

MINUTES

1 CALL TO ORDER – Curt Neufeld

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3 SIX RIVERS YOUTH HOCKEY UPDATE – Curt Neufeld

4 TOPSHAM FAIR MALL ROAD SURVEY UPDATE - Curt Neufeld

5 FINANCIAL POLICY UPDATE – Curt Neufeld

6 CPIC Update – Andy Sturgeon

- Form-Based Code (https://www.topshammaine.com/vertical/sites/%7B95A28B10-4485-4BEC-B8FC-5E8BF056A147%7D/uploads/Topsham_Center_Presentation_July_2023.mov)
- Zoning Amendments
- Comments

7 ACTIVITY UPDATE (time permitting) – Derek Scrapchansky

8 ADJOURN

9 NOTES:

Derek S. introduced three interns (Bowdoin College) – Skyla, Karam, & Abigail – that have been helping with research tasks related to Topsham housing, livable wages, employment data, vacancies & positions available town-wide, etc. They have been joining CPIC, TDI, and other Town public hearings.

Minutes Corrections – Andy S. mentioned he is a member of CPIC in addition to serving on TDI (minutes note him as a “Liaison.” Motion to approve both sets of Minutes from 5-5-23 and 5-17-23 by Andy Sturgeon, seconded by Steve Pelletier; unanimously approved.

Discussion on Six Rivers Youth Hockey – will look forward to presentation in front of select board as discussed. Curt N. mentioned that they will have maps and plans / collateral materials prepared. Will probably occur in August or September Select Board meetings.

TFM Road Survey, may be in October per Derek S. due to ledge / blasting work at Market Basket area. Andy S. mentioned that scope of work / as-built will be helpful for Winter Street and specific areas that could be “picked up” by Survey Team in Winter 2023/24.

On Financial Policy – Curt N. mentioned that they can borrow policy language from another template and adopt relatively quickly. Once we set a policy process (within parameters set per allocation, e.g. 25% or less of overall “Enterprise” funds) – we should review drafts and try and adopt by end of year. Steve P. mentioned, could there be a process for allocations costing more than 25% of funds? Derek S. and Andy S. both agreed that we should set a goal of Thanksgiving (November 2023) for adoption of financial / allocations policy. Chris W. mentioned allocations specific subcommittee potentially to inform overall board... Curt N. mentioned complications related to microlending if a number of grants or allocations are outstanding... We will probably want to review any loan or grant request as an entire board. Andy S.

noted that we could circulate policy electronically since not many will RSVP for August meeting!

6. CPIC Notes: Andy S. mentioned that the Round Table format at Topsham Public Library was a preferable format (similar to a meeting from a couple years ago?) Derek S. agreed.

Could be a struggle with 30-40 RSVP's from development community, engineers, TDI board members, consultants (Leslie), etc. However, using a Zoom format could make it possible.

Opinions varied on how helpful the "Form-Based Code" process will be for builders and developers... Andy S. mentioned architectural standards may be questioned by builders / developers. Why are we so detail oriented about some of these standards (Mr. Joe Feely instrumental in drafting?) Examples like flat roofs, form-based coding architectural elements, etc. Restrictive / proscriptive policy in the Form Based Code (Curt N. and Chris W. noted)... Could this standardize the look of large project sites like the Crooker Quad, and possibly discourage creativity (Curt N.) Could we allow some flexibility for a company that walks in the door and has branding / a certain look for example (e.g. Best Buy, larger retailers). May want some feedback from Commercial Developers like Jim Howard and Dan Catlin.

Dan C. joined the meeting – he mentioned in his experience the national chains will come in with a standard elevation or visual appeal... However they can sometimes utilize an alternate elevation or look / feel that is New England Specific. We don't necessarily want developers / chain operators to jump to Cooks Corner or other sites because Topsham will be a difficult approvals process.

John H. mentioned that – from a development perspective – we should endeavor to make things simpler... Could we look at other communities that have form-based code (e.g. phone calls to planning staff) and think about their thoughts as well as developers? Andy S. mentioned that we have solicited some of that input and recorded data already... Also we are only implementing form based in a couple areas in the Downtown Village, TFM and other centralized areas (e.g. the Crooker Quad.

Derek S. noted that based on what he's hearing, he doesn't necessarily see Re-CODE being adopted any time soon given the variance of opinion & experts. He thinks that we should continue to hold these meetings in order to gauge public input and continue to involve the Topsham business and neighborhood community.

Andy S. brought up West Side / across interstate (Allen Property) which Dan Catlin had mentioned as not included in CPIC ReCODE focus area. Derek S. and Andy S. mentioned that sewer estimate needs to be finalized. Curt N. added that water pressure (BTWD) could also be a factor. Water tower / standpipe near Annex and Highland Green may provide some relief. Derek S. noted that we should ask Craig Douglass (BTWD). Curt N. noted we have already met with Craig D. and BTWD along with Stu Kay / Ponziani & the Sewer District board.

There was a brief discussion on Drive-Thru policy... Andy S. mentioned that Starbucks & Chick Fil-A "double drive thrus" could be helpful to see from Dan Catlin... Dan C. mentioned that the Chick Fil-A in South Portland has a very high volume of sales; other quick service restaurants may want to copy this (such as McDonalds or Starbucks at TFM)... During COVID and with staffing shortages, drive-thrus have kept businesses alive! Looking at the 55 acres of the Crooker Quad – Dan C. had 6 key Pad Sites laid out for Frank Crooker years ago; along with an Anchor Tenant on the back property... Currently if we are looking at masterplan for entire parcel / area, ways to implement Mix Use and integrate with Schools, etc., may be important.

Further to point on lack of land and relatively full tenant base @ TFM – Dan Catlin mentioned that there are no places to go for Big Box or larger tenants like Market Basket. The next pieces of property will be North of the powerlines and on the West side. Dan C. confirmed the "Big Ticket" items are Sewer and Water – in particular the Sewer which could be "Tens of Millions of dollars" to get that done... Last report

or estimate via Curt N. was in 2004 and will need to be updated. (key to-do list item) -- need to know specifics on infrastructure costs ASAP in order to move things forward. Dan C. also noted that land cost per acre at Crooker Quadrant (3 times more value per Andy S. / sale value?) will impact the West Side (former Allen) property... Will need water for Fire Protection (Sprinkler Systems) and could this development go on a septic system rather than sewer? Since this land does not have the infrastructure, it is significantly less valuable than the Crooker Quadrant.

John H. mentioned that TIF or CDBG (Block Grants) might be tools for the board and for Derek S. / Planning Staff to consider? (in order to assist with infrastructure costs).

Brian R. asked a question about “Northwest” Quadrant... Curt N. answered that we are focused more on the Southwest Quadrant as the Mobile Home Park and other landowners occupy the Northwest and have that well under way on approvals and future build-outs, etc.

Curt N. noted on branding / look and feel of new commercial areas will be important to move things forward from 1980’s design of TFM... Will need to figure out more about what Form Based Code will mean for the future of TFM and other Commercially Zoned areas. Andy S. noted that CPIC is pushing “Aroma Joe’s” type model with housing above (3rd story for example), etc. (Village Center Zoning)... Some of which will depend on level of walkability from what is built out at Crooker.

Andy S. noted that CPIC was trying to speak with Dan Stevenson (Westbrook) and also the Saco Planning Dept. for example... Curt N. noted that we may want to eliminate parts of code that may lead to the need for constant waivers... Andy S. noted that Julie and the Planning Staff are doing a good job at jump starting and continuing the process. Brian R. asked if Rock Row had been using Form Based Code; Andy S. mentioned that he was pretty sure it’s a Planned Development that would be under some form of Master Plan requirement with the new ReCODE in Topsham.... PCD (Planned Commercial Development). Could this address concerns about “Sameness”—mentioned again that the expert on ReCODE committee is Joe F. (experience as an Architect / Engineer, etc.)

Derek S. repeated that we will need more meetings and community input prior to any implementation. Will need experts and developer input prior to presenting anything to Town Meeting.

7. Activity Update – Derek S. – Derek S. gave a general overview of what he’s been working on. Town of Topsham is now 100% converted to LED lighting, great news! Also the new MDOT bridge (targeted for 2025 completion) from Brunswick to Topsham is officially underway with surveyors & engineers on site! Topsham PD & FD are now fully staffed; first time in the 5 years of his tenure per Derek S. (more good news!) Community Paramedic positions will be particularly important; lessen impact on Hospitals.