



**TOWN OF BILLERICA
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
MAY 22, 2023**

Members Present: Chair Michael Riley, Vice Chair Kimberly Conway (Remote), Secretary Andrew Deslaurier, Michael Rosa, and John Burrows

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Town Manager John Curran, Assistant Town Manager Clancy Main, and Director of Administrative Services Robert Maynard

Chair Riley stated that the meeting is a hybrid meeting with a Zoom option. Vice Chair Conway is remote, so all votes will be taken by roll call.

Member Rosa stated that since Vice Chair Conway is remote, attendance should be taken. Chair Riley called for attendance. Member Rosa present, Secretary Deslaurier present, Member Burrows present, Vice Chair Conway present via Zoom and Chair Riley present.

Call to Order 7:15 PM

Member Riley called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1. Pride Month Proclamation

Secretary Deslaurier read the Pride Month Proclamation.

Trek Reef of Riveredge Road – Mr. Reef spoke of the history and presented data and statistics behind the proclamation and resolution.

Member Rosa stated that we have had several Pride Month Proclamations before and he has no issues with the first part but the statements after Further Resolved he has an issue with. What does adherence mean? The Town of Billerica should not intercede with businesses and he believes that this is a violation of the Charter. If Mr. Reef wanted to do something in the schools, he should appear before the School Committee. If we vote for this, we are directing our businesses and Town departments to adhere to something. The presentation was eloquent and he doesn't personally care who anyone wants to be or be with but in all past proclamations there has never been a directive. If the directive was removed, he would support it.

Member Burrows stated that he has a gay brother and sister and he doesn't have a problem with gay people but the Town should not promote it. If we do this for one, it could open it up to all types of groups. He would support the proclamation if the last Resolved statement was removed. He also believes that we should only fly the American, Town and Military flags and not fly other groups because again, it could open us to hate groups. He appreciates the presentation and it's sad that we must tell people to be kind but this is overstepping our boundaries.

Secretary Deslaurier stated that he believes this is what we should be doing. It does not mandate; it encourages conversations and may save lives. This is the LGBTQ community also.

Vice Chair Conway thanked Mr. Reef for his presentation and asked when the first Proclamation was done. Mr. Reef replied 2008. Vice Chair Conway 100% supports this and we need to continue to educate our residents. She agrees with Member Burrows that it's sad that people need to be reminded to be nice.

Member Rosa stated that he has voted for this every year since 2008 but he objects to the new language being added this year. He also has no problem with the flag raising. The word adherence is close to a mandate.

MOTION - Secretary Deslaurier made a motion to approve the Pride Month Proclamation as written. The motion was seconded by Chair Riley and voted 3-0-2. On a roll call vote: Secretary Deslaurier voted Aye, Vice Chair Conway voted Aye, and Chair Riley voted Aye. Member Rosa abstained from voting and Member Burrows abstained from voting.



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2. Resolution Condemning Anti-LGBTQ Legislation and Protecting Transgender Individuals and LGBTQ Youth

Secretary Deslaurier read the Resolution.

Member Rosa stated that everyone should be treated equally but he does not know what legislation is being proposed. The legislation is not referenced and he cannot support a resolution when he doesn't know what is being proposed. It is sad across the board when a youth feels suicide is the answer, regardless of the circumstance. Mr. Reef stated that he can list the bills that harm the LGBTQ community

Member Burrows agreed with Member Rosa and if there is information that you can send to the Board that would be helpful.

MOTION - Secretary Deslaurier made a motion to approve the resolution condemning Anti-LGBTQ legislation and protecting transgender individuals and LGBTQ youth as written. The motion was seconded by Chair Riley and voted 3-0-2. On a roll call vote: Secretary Deslaurier voted Aye, Vice Chair Conway voted Aye, and Chair Riley voted Aye. Member Rosa abstained from voting and Member Burrows abstained from voting.

3. Town Center Project Discussion

Mr. Curran stated that the tonight is a public information session on the Town Center Project. They will be having a public meeting on June 13th and a Zoom public meeting on July 12th. They will also be meeting with stake holders in June through August as well as discussions at the neighborhood meetings. Mr. Curran presented the funding worksheet for the Town Center project including \$3 Million from the Federal government; \$5 Million from Mass Works; \$2 Million from Free Cash for 2023, 2024, and 2025; \$500,000 from the budgets for FY24 and FY25; \$500,000 from Chapter 90 funds for 2024 and 2025 and \$4 Million from other sources. This will bring the total to \$20 Million for the Town Center projects.

Member Rosa stated that this is a public hearing and we should go through the presentation and he did not receive the new slides that were shown. Vice Chair Conway stated that this is not a public hearing, it is a public information session. Chair Riley stated that this meeting is to discuss the previous presentation that was given and for the Select Board to ask questions. Chair Riley asked if there have been any changes to the plans since the presentation. Mr. Curran replied no, but BETA did a 3D rendering to help with the discussion.

Secretary Deslaurier stated that he has multiple questions that residents on River Street sent him.

BETA representatives Scott Ridder, Kent Ho, Dennis Flynn and Darshan Jhaveri joined the meeting.

Mr. Ridder stated that the 3D rendering was done to better show the different concepts. The information did not change. In Option #1, there will be 16 diagonal parking spaces where Option #2 shows 12 parallel parking spaces. There is no official planting plan or ornamental lights drawn on the plans and there is no drainage shown on the plans yet.

Member Rosa reiterated that the funding information and the renderings were not included in the package. Mr. Curran stated that the renderings just came in and there are no changes to the design. The funding was in the Town Manager's report last meeting, so the information is not new. Member Rosa stated that he disagreed, it was not in the last Town Manager's report. We held a meeting to discuss financial impacts of all upcoming proposed projects. We need to discuss funding for all projects before we vote on one specific project.



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Secretary Deslaurier asked if there is a 3D rendering for the River Street area. Mr. Ridder replied yes, but they do not have it tonight. Secretary Deslaurier asked BETA to explain how River Street will work. Mr. Jhaveri stated that there are major changes in this area. They are proposing 1 lane going into River Street and 2 coming out to Boston Road. There will be a left hand and right-hand turn lane, it will be signaled and there will be a crosswalk. They are proposing relocating the fountain and removing the grass strip. Secretary Deslaurier asked how someone would get to Andover Road. Mr. Jhaveri stated that they would take a right and go right into the left turn lane to Andover. Secretary Deslaurier stated that there are 19 parking spaces now in front of Mangia Mangia. Mr. Ho stated that there will be 6 parallel spaces in front of Mangia Mangia, 2 in front of Center Cafe and 4 in front of O'Connor's Plaza, so this design is taking the current 19 spaces down to 12.

Member Rosa stated that those parking spaces in front of Mangia Mangia are currently angled and are protected by an island, and this proposal is changing them to parallel and taking the island away so people will be opening their doors into traffic. Mr. Jhaveri stated that they are adding a 2' area to allow for door swing but we can look at adding a 1' wider buffer. Member Rosa asked what the parking space sizes are. Mr. Ho replied 8' x 22'. Member Rosa asked what is happening with delivery trucks. Mr. Jhaveri replied that they will unload in the space to the right of the building. Member Rosa stated that means 2 parking spaces will be lost while they unload a truck. Mr. Maynard stated that they have spoken with the owner of Mangia Mangia and they control the delivery schedule, so they will be making deliveries during non-business hours. Member Rosa stated that there is more than just Mangia Mangia in the building. Mr. Maynard stated that they spoke with all the businesses and they all control when deliveries are made. Mr. Curran stated that we will have another meeting with the businesses and there will be 10 additional spaces in the O'Connor's parcel. They are adding two additional traffic lights and they provide calming measures so cars will not be speeding in this area. Member Rosa asked if there is a written agreement with O'Connor's for the additional parking. Mr. Curran replied that they have a tentative verbal agreement but nothing written. Member Rosa stated that there is not a truck exclusion, so there will be tractor trailers coming through the center.

Vice Chair Conway asked if Mangia Mangia has outside seating. Mr. Curran replied no, but they will have a 10' sidewalk if they want to. Vice Chair Conway stated that angled parking spaces seem safer.

Member Burrows stated that he believes that the traffic in front of the library should go the other way. He is also concerned with the number of trees being removed.

Chair Riley asked if there is a bike lane. Mr. Jhaveri replied yes, there is a 10' shared space on the sidewalk.

Member Rosa stated that he agrees with Vice Chair Conway about the angled parking in front of Mangia Mangia. In the presentation, it was said that you need 3 lanes for stacking but in the charts the presentation show existing travel time is 1.10 seconds and delay 30 seconds but in the build without PED it's 1.09 seconds and delay of .41 seconds and build is 1.14 seconds and .49 delay currently so we are going backwards. With the concerns of the angle vs. parallel and the time delays getting worse, we need to rethink this. Dennis Flynn of BETA joined and added for clarification, Boston Road (North) means north of the study area, not the direction of Boston Road.

John LaFauci – Mr. LaFauci stated that the lanes don't line up. Mr. Jhaveri stated that these are only renderings. We will have signs to help. Mr. LaFauci stated that coming from Concord Road, this design will block people trying to take the right. This should have 3 lanes, left only, straight, and right only so perhaps you can take some of the common green space away. Mr. Ho stated that traffic going into O'Connor's is less than 10% so it should not have its own dedicated lane. Mr. LaFauci stated that the left-hand lane going into O'Connor's from Boston Road should be longer. Mr. Jhaveri replied that it is 150' long and should be sufficient. Mr. LaFauci stated that you should look at moving the bike lane to run next to the parallel parking spaces to provide a better buffer.

Chair Riley stated that the big reason for this project is economic development. This will provide walkability and make the center viable.

Member Burrows stated that there are a lot of moving parts at Concord Road/Boston Road area and the left after stop is being removed.



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Member Rosa stated that the North and South in the Traffic Count charts don't make sense. The parallel parking does not prove to be the best option with this analysis. The angled parking is safer and provides more parking spaces. Mr. Ho stated that Mass DOT discourages angle parking. Research has been done that these are unsafe and Mass DOT will reject projects with angled parking. Parking analysis has been done as well as traffic data collection. These are preliminary findings which show that the highest volume is right in front of Mangia Mangia which dictates that three lanes of traffic are needed.

Secretary Deslaurier asked what the end result of this meeting is. Chair Riley stated that this meeting was to allow the consultants to hear our concerns and comments.

Member Rosa stated that we are working off renderings. We need detailed analysis of the trees. We are taking down 23 trees in the center. Mr. Curran stated that there are different types of trees and most being taken down have issues or are invasive species.

Mr. Ridder stated that in the Town Center there are 19 existing trees, we are taking down 5. Of these 5, 3 are Norway Maples, 1 is an 8" Cherry and 1 is a Red Maple.

Vice Chair Conway stated that she understands taking down invasive or sick trees but is there a plan to plant new trees or transplant healthy trees. Mr. Curewitz stated that we can transplant trees but it is expensive, usually about \$1,000 per caliber inch and does not provide much value. The plan is to plant new trees.

Chair Riley stated that we want to help with stopping global warming and part of that is to stop cutting trees, so if we take trees down, they should be replaced at a minimum of 1 to 1.

Member Rosa stated that he wants to reiterate that we need to look at all proposed Town projects. Chair Riley stated that we are focusing on the Town Center. Member Rosa stated that he understands focusing on the design of the Town Center but for \$20 million dollars we are getting very little and, in some cases, going backwards with traffic times as well as inconveniencing residents with parking. In the funding that was presented, taking \$500,000 out of Chapter 90 funds is a huge impact for the upkeep of the remainder of roads in Billerica. Our roads need repairs. It's also a huge hit to Free Cash of \$2 Million for 4 years. When will the Mass Grant be awarded? Mr. Curran replied fall of 2023.

Secretary Deslaurier stated that in the past, we have increased taxes with very little return. We have corrected a lot of that over the last few years. Our center is a glorified traffic circle and this design would increase community use and draw people together. The current design excludes people from using the space. We deserve better. This design needs tweaks but it is a better design to bring people together.

Member Burrows stated that there will be 5 lanes of traffic. This was voted down by the residents and he doesn't see any improvement with cost vs. gain. He doesn't see the value and the money could be spent on other projects.

Vice Chair Conway asked what the path is to get approval for this project. There is a lot of misinformation out on social media. Mr. Curran stated that the public outreach process will continue through August including design elements from the Historic District Commission. Once the plan is updated with comments and finalized, it will come back before the Select Board for approval as Road Commissioners. Funding will then go to Town Meeting for approval. A public vote is not likely if there is no tax impact, unless a petition is submitted. Vice Chair stated that she is not a fan of parallel parking and the plan could use some tweaks but it should save significant time for emergency vehicles to get through the center. This can really be something nice and is a great start to make it our common.

Member Rosa stated that in the renderings there is an 8'-10' grass strip between the road and sidewalk. This has been shown to be hard to maintain and would suggest a brick design instead of grass because it requires less maintenance. Mr. Jhaveri stated that is a good idea and we are doing a similar thing with the Boston Road project.

Mr. LaFauci returned to the mic and said if you were going to do a brick area, then perhaps you can do a fundraiser for engraved bricks. Member Rosa stated that we have done that in the past with the Senior Center and Library.



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Chair Riley asked what the next steps would be. Mr. Curran stated that he will bring this back in August to the Board and will continue to have public meetings from now until July.

A resident spoke via Zoom. He was concerned with the backup of the right hand only lanes. There is also a loading zone on Andover Street that tractor trailers use that that would need to be addressed and have better signage added. The current center is not pedestrian friendly and this design makes the center safer but it does need to be tweaked.

MOTION - Secretary Deslaurier made a motion to adjourn the May 22, 2023 Select Board meeting at 9:33 PM. The motion was seconded by Member Rosa and unanimously voted 5-0-0. On a roll call vote: Secretary Deslaurier voted Aye, Member Rosa voted Aye, Member Burrows voted Aye, Vice Chair Conway voted Aye and Chair Riley voted Aye.

*Respectfully Submitted by Dawn McDowell,
Recording Secretary*



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Exhibits for the Select Board Meeting – May 22, 2023

Call to order 7:15 PM

- 1. Pride Month Proclamation** – Proclamation
- 2. Resolution Condemning Anti-LGBTQ Legislation and Protecting Transgender Individuals and LGBTQ Youth** -- Resolution
- 3. Town Center Project Discussion** – Town Center Improvements Landscaping Plan dated 04/24/23, Billerica Town Center Traffic, Roadway and Streetscape Improvements dated 04/24/23

Approved On: JULY 17, 2023