

**TOWN OF WALPOLE
INFRASTRUCTURE PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING
AUGUST 23, 2023**

Selectboard Present: Peggy Pschirrer, Chair; Steve Dalessio; Cheryl Mayberry (arrived at mid-meeting)

Staff Present: Sarah Downing, Manager of Administration

Police Committee Present: Cheryl Watson, David Adams and Andrew Dey

Community Power Committee Present: Paul Looney (presenter) and Dennis Marcom

More than a total of 39 people were in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER: Mrs. Pschirrer called the public meeting to order at 6:32 PM. She introduced herself, Peggy Pschirrer, Selectboard Chair and asked that those asking questions use the microphone. Steve Dalessio is to speak about infrastructure projects and the police station. Mrs. Pschirrer announced Police Committee members who were present. Paul Looney was to arrive after work to speak about the power program. Mrs. Pschirrer will speak about the last topic of the night, which will be an update about the Brownfields project. She was happy to report it is coming to a close.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Mr. Dalessio explained that there were some projects not included in the presentation. They will be commented on. The presentation is focused on the most active projects. The other issues have not been forgotten. Mr. Dalessio explained that FEMA will cover much of the damage. However, FEMA only pays for the repair to what had existed prior to the damage. The Town has to go through an additional process of mitigation, which is another layer of bureaucracy.

Middle Street: The project had been delayed for approximately two months. Mr. Dalessio apologized for this. Water connection work began on 8/22/23. The storm drain catches basins have been ordered and a paving contractor has been selected. The project is expected to be completed around early to mid - September.

Union and School Streets: The gully starts at the top of Prospect Hill, and it is eroded. The DES has categorized it as a seasonal stream. Due to cost constraints, the remediation cannot go up the gully. The work will be from the catch basin down. Some of the drainage pipes were installed at the wrong angle. They are currently working on a design that will allow for cleaning out the catch basin. Larger piping will be installed to increase water flow. Judy Epstein asked what direction the water will flow when it hits the catch basin. Mr. Dalessio responded that it will flow east down School Street and then go down Union Street. The new piping will be at least 24 inches in diameter. A comment was made that the area below, near Main Street, also floods. Mr. Dalessio replied that that this drainage area may also need to be improved. The question of cost was voiced. Mr. Dalessio stated that he estimated that it will be in the high hundreds of thousands of dollars and could be over one million dollars in cost. This is not a FEMA aided project. Mr. Dalessio added that they are looking at Butternut Brook which is on the list of problem areas. A culvert over the brook needs to be replaced. The Town is trying to plan for 100-year floods.

Reservoir Dam: Mr. Dalessio confirmed that the dam will be repaired and not removed. The Town values the recreational aspect of the property. The cost to remove the dam may have been more expensive than repairing the dam. The rough cost of the project is \$750,000. This cost has been covered by grant funds. The slope is to be adjusted, the drainpipe repaired, and the spillway enlarged. The expected completion date is in 2025. Design work should be completed in June of 2024. Mr. Dalessio confirmed that this will be a contracted project.

Houghton Brook Bridge: The Town was awarded an ARM or Aquatic Resource Mitigation Grant for \$250,000 with the Town to match the award sum. However, the submitted estimates came in over twice the engineering estimate of initial cost of 525K. Most recent quotes are for 1.1 million. The Town had hoped to obtain a travel easement through a property, but that option was not successful. The Town must install a temporary bridge. Additionally, supply chain issues have increased costs. A cost cutting measure is to install a single lane bridge. This was acceptable to Town emergency service groups. Also, the Town is considering a combination wood and metal for a single lane bridge. Deb Hutchins asked to confirm that the one lane bridge will be the permanent bridge. Mr. Dalessio confirmed this is so. The Town is waiting for new quotes.

High Street Culvert/Bridge: A contract will be signed for engineering and study work. The Town wishes to replace the bridge so that it will last. It has been repaired after the 2005 flood. State mitigation money will be used to cover engineering costs. Mr. Rosko questioned if there was a bridge over High Street. Several audience members confirmed that there is a bridge over a culvert at the junction of High and School Streets. Mr. Rosko asked what was wrong with the bridge. Mr. Dalessio explained that the bottom of the culvert was ripped out during the July 29, 2022 flood.

Old North Main Culvert/Bridge: Mr. Dalessio stated that a hydraulic study and some engineering has been completed for this project. There is more engineering work to be completed.

POLICE STATION STUDY COMMITTEE

Mr. Dalessio stated that the Police Station Committee meets monthly. Mr. Dalessio introduced the committee members who were present at the meeting and listed the other members of the committee. Mr. Dalessio wished to answer the question of why Walpole needs a new police station.

Top Three Reasons: Mr. Dalessio read the reasons from the slide which were:

1. For the protection of our Police Officers
2. To provide an adequate work environment
3. To have an efficient/safe workspace

Photos of the problem areas at the Police Station in North Walpole were included on the slide and explained by Mr. Dalessio.

A chart with a typical month's police calls was discussed. The police staff include the chief, an administrative assistant, and 4 full-time officers. There is one open position. There are no part-time officers.

Committee Progress to Date: The committee determined that the current station does not meet the current or future needs of the Police Department. The committee visited 5 different law enforcement sites in the area. They have identified the space requirements for the building and what it should look like. The group has reviewed 10 potential building sites in Walpole. The sites should have easy access to Rt. 12, be flat, have access to Town water and sewer, etc. Listening sessions with different groups have occurred to obtain community input. Quotes for the architectural design have been recently received and will be reviewed by the committee. Mr. Dalessio reviewed next steps. Under the analysis of 2 potential sites, Mr. Dalessio stated that there has been no decision on any site at this time. There are no known costs. The site is not tied to the Dunkin Donut lot or contingent with the development of the Dunkin lot. An architect needs to be hired that will develop concept renderings and cost models. The committee will need to determine how funds are to be raised for all the costs associated with the building. Mr. Juris asked if the Town had appropriated money for someone to attend the National Chief of Police Design School. Mr. Dalessio will speak to Mr. Juris after the meeting about this topic. Mr. Juris then asked what the square footage would be of the building. Mr. Dalessio estimated it would be around 5,000 square feet. Mr. Juris felt this was an underestimated amount of square footage needed for the building. Mr. Rosko asked how this project would be approved. Mr. Dalessio and Mrs. Pschirrer said that it would be part of Town Meeting. Mr. Juris asked if there was a capital reserve for this project. Mr. Dalessio replied that there was not. Mr. Stewart asked how crime statistics were trending. Mr. Dalessio stated they are going up and

come in peaks due to the Town's location, being close to Rt. 91. Mr. Marcom commented that it is hard to design a building without knowing the location. Mr. Witthus asked for more breakdown in the monthly police statistics such as how serious the crimes would be. Mrs. Mayberry was asked to assist with sending the chart to Mr. Boas. Mr. Rosko asked for more clarification about the issues with the current police station. Mrs. Pschirrer stated that bulletproof windows would be installed, a safe room, and heavier doors. There was continued discussion related to the police statistics chart.

WALPOLE COMMUNITY POWER UPDATE

Rates: Paul Looney explained that the May, June and July lowest rate was 15.8 cents per kilowatt hour. A new rate has been negotiated for August through the end of January 2024 of 10.9 cent per kwh. They are excited to be below the Keene Community Power rate. The rate for Liberty Utilities has dropped to 12.24 cents per kwh. Mr. Looney explained why he chose the 100% greener and cleaner power rate since he could not place a solar array on his property. Mr. Juris asked if this process could be explained since the same power line goes to his home. Mr. Looney explained that Liberty continues to provide the poles, wiring, etc. The Town is buying the power differently. The Town has joined a coalition of towns to group buy power. Mr. Looney explained the map of towns that are part or soon to be part of the coalition. Twenty three percent of the people of NH reside in towns that are going to be part of the coalition. CPCNH is the group that is obtaining the new rate. Mr. Juris asked for more clarification. Mr. Looney explained the renewable energy credits. The power being supplied to the grid is from a clean energy supplier. It's a hard concept to understand. Liberty Utilities is obligated to purchase 23% of its electricity from renewable sources.

Mr. Looney then spoke to comparing models of electricity cash flows. Prior to CPCNH, Walpole customers would send their money to a for profit model. Now the money coming to the organization (CPCNH) is paying for just the electricity used with the excess not going into anyone's pockets. CPCNH is a non-profit organization. CPCNH has a CEO and is hiring 2 or 3 other people to run the organization. The Board of Directors has several committees. Mr. Looney is on the finance committee. The reserve is being increased faster than originally estimated. Things are moving in the right direction. The reserve is needed due to the gap of 60 days between delivery of power and billing/payment. Seasonal market fluctuations are the other reason a reserve is needed. To reduce the shock to customers, the reserve will be used to smooth out pricing. The question of what happens when the rate changes again was asked. Mr. Looney explained that in December the rates for the next 6 months will be announced. There was a question if there was a fee to change suppliers. Mr. Looney said there was not. Mr. Marcom asked Mr. Looney if he could mention what happens to the reserve once it builds up. Mr. Looney explained the goal was to have 180 days of reserve. As other towns are added, the amount of power being purchased is growing, as is the amount of required reserve. Once the 180-day reserve is met, there is a decision to be made by Walpole to either drop the rates with no additional reserve or to continue to grow the reserve so that Walpole could be part of or create energy projects. Homeowners with solar energy are not part of CPCNH since information is not being received from the for-profit utilities. CPCNH is working on fixing this situation. Hopefully there will be better news by the end of the year.

BROWNFIELDS SITE REMEDIATION


New Parking Lot: Peggy Pschirrer explained that in 2019 the Town began working on the Brownfields project. The Town received a \$500,000 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant to clean up the Central Plating Site. Mrs. Pschirrer explained the history of the site. The prior owner had been fined by the DES since it was a highly contaminated site. The Town also received a \$100,000 grant from the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) for site remediation. The actual cost to remediate was more than \$700,000. The Town negotiated with the owners for money to be held in escrow for future well testing of the property. After being awarded the grant, the Town hired Ransom Consulting of Portsmouth NH to oversee the project. Ransom hired Green Site Services that is a minority owned clean-up contractor. Mrs. Pschirrer explained the contamination including heavy metals and PFAS/PFOS. The garage on the property was removed. There is now a patio in that location. It will have benches and flowerpots added. The location may become a bus stop. The remaining section became a parking lot.


Signs will be added to promote public parking. Two Electric Vehicle (EV) stations will be installed by the Walpole Foundation. The recharging will be fee based and require a charge card. The Town will oversee the payment process. Trees have been left to the north side to shield abutters from the parking lot. Grass is to be planted around the patio area. The project comes to a halt on September 30th. Mrs. Pschirrer thanked the Town for its cooperation and the abutters' patience while the soil was being removed last summer.


Mrs. Pschirrer asked for any last questions. She said that more informational meetings will be held. Several citizens thanked the presenters for their work.

The meeting ended at 7:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Downing, Recording Secretary Pro Tempore


Peggy L. Pschirrer, Chair


Cheryl Mayberry


Steven Dalessio

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the August 31, 2023, Selectboard meeting.)