

**LOWELL PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
JUNE 12, 2014**

President Kelley called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Recording Secretary Dianna Cade called the roll. Members answering the roll call were Richard Kelley, James Konradi, Robert Philpot, Matt Felder and Donald Parker. Craig Early arrived at 7:03pm., Elias Carras was not in attendance. Also present were Building Official Tom Trulley, Department of Public Works Director Greg Shook, Planning Consultant Jim Mandon, two citizens and one member of the press.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Philpot made a motion to approve the May 8, 2014 regular meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Konradi and carried with five ayes.

PUBLIC HEARING

PC #14-004 – Town of Lowell – Thoroughfare Plan.

Mr. Mandon stated that at the last meeting there were two comments that resulted in request for changes to the Thoroughfare Plan.

The first request was to make an attempt to look at viable alternatives for the curb cut in Freedom Park. Mr. Mandon stated the route that was originally proposed cut thru the southern portion of the park at a forty five degree angle to connect 171st to 173rd. The whole idea behind the Thoroughfare Plan is to offer a continuous east/west route from 41 to 55. The more direct it is and also the more continuous it is the better it is for traffic flow. There are a couple of options that I have added to the plan. They involve T intersections, primarily to reduce the length and therefore the cost of the project. The more preferred alternative is a curvilinear route that has two reverse curves with a radii of 180 feet. Mr. Mandon stated that with a 30 mph speed limit the Town will need to superimpose or put an elevation of around three % grade on the curves. If the Town increases the radius to 300 feet we can keep the ground flat with a traditional crown, however, that would cut into the park a little further in those areas.

Mr. Mandon stated there are two other options making use of the two T intersections. One of the most important things is to get a roadway up in the area across the tracks that connects major thoroughfares together. Enabling all of the neighborhoods on the North side of Town to be connected to an outlet either east or west that does not require getting on Route 2 and adding to the congestion. Mr. Mandon stated that there are not any good alternative options that avoid the entire park area. Mr. Mandon explained the roads that are to the North or South of the park are not viable options due to impediments. Mr. Mandon stated that these are the three options and asked the Board to comment on the options that he presented.

Mr. Philpot asked about the radius of 180 feet and what kinds of vehicles that would accommodate. Mr. Mandon stated that would not accommodate semis. Mr. Philpot asked about the three percent elevation. Discussion followed.

Mr. Philpot asked about the option number two alternative, discussion followed. Mr. Mandon stated that we need some way to connect the two areas North of town together across the tracks, it is better if it is a continuous route. We do have an issue with requiring left turns at two T intersections that are several hundred feet apart, but it is still more valuable to have it than nothing at all. Mr. Philpot asked about the gate crossing. Mr. Mandon stated that we would have to trade the crossing with the railroad if it is going to be at grade. It is cost prohibitive to build a tunnel or bridge over the tracks. At least one idea is to trade the crossing at Oakley. Mr. Parker asked if the railroad is usually receptive to that. Mr. Mandon stated that they usually are. Some municipalities have applied for and been granted additional at grade crossings. It is rare that communities get an extra at grade crossing, but we can apply for that. Mr. Mandon stated that in his opinion the Oakley crossing would be the one to trade.

Mr. Philpot asked about alternative option number three that includes a road to the North that goes through the soccer field. Mr. Philpot stated that he believed the park board and the residents would be the least receptive of this option. Mr. Mandon stated that option cuts the park in half. It does try to make use of the parks existing pavement and system, but you are still stuck with two T intersections. Mr. Philpot stated he has a concern about the pumping station that comes off of 173rd. Discussion followed. Mr. Early asked about a bridge that was mentioned early in the meeting. Mr. Mandon stated if we build option one, two or three we do not need a bridge. Mr. Mandon stated he was talking about a bridge over the railroad. Mr. Early asked about waterways that are in that area. Discussion followed. Mr. Philpot asked about the cost of this plan. Mr. Mandon stated we would have to do soil testing and so forth before the cost could be estimated.

Mr. Parker asked if we could put all three options in the plan. Mr. Mandon stated you could or you could put in two of the three or you could select one option. It does not mean that is what is going to get built. It just means that at this time that is the Board's preference. Mr. Mandon stated that if the park's master plans change and influence a location of a roadway you can change your plan. Mr. Early stated that he thinks it would be a good idea to put all three options in the plan and prioritize them exactly how Mr. Mandon has them prioritized. Mr. Parker stated that he agreed with Mr. Early. Mr. Early stated that he likes option number one utilizing Linden. Mr. Mandon stated that is the shortest route. Mr. Mandon stated that just getting across would help tremendously and that is the option that stays the farthest away from the park. Mr. Mandon stated that in the future you could change it as the traffic picks up, it does not preclude us from doing options two or three in the future. Mr. Parker asked about the street to the north in Misty Glen and Heritage Falls. Discussion followed on the roadways that are currently developed, future roadways to be developed and the tie-in on roadways in Freedom Springs and Heritage Falls.

Mr. Philpot asked about a time frame for the building of the roads in the Thoroughfare Plan. Discussion followed. Mr. Early stated that he thought this was a plan for future development. Mr. Parker agreed with Mr. Early. Mr. Mandon explained that the Thoroughfare Plan is a guideline for future development. You have a document with a lot of information that you can give to a developer who is coming in to develop a subdivision. It can be changed at any time. Mr. Parker asked what course they could take tonight. Mr. Mandon explained that you can recommend it to the Town Council tonight with either all three options in the plan, two of the three options, only one of the options or you can include all the options and prioritize them. The Plan Commission recommends to the Town Council the Thoroughfare Plan after the public hearing tonight.

Mr. Mandon stated the last change that was recommended was to add roadways to the future growth area in tandem with the county roadway system. Mr. Mandon referred to the map with the changes that were made and discussion followed. Mr. Early asked about the areas that are not annexed. Mr. Early also asked about acquiring at grade crossing. Discussion followed.

Mr. Early asked Mr. Trulley about Heritage Falls and how far the subdivision is plotted. Mr. Trulley stated it is plotted and the builder is planning on adding ten more lots. Mr. Early stated that if option three is chosen then it will affect the developer the moment it is approved. Mr. Mandon stated that if that is the continuous route that is selected it does have a major impact. Mr. Early stated that option three should possibly not be included in the Thoroughfare Plan. Discussion followed.

Mr. Parker asked if we can make a recommendation to the council. Mr. Mandon stated that is correct with the two additions and exclude the number three option if the Board chooses. Mr. Mandon suggested they also include the county road ways and the roadway treatment near Freedom Park.

Mr. Kelley opened the public hearing. One citizen, Mr. Dave Shilling, 17555 Susan Lane approached the podium. Mr. Shilling stated that he is working on the Main Street project in Munster, and when they approached the railroad about an at grade crossing they were told they could have one, however three needed to be eliminated. Mr. Kelly asked if anyone else in the audience would like to speak. With no one else wishing to speak for or against the petitioner the public hearing was closed.

Mr. Parker made a motion to recommend the Thoroughfare Plan to the Town Council, including route one and route two. Seconded by Mr. Philpot and carried by a roll call vote.

With no further questions or comments, Mr. Konradi made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM, seconded by Mr. Parker and carried with six ayes.

Richard Kelley, President

Elias Carras, Secretary