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**Town of Exeter
Swasey Parkway Trustees
Joint Meeting with Select Board
Nowak Room
September 30, 2024
7:00 PM
Approved Minutes**

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Staples called the meeting to order at 7:24 PM and introduced the members who were present

2. Introductions:

Present were: Chair Dwane Staples, Vice-Chair Darius Thompson and Dave Short

Others Present: Select Board Representative Niko Papakonstantis, Select Board Representatives: Daniel Chartrand, Molly Cowan, Julie Gilman, and Nancy Belanger, Town Manager Russ Dean and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy, and Steve Cronin, Public Works Director.

3. Joint Meeting with Select Board

Select Board Chair Papakonstantis indicated that he met with Mr. Cronin, Jay Perkins the Highway Supervisor and Assistant Town Manager Melissa Roy so that ideas could be presented for reopening the Parkway to vehicular traffic. He noted that he felt the proposal met the spirit of the warrant article and what folks were looking for and contacted Mr. Staples. The Trustees had a site walk on September 18th with him and Mr. Cronin to view the temporary plan to open the parkway.

Steve Cronin presented the proposal for the construction of a temporary turnaround utilizing the existing maintenance driveway and curb cut. A new jug handle would be constructed to handle the turnaround with traffic entering on the Newfields Road side of the Parkway and turning around to the opposite direction. Vehicles need about 25' to safely turnaround and they were able to fit that in the proposed design. A second curb cut would be north of the existing curb cut and a driveway constructed to meet it. This would allow a right hand turn to be taken off the Parkway and to circle back 180 degrees and head back the other way. There would be three ADA (American's with Disabilities Act) parking spots off the turnaround and parking on the River side of the road before the entrance gate and north of the turnaround. Three gates are proposed, one at the entrance, one mid-point just beyond the turnaround and one at the Water Street entrance serving two purposes, to create a barrier for vehicles and pedestrians and to allow the ability to shut down the Parkway during an emergency or event. Under normal conditions the gate on the Newfields Road side would stay open and the gates at the mid-point and Water Street would stay closed with that segment of road open to pedestrian traffic. This would be restricted to passenger vehicles only due to the width of the turnaround but allow access to police, fire and delivery vehicles to be accommodated with coordination of the gates.

45 The speed limit would be 15 mph. Additional signage would be added for parking and general
46 rules.

47 Ms. Belanger asked about the gates. Mr. Cronin indicated they would be a manually operated
48 swing-style gate which could be locked, 48" from the edge of curb for bicycle and pedestrians
49 and snowplow access.

50

51 Ms. Belanger asked about additional parking and Mr. Cronin indicated parking would be on the
52 River Street side but the number of spaces has not been determined yet. There are breaks
53 proposed to allow for conflicts with passing vehicles.

54

55 Ms. Belanger asked the reason for limiting the ADA spaces to three and Mr. Cronin indicated to
56 preserve the look of the Parkway and due to space limitations.

57

58 Ms. Belanger noted the green space wasn't optimal where there are drainage issues and Mr.
59 Cronin indicated some of that may be solved with grading but there could be a tie in with the
60 drainage system.

61

62 Ms. Gilman stated it was a great improvement and asked how close the curb cut would be to
63 where the walkway is. Mr. Cronin indicated he would talk to the contractor about tying in with
64 the curb cut.

65

66 Ms. Cowan indicated she was glad to hear about the grading and thanked the Trustees for
67 coming. Mr. Chartrand also expressed his thanks to everyone who worked on the proposal.

68

69 Select Board Chair Papakonstantis asked how the proposal would tie into the Coastal
70 Resiliency Grant and Mr. Cronin indicated he was unsure what would come out of the study at
71 this point and would see how the temporary plan works but believes it would take about a year
72 to complete the grant work with input from the Select Board and Trustees and feedback on
73 issues and potential situations. He noted that quotes were solicited, and he has a construction
74 estimate which includes gates, turnaround, signage, pavement marking and accessible spaces.
75 Beyond those additional quotes would be solicited.

76

77 Chair Staples indicated that Mark Damsell emailed with a question about putting additional
78 handicapped spaces in the road and Chair Staples was concerned that wouldn't work because
79 of the turnaround but wondered if there is a way to add one more space in front of the gate. Mr.
80 Cronin noted that ADA requires room for loading, so 8' for parking and 8' for a loading area. To
81 put a space at the entrance may require removal of curbing to widen the road.

82

83 Chair Staples noted the area is always wet and this solves more than just one issue. He
84 thanked Mr. Cronin and Jay for a great proposal and indicated he thinks we can move forward
85 and build with this.

86

87 Mr. Thompson asked about including a rain garden and Mr. Cronin noted it would have to be
88 engineered but it could be looked into. Chair Staples indicated that porous pavers would not
89 work due to the ground water and proximity to the river, they would get clogged. Mr. Chartrand
90 noted it would be great to add the rain garden to the grant.

91

92 Select Board Chair Papakonstantis reminded this was a temporary plan and that the Board
93 would be excited to get feedback. He asked how soon the project could be underway and Mr.
94 Cronin noted if approved tonight he can authorize the contractor to move forward after the Chili
95 Fest. He noted the grant deadline if November 15th but they can begin work outside the right of
96 way.

97
98 Mr. Cronin noted he did not anticipate any unknowns although there have not been borings or
99 subsurface work and they are going on general knowledge.

100
101 Select Board Motion:

102
103 ***Ms. Belanger motioned to authorize the Public Works Director to begin work on the***
104 ***Swasey Parkway turnaround and further authorize \$32,102.08 to be expended out of the***
105 ***road aide fund to cover construction costs and to further authorize the Town Manager or***
106 ***designee to sign any appropriate paperwork.***

107
108 Ms. Gilman asked if the motion could be amended to authorize \$35,000.

109
110 ***Ms. Belanger amended the motion to authorize the Public Works Director to begin work***
111 ***on the Swasey Parkway turnaround and further authorize \$35,000 to be expended out of***
112 ***the road aide fund to cover construction costs and to further authorize the Town***
113 ***Manager or designee to sign any appropriate paperwork. Ms. Cowan seconded the***
114 ***motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed 5-0-0.***

115
116 **4. Adjourn**

117
118 ***Mr. Thompson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 PM. Mr. Short seconded the***
119 ***motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

120 Respectfully submitted,

121 Daniel Hoijer
122 Recording Secretary
123 (via *ExeterTv.com*)