

**SOMERSWORTH PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING
November 18, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron LeHoullier, Chair, Jason Barry, Bob Belmore-City Manager, David Witham, City Council Representative and Mark Richardson, Alternate, Harold Guptill- Vice Chair & Keith Perkins – Alternate, Jeremy Rhodes, Paul Robidas and Chris Horton

Excused Members:

STAFF PRESENT: Michelle Mears, Director Development Services, Dana Crossley
Planning Secretary

The Meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

Director Mears stated due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically. The public has access to watch to this meeting through the Local Government Cable Access Ch. 22 (Comcast), and streamed live through the City's website at www.somersworth.com. Although this is a public meeting, the public is encouraged not to attend and instead to leave comments or concerns at the following phone number # 1-603-841-2936, by emailing planning@somersworth.com or by sending written comment to Planning Board, 1 Government Way, Somersworth NH 03878. Comments must be received no later than 4pm the day of the meeting. She stated all votes will be taken by roll call votes.

Roll call attendance was taken: **LeHoullier** and **Perkins** were present in Council Chambers. **Guptill, Robidas, Barry, Rhodes, Horton, Witham, Belmore and Richardson** were in attendance remotely and alone. Director Mears and Secretary Crossley were also present in Council Chambers.

LeHoullier appointed Richardson as a full voting member for the meeting.

1. **Review and Discuss Proposed 2022-2027 Capital Improvement Plan:**

City Manager Belmore, Superintendent of Schools Robert Gadowski, Police Chief David Kretschmar, Fire Chief George Kramlinger, Director of Public Works Michael Bobinsky, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Lori Lane, City Engineer Amber Ferland were in attendance remotely to present the CIP and answer Board questions.

Belmore reviewed the CIP procedure and process. He stated the proposed net City Projects for 2022 is \$5,006,635. He reviewed the priority I, priority II, priority III and multi/year projects. He reviewed previous projects that had been completed. This included purchase of equipment and ongoing projects.

Belmore noted that the road resurfacing is expected to start in the spring of 21 and affect 20 roads. He stated the Council approved a bond for the Complete Streets project of Cemetery Road. He stated the Fire Station bond was approved, a construction management firm will be hired and construction is expected to take 18 months.

Gadowski reviewed the School Department CIP projects. He stated they are nearing to completion of the elevator renovations at the Middle School. He stated they continue to work on removal of the asbestos tiles in the High School. He reviewed the upcoming projects, highlighting the High School HVAC, Middle/High School paving project and Middle School window replacement. He stated the Middle School is the subject of their focus moving forward.

November 18, 2020 PB Workshop Minutes

Lane stated the installation of the new HVAC system has improved ventilation. She stated the School appreciates the support from the City on projects. She noted the received stated funding this year to help complete projects.

Board Questions/Discussion:

Robidas stated it was mentioned that the Police Department is on track to purchase one cruiser a year. He asked if they had been purchasing more than one a year previously and what had happened to that. Belmore stated the intent had been to purchase on a 1-2-1 trend, but it did not hold consistent. Robidas inquired if they are in turn then spending more on maintenance.

Kretchmar stated that is a concern regarding maintenance costs. He noted they had lost a cruiser due to an accident and it is starting to catch up to the Department.

Witham stated he does not think purchasing one cruiser a year will keep pace for long. He noted the Police are front line personnel for the City and they need to ensure that equipment will meet the demand and responsiveness required. He stated he would recommend that purchasing one cruiser a year is not adequate and it should be increased.

Richardson stated the CIP has been done very well by both the City and School staff. He noted some of the School projects have been on the plan for more than 10 years. He stated he would like to see the year the project is placed into the CIP attached to it. He felt this would give the projects a better chance at staying higher on the to do list.

Horton thanked the Staff for putting together the CIP. He expressed his compliments on the purchase of the portable vacuum by the DPW. He questioned if there were ongoing concerns of stormwater entering the system that have prompted the Sewer Collection Assessment.

Bobinsky stated they know there is some stormwater going into the system but the assessment would give them the opportunity to identify problem areas. He stated it would assist them in the best maintenance and repair areas.

Horton stated he appreciates that the City and Departments take care and pride of the City vehicles. He stated the asphalt behind the school is in severe disrepair and would like to see that addressed sooner than later.

Gadomski stated they are aware of the rising issue and have moved it to the 22-23 CIP year. He stated they are hoping to get a competitive bid for repaving of that area when the City comes through paving Cemetery Road.

Richardson stated there are drainage issues at the school that severely affect the playing fields. He expressed that drainage should be redirected away from those fields.

Witham stated the timing will never be better for the School to repave that location than when the City is paving Cemetery Road. He stated he is going to make note to have that included as a bid alternate when they go through that bid process for Cemetery Road. He noted that he fully supports the repaving of the Noble Pines basketball court, but feels that the Blackwater Road courts are underused and they should discontinue care of it at some point.

Horton stated the Riverwalk expansion study was identified in the 2010 Master Plan as an important element. He inquired why that study has been pushed out 16 years from origination.

Belmore explained that the projects that are completed comes down to what is most important for the City. He noted that much of the proposed Riverwalk is on private property. He stated there have been more pressing needs for the City.

November 18, 2020 PB Workshop Minutes

Horton stated the former Police Station has been owned by the City for quite a few years. He knows there has been some talk of movement for that property but thinks with the cleanup required for it, it should be added to the CIP as a project.

Belmore explained that the City is in the process of applying for a grant for remediation of that building and expect to hear soon if we will receive the funds.

Horton stated he believes it should be included as a CIP project. He noted that the Plaza façade is also owned by the City and inquired if there is a maintenance plan in place for its upkeep.

Belmore stated there is not a maintenance plan at this time.

Horton stated he would like to see that also incorporated into the CIP. He stated the City Manager has done a good job connecting the Master Plan and CIP. He stated he would like to see an additional column that shows how each project supports a Master Plan goal. He stated there has been discussion of a sidewalk restoration and maintenance plan but it has not come to fruition and feels it should be included in the CIP.

Witham stated that the CIP is a flexible document. He noted as priorities changes, projects get moved around on the list. He stated for example for better staffing coverage at the Fire Station they pushed off purchasing more radios. He stated the sidewalks are an important topic and the Public Works & Environments Committee has been working with the City Engineer to develop a maintenance plan. He stated if not for money, they would be completing more projects. He stated he is unsure why the City owns the Plaza façade but expects that it likely needs a coat of paint and would not qualify as a CIP project.

Richardson stated the conversation regarding sidewalks goes to his point of putting a date on a project once it is added into the CIP.

Belmore explained the City has shifted from sidewalk repair jobs to complete street projects. He stated he is aware of the sidewalk issue in the City. He stated in order to fund all of the projects they would need significantly more money.

Rhodes stated he would echo Manager Belmore's comment regarding sidewalks. He stated if they continue with the complete streets' projects and strict review of need when coming through Planning Board it can get to the point where the sidewalks can be dealt with in smaller portions. He stated sidewalk maintenance and upgrades without updates to the roadways leads to questions of utilization and feasibility of doing the work. He stated addressing the concerns in a complete street project makes a lot of sense. He stated with new development the Board can deal with it when it comes before them. He stated the work that the Public Works team around pavement maintenance and improving the quality of streets in the City is remarkable. He expressed his appreciation in the managing and installation of those improvements.

Robidas noted that the Fire and Public Work project submissions were done very well. He stated he feels the Police Department should be purchasing more than just one cruiser a year. He stated Somersworth is a small but busy City.

Witham inquired if purchasing 2 a year would be more appropriate.

Kretschmar stated if Council felt it was more appropriate 2 a year would be a positive move.

Belmore stated the Planning Board can make that recommendation but it would be a discussion he would have to have with the Finance Director and Police Chief and look at the budget for feasibility.

Horton stated the sidewalk tractor and Memorial downtown were squeezed in last minute. He stated he would like to offer an amendment to the CIP prior to it being sent to City Council.

November 18, 2020 PB Workshop Minutes

Belmore stated the Planning Board cannot change the CIP and explained the City Charter in regards to the CIP being submitted by the City Manager.

MOTION: Richardson stated, I move to APPROVE the 2022-2027 CIP as presented and move it forward it City Council.

The MOTION is SECONDED by Barry.

Discussion: Witham stated he agrees with the motion in general but feels they should articulate what comments they want with the recommendation. He stated he would like to note that Council should consider increasing the number of Police cruisers bought yearly and to consider removing maintenance of the Blackwater Road basketball court.

Richardson stated he would accept that comment and include the previously discussed comments as well. Belmore stated that is what has been done in the past and he would advocate it continue as part of this review process.

Barry stated he would also agree to that.

Robidas thanked staff or all of the work done on the CIP.

Guptill stated he would support the comments of a lot of work well done and he appreciates that work done year to year. He inquired why the Board would approve the CIP if they cannot change it.

Belmore stated the Charter dictates the City Manager will create and complete a proposed CIP each year and present it to the Council (by December 15).

There was a brief discussion of the Planning Board's roll in the CIP process.

Amended Motion: Richardson stated, I move to accept the 2022-2027 CIP as presented with the Board's recommendations as discussed to be passed onto the City Council.

The AMENDED MOTION is SECONDED by Barry.

The MOTION CARRIES by a roll call vote of 7-1-1 (with Horton voting in the negative and Belmore abstaining)

Robidas stated I MOTION to end the workshop.

Belmore SECONDS the motion.

The MOTION CARRIES by a 9-0 roll call vote at 6:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Crossley, Planning Secretary