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Amesbury

Traffic and Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 18, 2022
Start: 7:02 PM Virtual Meeting
Attendees: Lauren Tirone, Robert Desmarais, Christopher Falcos, Christine Miller, Jonathan Hickok, James Nolan, and Owen Corcoran.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- TTC Disposition succession with Councilor Lennon and Mayor Gove.
 - Owen stated that there would be no public comments taken at the meeting and gave the floor to Councilor Lennon for her presentation.
 - Councilor Lennon stated that there has been an ongoing discussion about the TTC in City Council for about a year, and said that in the last election cycle, they reinstated the Technical Review Committee. They found that TTC duties were being duplicated with the TRC. She stated that CC also created a planning and development subcommittee, as well as restructured the ordinance committee. Based on the new and restructured committees, Councilor Lennon said that the city now has a wealth of services that has created a situation that has been highlighted by issues that has created problems with members of the public not being satisfied with TTC recommendations, and has created problems with city council having to work with the findings of the TTC, specifically with Main St/Point Shore. It was also becoming clear that members of the public could just bypass the TTC and take their issues directly to CC. This was leading to a duplicity in services, when the P&D subcommittee is now intended to connect the TRC and the Planning Board (PD). Councilor Lennon then asked members of the TTC who are part of city staff who is also serving on the TRC, and which resident volunteers (Christine, Chris, and Owen) would be interested on serving on the P&D subcommittee, as well as general feedback from TTC members.
 - Lauren asked Councilor Lennon to elaborate on her question to the TTC> Councilor Lennon stated that the question was if TTC duties were being duplicated in other ordinances. Lauren asked if Councilor Lennon could come back to her so she could think about the question first.
 - Owen asked if this was an initial planning discussion, or if the end of the TTC was already a forgone conclusion. Councilor Lennon stated that her intent was to

submit a bill that would dissolve the TTC, describe future roles for TTC members, and highlight where TTC mandates are divided. She also stated that the TTC was formerly a quasi-legislative body that acted as the left hand to the planning board until the TTC ordinance was revised in 2015. Councilor Lennon said that because of the revision to the ordinance under the previous administration, the TTC was just an advisory board, requiring total cooperation between the CC and the executive office. Because of this, it would be very difficult to shift the TTC back to its original ordinance. She further highlighted the duplicity between the TTC and the TRC.

- Owen asked if there was a tentative timeline for the bill, stating that even though the structure of the TTC was in question, he felt that it would be a dereliction of duty if TTC actions were suspended while the bill was in progress. Councilor Lennon stated that she wanted to gather feedback from the TTC to help her in drafting the bill. She stated that she was aiming for a first reading in November.
- Jim stated he had no additional comments. He stated that he's on the TRC, and that issues in the TTC can be brought to the TRC.
- Councilor Lennon asked if he had any feedback to help her draft the bill. Jim stated that he thinks Chris and Owen are knowledgeable of the laws, particularly Chris who works for MassDOT.
- Chris stated that he wants to be able to help as much as he can, and said it makes sense that if the TTC is just an advisory board then perhaps there needs to be change. He stated that no matter what, he'd like to remain in some sort of advisory position, perhaps to Rob, to be able to help explore options in the future.
- Councilor Lennon stated that if he is interested in the P&D subcommittee, then they would be meeting the next day if he wanted to observe.
- Christine stated that she had no opposition to TTC dissolution. She said that she lives on Main St., and stated that until the TTC is dissolved, residents have an update given to the public that we are just an advisory board, and where they can go once the TTC is dissolved. Councilor Lennon stated that residents can always petition their district councilor to sponsor a traffic concerns bill. However, that was not her first preference. Councilor Lennon stated that her preference would be to establish a reliable mechanism for concerns to be brought to the city and possibly referred to the TRC, thus establishing a feedback loop with residents and the city on traffic and safety issues.
- Councilor Lennon asked Christine if she'd want to serve somewhere else post TTC, and Christine stated that she is an attorney and would be interested in somewhere where an attorney's skill sets were needed.
- Rob stated that he is on the TRC, and he feels that the biggest loss with dissolving the TTC would be the loss of technical expertise. He stated that people with technical expertise going to other committees would be beneficial. Rob highlighted the political nature of the TTC over the technical.
- Councilor Lennon mentioned the MVRTA coming to the TTC for the route change. Mayor Gove stated that MVRTA came to discuss no parking signs, not the route. Rob mentioned the previous structure of the TTC in years past and highlighted the helpfulness of those with technical expertise.
- Mayor Gove mentioned the TRC meetings being during the day and not public meetings. Her concerns were over where people would go to get information on a discussion and review. She stated that people call her office looking for traffic and safety assistance, and their concerns are often "half baked", without technical

expertise being involved. She also highlighted concerns with abutter notices, as well as residents being upset for not knowing a concern had been already discussed and deliberated by the TTC. Councilor Lennon said her recommendation would be to send residents to the P&D subcommittee during the public comment period to air their initial concerns, before the issue heads to the TRC and possibly CC. She stated that there, residents could find support and a sponsor for their issue before it moves forward. This would potentially avoid CC or the executive office being surprised. Councilor Lennon stated that residents could use SeeClickFix for initial awareness on the issue. She also stated that she did not want to structure the bill in a way that would cut the executive office out of the conversation. Mayor Gove again highlighted the necessity for residents know where to file complaints.

- Owen added to the mayor's comments and stated that he and Lauren have worked together on addressing traffic issues that don't need to eventually go to council. Councilor Lennon said she imagines that most complaints coming to the TTC could be cleared through the PD.
 - Lauren stated that recently speeding complaints have come in to the PD, where they can conduct a speeding count. If they are not satisfied, we can move the issue to the next step. Lauren stated that many issues don't need to bog down CC and other committees. She stated that she supported the dissolution of the TTC.
 - Mayor Gove stated that she could work with other department heads to come up with a "flow" for handling these complaints.
 - Councilor Hickok stated that he believes that clarity on the TTC is in order (TRC vs. P&D). He supported separating the political from the technical, using the resources and abilities of the respective committees. Councilor Hickok then talked about the town meeting regarding the Merrimack River District. He raised concerns over how to thread the needle between the technical and political aspects of such a big issue.
 - Rob stated that we are going to get the feedback from the Main St. survey and formulate a proposal to CC.
 - Councilor Lennon said she appreciates Councilor Hickok's comments, and highlighted his efforts to hold town hall neighborhood meetings to facilitate a more efficient discussion.
 - Councilor Lennon handed the floor back to Owen.
 - Owen thanked Councilor Lennon and Mayor Gove for joining the meeting.
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- Additional Comments and Discussion from TTC Members
 - No one had anything to add.
 - Owen mentioned future meetings, and because we have a standing ordinance, he asked how TTC members felt about subsequent meetings. Lauren stated that we had to meet again anyway to approve the minutes from July.
 - TTC consensus was to schedule a meeting for December.
 - Jim motioned to adjourn; Chris second. Chris-yes, Lauren-Yes, Jim-yes, Rob-yes, Christine and Councilor Hickok were no longer on the meeting.

Next meeting scheduled for December 19, 2022 at 7:00 pm. Meeting adjourned at 8.m.