



**MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
MINUTES**



January 7, 2013

PENDING APPROVAL

- PRESENT:** Mayor Betsy A. Davis
Councilmember Trowbridge Littleton
Councilmember Catherine "Bundles" Murdock
Councilmember Kathy Jo Shea
Councilmember Mark T. Snyder
- STAFF:** Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk
David M. Beniamino, Town Planner (arrived late)
Martha M. Semmes, Town Administrator (arrived late)
- ABSENT:** Vice Mayor C. Darlene Kirk
Councilmember Kevin Hazard
Councilmember David B. Stewart

The Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held their regular monthly work session on Monday, January 7, 2013 in the Town Hall Council Chambers, located at 10 W. Marshall Street. Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

Presentation – Proposed Route 50 Crosswalk Materials

Mayor Davis introduced Jim Zeller of the Virginia Department of Transportation. She explained that the main purpose of this meeting was to ensure everyone was on the same page with regard to the crosswalk materials. Ms. Davis reminded Council that the options were concrete pavers versus imprinted asphalt. She advised that a Route 50 Traffic Calming meeting was scheduled for later this week; and, reiterated that she wanted to make sure the Council was on the same page regarding materials as well as the timing of the project. Ms. Davis reported that they have been told the work would be completed in 2014.

Mayor Davis noted that the Town Administrator sent her apologies for her absence. She advised that she, Ms. Semmes, Fared Bigdeli and Mr. Zeller met last week. Ms. Davis advised that the Town Administrator wanted to make sure this project was coordinated with upgrades to the Town's underground infrastructure. She further advised that they felt that 2014 was the more appropriate time to construct the crosswalks; and, noted that if VDOT rushed to do them this summer, they may not be done as well. Ms. Davis opined that the Town did not want to lose its traffic calming money; and explained that as long as work was being done, the money was safe.

Mr. Zeller confirmed this was correct; and, noted that VDOT had started to update Middleburg's right-of-way surveys. He opined that since this work was underway, there was much less of a likelihood that the money would be taken away. Mr. Zeller reminded Council that there had been a concern that because this sum of money, which was formally part of the west segment of the Route 50 traffic calming corridor, had not been used for years that it could be taken away. He noted that VDOT was looking at all of its line items; and, if nothing had happened on projects for xxx years, was questioning whether the money could be better used elsewhere. Mr. Zeller reiterated that since work was now being done on this project, the money was a lot safer.

Mayor Davis reiterated that the purpose of this meeting was so the Council could share its preference for the crosswalk materials – pavers versus imprinted asphalt – with the Route 50 Traffic Calming Committee.

Mr. Zeller advised Council that some of the items to consider when making this decision were the cost of installation, the cost of maintenance and the product's durability. He noted that he would defer to the Council on matters of aesthetics. Mr. Zeller advised Council that the concrete pavers would be more expensive to construct than the imprint material. He explained that the pavement structure needed to make the pavers work would be more than the cost of installing the imprint, even though the imprint material was proprietary and very expensive. Mr. Zeller advised that as to maintenance costs, the concrete pavers would be less expensive to maintain because every time the imprint needed to be repaired, VDOT would have to go through a sole source procurement process as there was only one licensed vendor authorized to do this work in Virginia. He reminded Council that concrete pavers were a common material that was manufactured by numerous sources and to which a number of contractors had access. Mr. Zeller reported that the unknown question with regard to the concrete pavers was their durability. He noted that he was unsure how well the concrete pavers would stand up to the weather conditions in this area and the level of traffic on Route 50. Mr. Zeller advised that they had a few years worth of data on the imprinted crosswalks. He reported that while they have had to do one round of extensive repairs on it, it was mostly due to soil failures beneath the structure. Mr. Zeller advised that he recently looked at the Upperville crosswalks to see how they looked; and, could see cracking as one would expect to see with asphalt. He noted that it was an unknown as to how they would hold up this winter when compared to the concrete pavers. Mr. Zeller reported that VDOT did test the concrete pavers during construction in Aldie by bringing in a plow and scraping them. He reported that none of the bricks pulled out. Mr. Zeller noted, however, that this was only one of his concerns; and, advised that the other was how well the pavers would perform during a freeze/thaw cycle and once water got into the joints. He advised that as for cracking, the pavers would adjust themselves as the pavement settled and moved; therefore, one would not see the cracking effect that could be seen in Upperville. Mr. Zeller noted that Upperville used an imprint material, which was very much like a surface course of asphalt. He reminded Council that asphalt was flexible and moved around; therefore, it cracked over the years. Mr. Zeller confirmed this could be seen in Upperville; and, noted that those crosswalks have been in existence for four years.

Mayor Davis expressed an understanding that if the concrete pavers were used, the Town must do more to support them. She noted that this would mean the installation cost would be higher.

Mr. Zeller advised that what he hoped to find this winter was that less repair was required for the pavers than for imprinted crosswalks. He noted that the big question was how often the materials would need to be repaired not only to maintain a safe level of service but also from an aesthetic standpoint.

Mayor Davis questioned whether the pavers have been used in other places. Mr. Zeller confirmed they have been installed in a couple of urban boulevards in Hampton Roads; however, he noted the difference between their winter weather and Middleburg's. He further noted that they were also used in locations where the traffic counts were not as high because it was more spread out. Mr. Zeller reminded Council that, in the case of Middleburg, all of the traffic traveled over a narrow area; therefore, the wheels of each car were within a couple feet of each other.

Councilmember Shea noted that the Costco in Chantilly used pavers for its crosswalks. She opined that the pavers were fine; however, the road around them was breaking down. Ms. Shea suggested this could be the result of drainage issues.

Mr. Zeller noted that one construction method that VDOT used for pavers was to sit them in a massive concrete cradle, as opposed to sitting them on asphalt. He explained that this involved the removal of the pavement structure and the construction of a separate concrete structure on which the bricks would sit. Mr. Zeller advised that the concrete structure would be turned up on either end so the bricks would not shift. He noted that placing bricks in a concrete structure was great; however, VDOT has discovered that the approaching asphalt settled, shifted and developed ruts. Mr. Zeller explained that, over time, a lip was created between the asphalt and the cradle, which became a problem when enough of a lip formed that the snow plows caught it.

Mayor Davis noted that there has been discussion about the possibility of constructing a thin strip of cement to define the brick crosswalk.

Mr. Zeller confirmed this would be done using a contrasting color paver. He advised that there were pavers that were a very light color that could be placed down the sides of a crosswalk in the place of concrete.

Mayor Davis opined that it looked nicer when the crosswalk was defined, as opposed to having brick against the pavement.

Councilmember Murdock asked whether it was correct that Upperville's crosswalks were imprinted, whereas Aldie's were constructed of pavers. Mr. Zeller confirmed it was. He noted that Upperville was the only place where the imprint material had been used. Mr. Zeller advised that Aldie was the first application of concrete pavers on asphalt.

Councilmember Murdock asked whether the Council needed to make this decision immediately. She asked whether they could wait until after the pavers had gone through a winter cycle.

Councilmember Snyder noted that the Mayor hoped the Council would settle this issue before the next Traffic Calming meeting.

Mayor Davis asked whether the Council needed to select the materials soon.

Mr. Zeller noted that they were in the process of developing the construction plans so the crosswalks could be installed in 2014. He advised, however, that the materials did not need to be decided upon immediately.

Councilmember Murdock asked whether the Council could change its mind if it selected brick pavers; however, it decided to change to imprinted asphalt after learning the affects of the winter weather on the pavers.

Councilmember Shea opined that this would not be a problem this year as the material was placed on a sound base. She suggested there would not be a long-term answer after one winter.

Mayor Davis questioned the Council's material preference.

Councilmembers Snyder and Littleton advised that they strongly were in favor of the pavers. Mayor Davis noted that this was how she was leaning. She advised that the Route 50 Streetscape Steering Committee also felt this way. Ms. Davis noted that this was more expensive; therefore, the Town may not be able to construct as many crosswalks. She reminded Council that the entire east end of town did not have crosswalks; and, advised that while they wanted to construct them, they may have to wait and see whether there would be sufficient funds to do so. Ms. Davis suggested the idea was to do the main intersections first. She further suggested that if they could not be constructed on the east end, they should at least have painted crosswalks.

Councilmember Littleton suggested the Town do the crosswalks “right” the first time, even if that meant they could not do as many. He opined that Aldie’s crosswalks appeared to be constructed of a more quality product than Upperville’s. Mr. Littleton noted that Upperville’s crosswalks also produced a lot of noise, which in turn ruined the residential real estate values.

Mr. Zeller noted that Upperville’s first iteration of crosswalks was rough. He advised that they have since installed a second iteration.

Mayor Davis noted that one of Aldie’s crosswalks consisted of a wide section of brick; however, it did not have the edge strip. She asked whether they were all the same. Mr. Zeller reported that, formally, there were no crosswalks in Aldie; and, explained that there were just rumble strips or raised intersections. He recommended the members of Council take a trip to Aldie and Upperville to witness how the traffic calming measures worked.

Mayor Davis noted that Jim Burton loved it and said it was not loud.

Mr. Zeller suggested it was enough to get a motorist’s attention. He reported that the larger concern was the coordination with the Route 50 streetscape study that had just started. Mr. Zeller noted that VDOT had prepared a preliminary design that was based upon the original traffic calming plans in terms of placement of the crosswalks. He expressed concern that the Route 50 streetscape study would produce a design statement/preliminary plan of streetscape features in the same area in which they were working. Mr. Zeller advised that he did not want to implement a design if this other effort would produce something different.

Councilmember Littleton reported that the Route 50 Streetscape Steering Committee was creating a design for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. He noted that VDOT was in the process of finalizing their plan; whereas, the Route 50 Streetscape Plan could be a couple of years in the works.

Town Planner Beniamino reported that the Route 50 Streetscape Plan would be finished by June. He noted the \$40,000 that was available as the result of the Middleburg Meandering Trail grant that would be used to develop an overall pedestrian plan, which may take longer to develop.

Councilmember Snyder advised that he did not see a lot of contention regarding the crosswalks on Route 50. Councilmember Littleton agreed.

Mr. Zeller noted that the streetscape plan included bump outs and a mid-block crosswalk at the post office. He further noted that VDOT was also looking at doing things at The Plains Road intersection to enhance pedestrian access to the museum.

Councilmember Shea noted that she lived on that end of town; and, reminded Council of the need to do something for the residents. She asked that it be presented to the public in that manner.

(Town Administrator Semmes arrived at the meeting at 8:38 a.m.)

Mr. Zeller reiterated that he did not want what he was designing to conflict with the work being done by the Route 50 Streetscape Steering Committee.

Councilmember Shea asked whether the Streetscape Steering Committee would accept VDOT’s plans for the crosswalks.

Councilmember Littleton opined that they would; and, noted that they have expressed a desire to work with VDOT.

Councilmember Snyder recommended that VDOT's project be put "in the driver's seat".

Mayor Davis suggested that VDOT's plans were the ones the Town wanted to work toward. She opined that it made sense to look into upgrading the Town's infrastructure when doing the crosswalks; and, noted that it was needed. Ms. Davis expressed hope to have the money to do so; and, noted that the Town's borrowing power was good at this time.

Councilmember Snyder noted that the Town was finishing its rate study, which would give the Council those answers.

Mayor Davis suggested the Town temporarily borrow the money to get the work done. She noted that it could use the revenue from the resort to help pay back the loan quickly.

Councilmember Snyder reported that the rate study was modeling that question.

Town Administrator Semmes noted the low interest rates. She reported that she was scheduled to meet with representatives from Middleburg Bank this week to talk about the Town's existing debt and what could be done in the future.

Mayor Davis opined that this was important; and, noted that the upgrades were needed.

Mr. Zeller asked whether the Town had hired a consultant to do the utility work design. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed it had not. She noted that this replacement project was identified in the Town's Utility Master Plan. Ms. Semmes opined that it was simply a matter of digging out the old line out and putting a new line down.

Mr. Zeller reported that if the water line replacement work was done at the same time as the crosswalks, there were a number of ways it could be handled. He suggested he could look at the scope of work for VDOT's consultant to determine whether it included utility design services; and, suggested they could do the work for the Town. Mr. Zeller noted that VDOT also had other on-call consultants that did utility design work. He explained that there was a difference between replacement in-kind and betterment; and, advised that if the project touched a utility, VDOT was obligated to replace it in-kind as a part of the project. Mr. Zeller advised that if the project touched a four-inch line that the Town wanted to increase to an eight-inch line, they would figure out the cost difference, with the cost of the betterment being the Town's responsibility. He noted that this was common practice as a lot of municipalities had old infrastructure.

Town Administrator Semmes reported that there was nothing in the crosswalk design that would conflict with the Route 50 streetscape consultant's proposal.

Mayor Davis noted that the straw poll determined the Council was in favor of pavers. She further noted that, even after the winter, the Town would not have a full history of what could occur.

Town Administrator Semmes asked whether the pavers would be similar to the ones used in Purcellville. She opined that they used clay bricks. Mr. Zeller noted that the Council was talking about concrete pavers, which were sturdier. He advised that they could be secured in a red color to imitate brick.

Mayor Davis thanked Mr. Zeller for attending the meeting. She expressed appreciation for what VDOT did for the Town; and, noted that it worked well with them. Ms. Davis opined that this cooperation was good as it also helped VDOT by identifying things that could happen before they actually did.

Mr. Zeller noted that the Route 50 Traffic Calming Project was a learning process, which was why VDOT did pilot projects.

Review of Regular Meeting Agenda of January 10, 2013

Mayor Davis noted that there were only two action items on the agenda.

Councilmember Snyder noted that he would like to ask some questions regarding the shot guns. Mayor Davis suggested he wait until the Police Chief was present.

Mayor Davis asked whether the Council needed to discuss the parking waiver request. Town Planner Beniamino advised the Council that, during the meeting, he would like to talk about the waiver process. He reminded them that this request was related to the proposed office building located at the intersection of Jay and Federal Streets, which due to the site constraints, needed a waiver of some of the parking requirements in order to make the plans work. Mr. Beniamino reported that the Town would get \$60,000 in fees for the waiver. He advised Council that the applicant would still be required to construct twenty-four parking spaces.

Councilmember Shea asked whether there was a concern from the Town Attorney about the legality of a parking waiver. Town Planner Beniamino noted that this was something the Town had done for years. He explained that the concern was addressed so long as the money was spent on parking facilities. Mr. Beniamino reminded Council that the Planning Commission was working on developing a transportation plan that included parking.

Councilmember Snyder suggested there was no problem addressing the waiver as the Town spent money to construct a parking lot and was spending money on parking related items.

Town Planner Beniamino noted that paying the in-lieu-of-parking fee did not guarantee the applicant a parking space.

Mayor Davis asked whether the applicant was required to provide twenty-eight parking spaces. Town Planner Beniamino confirmed he was. He explained that he was using the space from waiving the four parking spaces for landscaping. Mr. Beniamino reported that the applicant was pushing the building off the corner so he could have some architectural depth to the building, which would hopefully make the HDRC happy. He expressed hope to have received a revised architectural plan before the Council meeting. Mr. Beniamino advised that if he did not, he could show the Council an old plan.

Councilmember Shea asked whether part of the issue was the right-of-way. Town Planner Beniamino reported that he was still waiting to hear from VDOT. He confirmed the applicant must stay off the right-of-way.

Mayor Davis asked whether the staff would have pictures available during the meeting. Town Planner Beniamino confirmed he would have the plans available.

Councilmember Littleton advised Council that the revisions made for a better project. He opined that there would be no parking problem given the location and size of the proposed building.

Town Planner Beniamino reported that he was working with the Town Attorney to look at using the revenue for parking meters. He confirmed it could be used for parking in some manner.

Councilmember Snyder reminded Council that they made the parking requirements for offices strict for a reason; however, they also allowed for a waiver possibility so as to not quash someone from doing a project that was constructive.

Mayor Davis asked that the Town Planner have plans available during the meeting that showed both twenty-eight and twenty-four parking spaces on the site. Town Planner Beniamino confirmed he would try. He noted that he currently had the revised architectural plan; however, he did not have a revised site plan. Mr. Beniamino reminded Council that the HDRC was ahead of the Planning Commission in their review. He expressed hope that he would be able to show both versions of the site plan.

Councilmember Shea asked that the third paragraph of the Resolution of Appreciation for Christmas in Middleburg be amended; and, noted that it stated that the event was enjoyed by “thousands of residents and visitors”. She reminded Council that the Town did not have thousands of residents. Town Clerk North noted that the “thousands” referred to both residents and visitors.

Councilmember Shea requested that the fourth paragraph be amended to delete the phrase “to occur”.

Councilmember Littleton suggested the resolution be amended to refer to “local residents” so it was clear it was not just those from Middleburg.

Councilmember Murdock noted that the event was enjoyed by thousands of people.

Town Administrator Semmes recommended it say “thousands of people, both residents and visitors”.

Councilmember Snyder asked why the Council was doing another resolution when it did one last month. Town Clerk North advised Council that this item was not on the December agenda as she only recently received the names of the volunteers. Mayor Davis noted that she only thanked people during the December meeting.

Councilmember Shea asked that an item be placed on the agenda related to the installation of a sign indicating that the Liberty Street restroom was a public one that was owned and maintained by the Town. She opined that visitors needed to know the location of the public restrooms; and, noted that there was no signage to indicate what the building contained.

Town Planner Beniamino noted that this was part of the Town’s way finding signage.

Town Administrator Semmes suggested that a sign be installed on the building in the interim.

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 a.m.

APPROVED:

Betsy A. Davis, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk