

**Hull Board of Selectmen
Final Minutes
April 22, 2021**

The meeting of the Hull Board of Selectmen was held at 7:00 p.m. on April 22, 2021 via the GoToMeeting platform as an alternate means of access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Present: Jennifer Constable, Chairwoman; Donna Pursel, Clerk; John Reilly, Member; Domenico Sestito, Member.
Absent: Greg Grey, Vice-Chair. Also present were Town Counsel James Lampke and Town Manager Philip Lemnios.

Before calling the meeting to order Constable led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing re: Atlantic Avenue Rehabilitation Project, Layout, Relocation and Alteration Plan

Lemnios introduced members of the Atlantic Avenue Team, John Morgan and Drew Valcovic who were the project engineers, and Melissa Ryan and Brian Vaillancourt from AECOM, the firm that along with Town Counsel James Lampke was guiding them through the legal process. The Right of Way Team included Lemnios, Lampke, retired Public Works Director Joe Stigliani and Assistant Conservation Administrator Sarah Clarren.

Lemnios said this project has a total value that is close to \$9.5 million. The State, through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), is covering \$8 million in construction costs. Without this aid, local taxpayers would need to finance \$9.5 million. Lemnios said that the roadway will be fully reconstructed with a new sidewalk and will also be brought into close compliance with both federal and state safety guidelines. He said the project impacts the entire Town as Atlantic Avenue is one of the area's most heavily traveled roads. In order to bring the roadway up to current codes they will need to make some changes to the road as it currently exists and environmental considerations involving Straits Pond will play a major part in these changes. Lemnios noted that there is pressure to keep the project moving along as there are timelines that must be met for the funding to come through and without this funding the project would effectively end. He then turned the presentation over to John Morgan and Drew Valcovic for a more complete description of the project.

Morgan, the Design Manager, said he would give a brief overview of the Atlantic Avenue Reconstruction Project and explain some of the reasons for the need for alterations to the roadway. He said the project includes the full length of Atlantic Avenue from Nantasket Avenue all the way to the Cohasset town line. The project started in 2008 and it has been a long design development process but recently they have had some public outreach meetings and Conservation Commission meetings. In November of 2020 there was a public information meeting at which they explained the proposed improvements. He said that the vote on the alteration will take place at the upcoming Town Meeting. The plan will be finalized in June and the Right of Way acquisition will be completed in early August after which they will begin advertising the project for construction. Construction will begin in the fall/early winter of 2021.

Morgan said the goals of the project are really infrastructure and safety improvements including roadway, sidewalk, drainage, and utilities. He said that the Town has been upgrading the utilities and the roadway and that once it is completed it will be in good shape for the next fifty years as long as routine maintenance is done. The design is being done to address the needs of all roadway users, pedestrians, bikers, and cars. Due to the funding they are required to meet design standards of MassDOT as well as federal highway and ADA standards. They also have to follow the Right of Way guidelines that MassDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have set which determine the size and types of easements that are required. He said they also have to minimize the environmental impacts of the project and their plans and designs are reviewed by multiple regulatory agencies including the Hull CC, Mass. DEP, Army Corps of Engineers and Coastal Zone Management. They need to obtain permits from each of the regulatory agencies.

Morgan said that certain portions of the roadway will be narrower than minimums required by MassDOT but they were able to secure an exception in order to limit impacts to private property and the environment. The narrower areas will have 11' travel lanes, 4' paved shoulders for bicycles and a total paved area of 30' plus the sidewalk on one side. There will be some areas where on-street parking will be allowed on one side of the road and in these areas there will be a 7' shoulder. He said there would be minor adjustments to some of the intersections to improve pedestrian crossings at those intersections. He said that in certain areas where there were 7' shoulders parked vehicles would be sharing the space with bicyclists which would necessitate bicyclists moving into the vehicle roadway as they go around the parked cars. He said there was not enough room on Atlantic Avenue to provide for parking and a separate bicycle lane in the same direction without too much of an impact on property and environment. He said in the area near Straits Pond they are making some wetland replication improvements and are working with the environmental permitting agencies to finalize these. He said that in that area there was not enough room to put in a 7' shoulder due to the constraints of the pond and limiting environmental impacts.

Morgan said that in order for MassDOT to advertise the project and construction, the Town must acquire the necessary rights to work on private property. In order to do that there are 5 required fee takings, which would be alterations to Atlantic Avenue's right of way. There would also be 43 sidewalk permits/easements required which are considered alterations to the right of way because the public will be allowed to travel on those easements. There are also permanent drainage and utility easements and temporary construction easements which would only be for construction which will expire once the project is completed. Without these easements the project will not be able to move forward. Part of the process involves securing approval of the roadway alterations from the Board of Selectmen.

Constable asked if there were any questions from members of the Board. Sestito asked Morgan if he had any sense of how long a project like this would take to complete. Morgan said he thought it would take two full construction seasons so if they started when they hoped it should be completed by late 2023. Morgan said they would plan to work during the busier summer season but would plan to keep traffic flowing during construction.

Sestito asked if the communication around easements and takings has begun. Lemnios said that communication to property owners regarding easements is a very precise process that is guided by both federal and state guidelines and asked Melissa Ryan to address this question in more detail. Ryan said they have mailed out information packets to the property owners by certified mail, which will require a signature from the recipient. She said the packet includes an introductory letter that will highlight contacts, construction schedule, and what should be expected in the coming months. Ryan said they should also have received a letter from the appraisal firm that has been assigned to their property and they have a right to speak with the appraiser and meet with him/her during the property inspection. She said she has heard that many of the property owners have been in touch with the appraisers, which is great. The packet also includes the design plans and a photo illustration outlining the easement on the property along with a donation certificate. Property owners have the right to receive compensation for the easement or to donate it to the Town. The packet also includes the Federal Aid Acquisition Guide which they should read as it explains their rights under federal and state laws.

Constable asked Morgan to clarify why there would be parking for most of the length of the project but not from Driftway to the Cohasset town line. Morgan said they stopped the 7' shoulder at Driftway because of the proximity to Straits Pond as the extra 3' toward the pond would have environmental impact. Lemnios said that trying to accommodate parking is of high importance to the project and they are discussing the possibility of altering the roadway to allow for parking on the ocean side of the road in this area but have to consider environmental impacts and safety standards. Constable asked if there were any recommendations relative to the speed limit on that road. Morgan said he believes the limit is 30mph and there is no change proposed. Lemnios said that once the road is freshly paved they will ask Chief Dunn to put in greater enforcement to reduce speeding.

Constable then asked if there any members of the public who had questions or comments. One caller asked about the appraisal process. Ryan said the appraisal is completed by a primary appraiser and reviewed by a second appraiser and they come to a conclusion as to the value of the easement. Property owners should hear about the appraisal value in June and will receive an offer letter from the Town based on this appraisal. Anyone who wishes to donate their easement can drop the donation form off at Town Hall.

Dave Bowen from Atlantic Avenue said that his porch is subject to easements and he is not clear as to how that would work and added that it would be nice to have a break from the project during the summer. Lemnios asked Bowen to call his office and would arrange for Stigliani to visit the house and explain what the impacts would be. He also said he realizes that this is incredibly disruptive but if they put restrictions on when work could be done it would significantly increase the cost of the project. He said that everyone who lives in that area will ultimately benefit from the improvements to the area and that the project will ultimately draw people to Hull.

Another caller asked about speeding in the area near the Cohasset town line. Lemnios said they receive this question frequently and that people have asked about the possibility of installing speed bumps. Morgan said that Atlantic Avenue is an arterial roadway so speed bumps are not generally allowed. He said they do have a few things proposed that should help to slow traffic down but the roadway in this area will not change much so he would not expect a big change in speeds on the road. He said that the crosswalks that are currently in place will remain pretty much the same. Karen Stacy, 5 Montana Avenue, asked if it would be possible to install temporary speed bumps during the summer. Lemnios said he would have the Police Chief look into this but thinks the classification of the roadway might make this impossible. Anne Murray said speeding is a huge problem and suggested the possibility of a flashing light that flashes the speed the driver is going. Murray also asked about the liability associated with temporary easements. Lampke said that all contractors who are hired would have insurance to cover any claims.

Harold FitzGerald said he was concerned about a stone wall at the front of his son's property and wants to know that this will be retained. Morgan said the sidewalk will go up against the wall but it will be retained. Fitzgerald said he was concerned about the possibility of accidents occurring at that spot because it was so tight and Morgan said they were actually looking at that and designing the roadway so that the radius would be further away from the stonewall.

Paul O'Brien asked how storm water runoff would be dealt with as he lives right up against Straits Pond. Morgan said that the drainage work is detailed on the utility plans and the improvements provide for 74 new catch basins that will improve storm water treatment before it outlets to the pond. He said there is also a storm water report that was submitted with the Letter of Intent filing submitted to the CC and they could make both reports available to the Town. Lemnios said the Town website has links about the project that would help answer questions or the caller could send an email to the Town for information.

Hugh Smith from 25 Atlantic Avenue said that he noted more drainage areas going into a distribution box just outside of his driveway which is a major concern because everything going into the pond backs up in those drainage areas and during a heavy rainstorm they do not drain out. There has been nothing said about replacing the pipe going out to the pond which is described as a 12" pipe but looks like a 6" pipe. He said he is the lowest house on the street and has been having issues since he lived there. Morgan said he feels that the roadway changes and the additional structures will help to get the water out of the roadway. He said they were not planning on replacing the existing pipe that runs through Smith's property but they will check into this. He said that any existing pipe that remains will be completely cleaned out and they will take another look at that to see if it helps. Lemnios noted that there are multiple agencies that are involved in a project of this nature including the local Conservation Commission and Coastal Zone Management and that anything in this project that involves Straits Pond will come under close review. He feels that the project will improve drainage in the area but it will never be completely free from flood impacts as it is a very dynamic area from a weather perspective.

Brendan Barry, 184 Atlantic Avenue, asked about the proposed concrete in front of homes in this area and the possible relocation of the stairs to the beach near his home. Morgan said the design has changed and this area would remain pavement and the stairs would remain where they are but might be moved later as part of the seawall restoration project. Lemnios said they had just received design plans for the replacement of that wall and would keep property owners in this area informed about what would be proposed. Barry also asked about the parking spaces on his side of the road that make pulling out to the road difficult. Lemnios said they would look at this but are hoping to preserve as much parking as they can.

Michael Connell raised the issue of parking from the Driftway to the Cohasset line. Lemnios said that based on comments from abutters they had adjusted the curbing in this area so it would not make parking impossible. He said

that although parking in this area is technically illegal the Police Department has generally not enforced restrictions in this area as they realize residents have created pull up areas to use for parking. Lemnios said issues regarding visitors would need to be worked out with the Police Department.

Connell also said there is a utility pole that is about 5' from his house and he believes they are planning to move it closer to his house bringing the wires closer to the house which was a concern for the building inspector. Lemnios said they have not thought of putting utility lines underground in this area as going underground has a whole different set of standards and precautions in terms of maintenance and can make repairs and restoration of power more difficult. He said they would look at Connell's situation to see if they could accommodate him but it might not be possible. Morgan added that in this particular area the utility company is planning on offsetting the wires so that they will be closer to the roadway and further away from the house.

Jim Curran from 214 Atlantic Avenue asked about a catch basin located on a handicap driveway on the north side of the road that appears to be located in the middle of a proposed sidewalk. Valcovic said that from what he can see the cistern is outside the limits of the proposed sidewalk but they can take another look at it to make sure this was accurate and that it would function as designed.

Patrick Handrahan, 264 Atlantic Avenue, asked about a proposed utility easement and a temporary construction easement on his property that affected one of his driveways. Valcovic said it appears there will be a minor widening in front of his property to accommodate the 4' shoulder and that utility poles are being relocated as a result of widening in other areas in order to keep them aligned correctly. They will be moving the utility pole a couple of feet closer to his property and the easement will be for the overhead wires. The pole would just barely be on Handrahan's property. Handrahan asked how long the construction easement would be in place. Lemnios said that it might be in place for the duration of the project (possibly 3-4 years) but as a practical matter the utilization of the easement would only be for the time when they were actually working in front of his property.

Lemnios noted that individuals with questions specific to their property could reach out to him directly by email but that this meeting was more of a presentation about the layout of the roadway and the Board needed to vote to approve that.

Another caller near Straits Pond had questions about the placement of utility poles and curbs in the area. He said there are about 12 houses in this area that are accustomed to parking on Atlantic Avenue and they noticed that the roadway is being pushed away from the pond and they wondered if the existing projections for spacing have been presented to the state. Lemnios said nothing has been presented to the state because they have not concluded their internal discussions on the matter.

Lisa Albrecht from 215 Atlantic Avenue said she would like to know who is advising on the general landscaping piece of the project in terms of what can be viably relocated or retained as she has a tree that she feels might be in jeopardy. Morgan said they had worked with MassDOT to review the impacts to trees. Lemnios said there is no arborist on the project but they could consult with one to see what would be the best way to save this tree or if it can be saved and as they get closer to actual construction they would have more information on details like this.

Kathy Calnan, 206 Atlantic Avenue, asked what would happen during construction in terms of installation of the playground and basketball court. Lemnios said there is funding associated with the Community Preservation Act for that playground. He said he will check with Planning Director Chris DiIorio but the Atlantic Avenue project should have no adverse impact on the playground project.

Constable asked Morgan if he could speak about the phasing of the project and at what end of Atlantic Avenue it would begin. Morgan said that at this point they don't know and it is up to the contractors. They will develop a schedule once the contract is awarded. Lemnios said the Town could not be in a position of micromanaging this.

Pursel thanked everyone for their efforts and for the presentation. She said her one unanswered concern was about getting signage in place for speed and highlighting the crosswalks. She feels it is helpful to have crosswalks clearly marked and lighted.

Lemnios thanked everyone who had called in for the meeting and said he wanted to make sure that people know that they take all of their requests and comments very seriously and work hard to accommodate them. He said they are grateful for the engineering and legal teams. He hopes they can see this project to completion.

Constable said they do need a motion to accept the layout of the plans.

Motion	Sestito	To move to layout, relocate and alter Atlantic Avenue and intersecting streets as shown on the plan entitled Atlantic Avenue Layout Plan dated March 17, 2021, with a scale of 1" equal to 10', prepared by CHA Consultants, Inc. referenced herein and further that the Board of Selectmen adopts the report and order regarding same as presented this evening.
Second Vote	Pursel Unanimous	Sestito – Aye Pursel - Aye Constable – Aye

On a motion by Sestito, seconded by Pursel, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Recorded by Kathleen Fanning

Approved by:

Documents

The following documents were included in the members' packets or were presented during the meeting and are available in the Board of Selectmen's office upon request:

- Agenda for Board of Selectmen Meeting on April 22, 2021
- Plan entitled Atlantic Avenue Layout Plan dated March 17, 2021 with a scale of 1" equal to 10", prepared by CHA Consultants, Inc.
- The Board of Selectmen's report and order regarding same

