

Salem State University Neighborhood Advisory Committee

January 20, 2016 – Minutes

Attendees: Dominick Pangallo, Adria Leach, Richard Riggs, Marcia Lambert, Ben Szalewicz, Dana Lothrop, Jack Hoar, Dennis King, Harry Rocheville, Robert Phelan, Shawn Newton, Mayor Kim Driscoll, Councillor Steve Dibble

Absent: Councillor Robert McCarthy, Maureen Call, Councillor Josh Turiel

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of December 16, 2015 minutes

- Accepted

Construction Updates

- **Sophia Gordon Center for the Creative & Performing Arts** – Update on construction progress (Mark Swingle)
 - Crane has left now that big pieces have been installed
 - Work being moved back inside
 - Concrete flooring will be poured on the second floor soon
 - Plan to button up the exterior within a month
 - Saturday work is going to happen to maintain the project schedule
 - Work will not begin before 8am on Saturday's
- **Questions/Comments**
 - Mayor Driscoll asked about a completion date. Mark advised a 2016 fall completion with occupancy ready for spring 2017.
 - Dana requested clarification on the covered walkway. Ben advised that it will be up until the project is complete for pedestrian safety. The plan is to have it down in the fall of 2016.
 - Chairman Pangallo informed the group that it has been determined that the cones were placed in the street by police to prevent people from driving in the bike lane.
 - Audience member asked if most of the noisy construction was complete. Mark stated that the vacuuming is complete but the exterior work is going to begin in the spring and that could be considered louder.
 - Audience member asked about the status of the National Grid pole. Ben advised that they are working on a schedule with National Grid and will provide information on any possible outages ahead of time.
- **287 Lafayette Street** – Update on noise mitigation and parking (Ben S)
 - Equipment has been ordered and are hoping to have it installed end of February, beginning of March. After installation is complete screening will be looked into.

Old Business

- **Loring Avenue Sidewalks** – (Presented by Gary Herbert, FST)
 - Improvement needed for pedestrian crossing and vehicle safety
 - Several studies were conducted from 2011 – 2014
 - In 2015 the design was funded by both the city & SSU with a purpose to improve sight lines and reduce crossing hazards
 - City chose to have bump outs at rail trail crossing & a flashing beacon for crossing safety
 - Barrels were placed out for a couple of months to simulate location of sidewalk curbs, with no problems observed
 - Completion of work recommended

○ **Questions/Comments**

- Marcia asked about the two parking spaces that have been removed in front of the convenient store. Mayor Driscoll advised that it is a 60 day experiment to help with a sight problem coming out of the parking lot, it is unrelated to the sidewalk program.
- Councilor Dibble requested the presentation to be sent out. He added that he applauds the removal of the crosswalk as it is too dark for people to be crossing. He requested for street lighting to be added at the crosswalk at the bike path.
 - Chairman Pangallo added that this has been recommended on a previous study
- Dana "When/why did the bump outs turn into sidewalk expansions? Those are taking away parking." - Gary "Technically they are considered bump outs, we didn't want to have the street going in and out. The expansion of the sidewalk has been part of the project, giving pedestrians more safety. It gives them a place to gather before crossing."
- Dana "Expanded sidewalk and the middle of the road, what is the space?" - Gary "17 feet." - Councilor Dibble "Does that include the parking lane?" - Gary "There is no parking there." It was added that you cannot park within 20 feet of an intersection or a crosswalk.
- Jack "What is the purpose of all this? Has a study been done about what has happened? Any accidents, people been hit?" - Officer Phelan "We are always trying to make things safer. There are a lot more kids crossing the street then there were 5 – 10 years ago. This plan is well thought out and something that should be supported. This could prevent tragedies."
- Jack "Is the crosswalk going away that goes to the parking area?" - There are no plans for that.
- Jack stated he thought this would create a traffic nightmare and does not believe the plan should go through.
- Mayor Driscoll advised that there is an issue with pedestrian crossing.
- Marcia "I take Raymond Road every day to Marblehead. Traffic is so light on Raymond. I waited 5 minutes for students to cross the street single file and people went around me on the right. With these new bump outs they won't be able to do that." Gary – "Cars will be able to go around but they will have go slower."
- Average crash rate is .58, this intersection is .73
- Councilor Dibble asked about moving the bus stop. Gary and Mayor Driscoll both agreed.
- Dana suggested gathering some more information and putting the barrels out for two more months. Officer Phelan advised that they did not receive one complaint about the barrels.
- Dana "Can we phase this in?" - Mayor Driscoll "Let's see, but ultimately it is going to happen or not. There is a strong desire to keep the pedestrians safe because right now it does not seem very safe."
- Dana "Can we have them come back in two months?" - Mayor Driscoll "It's the middle of winter, nothing is happening right now."
- Jack explained that the barrels were not in the correct position to accurately reflect the impact to the traffic. The barrels had been bumped by cars and pushed back closer to the curb. He shared video footage that was on his cell phone with Mayor Driscoll.
- Chairman Pangallo stated that we will leave it that there will be further discussion on this.
- Mayor Driscoll stated that she wants to think about the other crosswalk being removed as it defeats the purpose of what is being done.
- Councilor Dibble asked to have copies of the plans, and discuss the plans with a few members and will go back to the Mayor with action items.
- Councilor Dibble asked if there are shields on the blinking lights. Gary advised they will only go on when people are there and they are focused into the street.

- Mayor Driscoll asked if SSU can help with pedestrian counts to find out when students are crossing.
- **Garage Utilization Update**
 - Ben advised they are still working on the lighting issue.
 - The main controller went down and they are working quickly to repair them. The sensors were not working correctly, they were saying cars were in the garage when they were not.
 - It is a technical issue.
- **Questions/Comments**
 - Councillor Dibble “Can we plan to have all the lights shut off during breaks except what is absolutely necessary?” - Adria “We would like to do that, except the lights have to be able to go up if one person drives in.”
- **Residence Life Study: Update on response to Councillor O’Keefe request**
 - Survey was sent out with limited response
 - Adria is going to work with Residence Life on getting more responses
 - Hoping for a February update
- **Neighborhood Disturbances**
 - Police have not received many complaints
 - Requested to be made aware of any hot spots so they know where to direct patrols

New Business

- **410 Lafayette Street**
 - SSU purchased home after being approached by homeowner
 - No plans for the building yet but it will not be student housing
 - It is a property bumper for the science building
- **Questions/Comments**
 - Jack “Is the college committing to not putting a driveway there?” - Adria “We’ve committed to not demolishing the house.”
 - Councillor Dibble stated that he had asked the President to consider turning the house back over for family to purchase the house after the building is complete. He has not heard back yet.
- Ben stated that they are putting together a RFP to look North Campus to flip Horace Mann and Harrington.
 - Mayor Driscoll added that there is a study in place, Horace Mann cannot stay where it is.
- Jack asked if there are any updates on the demo bike lane on Lafayette. Mayor Driscoll advised that they have retained an engineering firm but there is nothing to share yet.
- Adria advised that SSU still has some snow emergency passes

Adjourn Next meeting: Wednesday, February 17, 7:00pm Enterprise Center