

AMSTERDAM-CHURCHILL PLANNING GROUP

Minutes of November 16, 2010 Meeting

ATTENDEES: Walt Sales, Warren Vaughn, Jim Potts, Brendon Beyers, Glenn Flikkema, Ashley Mares Jones, Elsie Johnson

BUSINESS:

- Introductions
- Quorum was met? No
- Excused absences: Del Van Den Berg, Tim Van Dam & Gail Weidema
- Minutes approved for 11/9/2010 meeting
- COMMITTEE REPORTS:
 - **Jim Potts / Sewer & Water:** The status of CTEP funding is still an unknown at this time. Jim also gave a description of some of the procedures involved with the project, and gave updates on the progress of it, as well as state funding possibilities.
 - **Walt Sales:** Announced the awarding of a grant in the amount of \$5,000 from the Sonoran Institute's GAP (Gallatin Area Program) grant project.
 - **Glenn Flikkema / Fire Department:** Tim Van Dam had approached the Amsterdam Fire Department last night (Nov. 15th) about being a sponsoring organization for the proposed sidewalk/bike trails project currently in the planning stages. Glenn stated that the department is "stretched" to its capacity right now, and they decided, as a body, not to participate. Their resources are already in limited supply, and they are not willing to undertake the maintaining of the sidewalks and/or trails (i.e. shoveling in winter, on-going general maintenance, etc.). It's beyond their capabilities right now.
 - **Sidewalk Project:** The bulk of the meeting was devoted to discussion of the pending sidewalk (and possible bike trail) project in town. Warren explained government allocations for the sidewalk work (i.e. chain of command, how things were handled in Gallatin Gateway with regards to their sidewalk project, etc.). Walt described areas planned in town for the sidewalks, and elaborated on various aspects of the project. The group also kicked around ideas on planning, as well as entities that might be interested in taking care of the walks (a pre-requisite for grants). Deadlines for the CTEP grants were also discussed. The grant has to be undertaken by the end of 2010, with possible construction occurring during the summer of 2011.

Ashley reported on her on-going talks with homeowners in the area that might be affected by the new sidewalks. The main concern shared with her and her crew was avoiding any drainage or irrigation ditches, but overall, the consensus was that sidewalks are definitely needed. However, some homeowners raised concerns about having them on their property, and preferred to locate them across the street from their property. Right now, the general feeling is that the best spot would be on the south side of Churchill Road, which would mean two crosswalks are required: one in the general vicinity of where the existing walk is located across from Bethel Church (the north side of Churchill Road), and the other near Manhattan Christian School. The south side has a much clearer and direct path for the walks; the north side contains numerous mailboxes and utility poles, and would be much harder to work around.

Walt has talked with Tim, and Tim has visited with three of the homeowners on the south side of the road. Out of the three mentioned, two were in favor of it, and the third wanted it on the opposite side of the street. Also, one question that popped up (and was determined to be an important one) is just where the state easement is in regards to Churchill Road. Any new walks would need to be on the state easement. As a result, the issue of liability should not be a concern for homeowners. Questions about taxes were also brought up. Property taxes for individual homeowners would tend to rise with the addition of walks, although to what extent is not known at this time.

Jim provided a map of the sewer district lines for the group's general information. The map was sketchy in nature, but the intent in showing it was to gauge approximately where lot lines are, and ultimately, where the state easement might be located. Again, determining exactly where the easements are located will be of paramount importance, and could determine definitively if the north or south side of Churchill Road is where the walks will be located. The State highway department will need to be contacted about this, and hopefully they will be able to assist in determining easements, and what can happen within them. They (the State highway department) also need to have input as to design, location, types of crosswalks, curb cuts, etc.

It was decided that Ashley and her crew (that have been canvassing the homeowners in Churchill) will need to gather and combine their findings and host a community meeting to relay what those findings are, as well as to provide general information on the overall project to educate any Amsterdam-Churchill residents that are interested in (or affected by) the project. It was also decided to try and have that meeting in three weeks, on December 7, 2010, to provide this information to residents. They (homeowners) will be encouraged to attend in order to give their input, and our group should have options ready to show and discuss, as well as having the easement question answered from the State. Pros and cons of the project will be discussed. Too, the issue of a sponsor (or sponsors) for the CTEP grant needs to be addressed. Normally, a city body takes on that role, but since Amsterdam-Churchill is in an unincorporated part of the county, a different group will need to take the lead. The schools will be approached to gauge their reaction to being the sponsor.

The “Safe Route to Schools” program was also discussed. This is a separate program from the TSEP grant, and it deals more with a straightforward safety policy for kids walking to school. Most schools in Bozeman are already on-board with the program, and there’s a lot of interest in this area for it as well. This program could be thought of as an auxiliary or complimentary program to the CTEP, but they are two different entities.

Clear goals for the December 7th meeting were discussed. The main thrust will be to tell homeowners what is planned, and how new sidewalks could impact them and their property (i.e. liability issues, taxes, etc.). Direct input from the owners will also be a main focus of the meeting. In addition, determining sponsorship for the CTEP program by the end of the year is the most immediate need.

We talked about individual residents buying 5’ sections of the walk as a way to spark interest, and as a way to motivate them to do something positive for the community. A letter will need to be mailed out to all homeowners describing the project (and notifying them of the meeting on the 7th), and will have to be in the mail no later than Monday, November 29th. Also, the reporter for the Belgrade newspaper, Michael Tucker, will be contacted to get a story in the paper announcing the meeting and it’s agenda.

○ OTHER BUSINESS:

- The potential new Verizon cell phone tower on the Ecton property was briefly discussed. The tower could reach a height of 80-90 feet, but is still in the initial “talk” phases.
- Sign Provisions: Warren had some model regs that the group briefly reviewed and discussed. Initial ideas and “pros and cons” were talked about, but nothing definitive was decided on. Warren will do a little more research in regards to what Bozeman requires as a basis for our regulations, and (probably most importantly), share with the group what should *not* happen, via photographs of North Seventh Avenue in Bozeman, circa mid-1970’s.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, December 7th, at 7:00 P.M., at Manhattan Christian School (pending approval from them).

MEETING ADJOURNED