

**Town of Freetown
Planning Board**

Minutes of the Tuesday, September 14, 2023 Meeting
Held at the Police Station Community Room, 15 Memorial Drive

Present: James Frates, Chad Carvalho, Christopher Mello, and Steven Tripp.

Absent: David Crose.

Call to Order: James Frates called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. This was a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the Historical Commission.

Note: As this meeting was conducted virtually and all members participated remotely, all votes taken were by roll call.

Presentation from Environmental Partners on options for Assonet Four Corners

Selectmen Zager clarified that they are not making any decision tonight; this is more informative where we can discuss options. Environmental Partner will take back whatever changes we give them and work with that.

Margot Schoenfelder from Environmental Partners (EP) made a presentation to the group showing the results of their Assonet Four Corners Traffic Review and their four suggested options for this intersection. The options included a couple options for installation of a roundabout, a traffic light or a four way stop. Ms. Schoenfelder stated the project purpose was to address safety deficiencies, reduce intersection confusion, improve pedestrian accommodations and address intersection delay, which will be expected to increase with the MBTA station. Traffic volume is still 100 vehicles per hour. Safety deficiencies are the two-way stop control on North Main Street and Water Street, instead of North Main Street and South Main Street as it would typically be opposing each other. The other two directions are free-flowing and a yield. There is also excess pavement at the intersection which causes or promotes fast turning speeds and fast through speeds. There are also poor sight lines for vehicles coming from Elm Street to South Main Street and seeing the traffic coming northbound. There are two formal pedestrian routes and two informal routes. Really undefined pavement that people work on next to the road. There are two existing crosswalks, one at the intersection and one is not at an intersection. It is at least a hundred feet away from where it should be. We would look to have crossings for all four approaches in the right areas. EP considered scenarios; a traffic signal control or a mini-roundabout. Cost for signal scenarios is about seven hundred thirty-five thousand to seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Roundabout configurations cost is about eight hundred fifty thousand for the sixty-foot in diameter. The seventy-five-foot roundabout is about nine hundred and seventy thousand. With the town recently completing the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan we are now eligible for a tier three Complete Streets funding which is five hundred thousand dollars from Mass DOT that is eligible towards the construction of a project. Assonet Four Corners was on the list and would be eligible for the funding. Deadlines for the tier three applications are in October and May 1st in the spring.

After the presentation an opportunity for questions was made available to everyone in the room and on the zoom meeting. There was discussion on choosing options that would keep the Assonet Village a historic district and small-town charm. This included if a traffic light was installed perhaps, it could be a vintage type of light. The roundabout options, one being a large roundabout with the center allowing large trucks to drive over it to make the necessary turns to utilize the intersection and the other was a small traditional roundabout that traffic would drive around. There was talk that some low body trucks would not be able to maneuver the roundabout that trucks could drive over and would result in a lot of banging noises. There was a lot of discussion on speed being an issue and the need for enforcement was mentioned numerous times.

Ms. Pettey would like each committee to meet and then make their recommendations to the Board of Selectmen and have another meeting to listen to everyone's thoughts and ideas. Then a final decision will be made with everyone's input.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Chad Carvalho, seconded by Steven Tripp, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:55p.m.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Nicole DeMoranville, Senior Clerk