

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Town Hall Council Chambers
November 21, 2011 - Monday

Present: Victor Pap, Chairperson
Kevin Whitaker, Vice Chairperson
Robert Conlon, Councilor
Thomas J. Lacey, Councilor
Patrick O'Connor, Councilor

Also Present: Brian McDonald, Councilor

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chairman Victor Pap called the Environmental Committee meeting to order at 6:45PM.

Fore River Bridge 25% Design Phase

Chairman Pap reported that two weeks prior the administration received comments from MassDOT regarding the 25% design phase of the Fore River Bridge replacement plan. The plans are complex and have not fully been reviewed, but the committee asked the administration to provide an overview of the MassDOT communiqué. A memo was provided to the committee with the construction impacts and the concerns the administration will raise to MassDOT as the project goes forward.

The chairman, after speaking with the mayor and Jim Clarke reported that the committee and council should also address concerns to MADOT. The chairman provided the committee with a draft of seven principles that he will recommend forwarding to MassDOT through the Town Council. He asked the other members for feedback and input. He also welcomed comments from the audience. He reviewed the principles and noted the general disappointment with the architectural design of the bridge:

- Although the council is disappointed with the 25% Design Plan and the currently proposed architectural design of the Fore River bridge, this communication specifically responds to the construction impact as well as short and long term concerns of all of Weymouth's residents
- An alert system must be synchronized with the current message boards and initiated, not through MassDOT, but through the Boston Harbor Pilots, the party responsible for actually raising the bridge, using all electronic means, including Facebook, email, text and twitter. Anything less is unacceptable because of the ease and low cost (free) of the existing technology.
- MBTA ridership must be factored in as a constituency that is majorly impacted.
- Uniform sidewalks from the Back River Bridge through Bicknell Square and up to the Fore River Bridge are critical for public safety and long-term economic growth.

- With previous projects, there has been significant infrastructure improvement and investment, which in turn creates jobs and improves quality of life. The same should apply here.
- To the extent possible, the environment should be considered as part of quality of life issues in determining construction impacts.
- Our state delegation should be notified of any communications to ensure the most collaborative approach in the construction of the new Fore River Bridge.

Councilor Conlon noted the alert system is most important. Councilor Whitaker noted the construction MOA will be important and the implementation of a mitigation plan is closely monitored.

Chairman Pap noted that the administration has added that the flow of traffic should be closely monitored as well.

Gary Peters met with the new chief in the Environment section, and delivered the message from the town. Much needs to be discussed still. The Fore River Bridge Neighborhood Association intends to challenge every part of the project, beginning with the water quality certificate. It was sent out in January 2011 and buried in the legal section of the newspaper. He would like to see a more open approach. He provided the committee with buttons from MassDOT. During this discussion, Councilors McDonald and O'Connor arrived. Councilor Conlon and O'Connor noted their support to anything the council can do to support Gary Peters and the Fore River Bridge Neighborhood Association.

Ann Hilbert also noted the dissatisfaction with the agency and the lack of response in terms of public safety.

Councilor Conlon also recommended that there should be a single point of contact at the state house; someone who will be available.

A MOTION was made by Councilor O'Connor to forward the principles outlined in discussion be forwarded to the full town council with a recommendation that they be included in a letter drafted to MassDOT prior to the November 30th comment deadline on the 25% design phase of the Fore River Bridge Replacement Project and was seconded by Councilor Whitaker . UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Adjournment

At 7:10PM, there being no further business, Councilor Whitaker made a MOTION to ADJOURN the meeting and was seconded by Councilor McDonald. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary
Approved by Councilor Pap as Chairman

