPWP grant to explore a transit route analysis for Richmond. Since then, Cole reached out to GMT and Venkataraman reached out to CCRPC, with the happy result that Richmond’s transit route analysis will be included – as part of the Williston to Waterbury analysis -- in the GMP FY23 UPWP grant application. Gent suggested this would be a good topic to bring to the Selectboard and Cole added that, after a new Selectboard is in place in March, the Transportation Committee should discuss the GMT work and to provide a brief update.

## **7. UPWP FY22 Project Updates**

a. Sidewalk Scoping – Venkataraman said that Stantec has not yet provided draft alternatives for the three locations, but he expects to get that shortly and will provide that in the next committee packet. He said the project is still on schedule.

b. Phase 2: Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan – South End – Venkataraman said the public outreach plan for the February 9<sup>th</sup> local concerns meeting is completed and he will begin posting FPF announcements, getting flyers posted in town, the wikimap is launched, and the large format map will be placed at the library.

**8. Committee Priorities for Future Construction Projects** – Gent proposed, and committee members agreed, there should be a work session soon to take up prioritizations, as well as planning for designs holistically, and reviewing the Committee scope -- goals and objectives. Time will be set aside possibly at the next meeting.

Kart brought up parking for recreational locations and discussed the Transportation Committee’s potential role. Gent pointed out that there is a committee focused on parking for recreational trails, the Winooski River, etc.

**9. Grant Opportunities** – Venkataraman had sent the committee ahead of the meeting a copy of the “Building a Better America” list of infrastructure funding opportunities. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

**10. Old and New Business** – The committee discussed potential topics for the February 8<sup>th</sup> meeting: UPWP project updates, lighting fixture cut sheets for Bridge Street, Committee priorities and planning session, AARP walkability audit tool, traffic calming policies, Building a Better America grant opportunities.

**11. Adjourn** – At 7:05 PM, motion to adjourn by Cole, seconded by Knowles. Approved unanimously.

-Minutes taken by Cathleen Gent