

Capitol Region Council of Governments

241 Main St., Hartford, CT 06106

Route 195 Advisory Committee Meeting
Hicks Memorial Municipal Center – Town Council Chambers
Minutes of November 30, 2009, 7:00 PM

Committee Members

Kevin Bouley, Chair
Steve Werbner
Kathy Bach
Marilee Beebe-Kostrun
Steve Beeching
Barbara Cook
Fred Daniels
Harvey Gilbert

Organization

Tolland Economic Development Commission
Tolland Town Manager
Historical Society/Museum Director
Tolland Planning & Zoning
Resident (Town Green) & Business Owner
Tolland Historic District Commission
Tolland Town Council - Chair
Tolland Town Council

Others

Linda Farmer
Chief John Little

Tolland Town Planner
Tolland Fire Department

Project Team

Tom Maziarz
Lia Huang
Steve O'Neill
John Kennedy

CRCOG
CRCOG
VHB
VHB

Public Attendees

Rod Hurtuk
Marjorie Hurtuk
Linda Calabrese
Tom Calabrese
Heather Rickard-Gilbert
Sue Errickson
Jeanne Kennedy
Jon Gould
Mary Ann Delany
Maryanne Gould

Resident
Resident
Resident
Resident
Resident
Resident
Attendee
Resident
Resident
Resident

Meeting Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Advisory Committee to review and act on traffic calming concepts for Tolland Green; receive public comment.

1. Welcome & Review of Traffic Calming Concepts

Kevin Bouley opened the meeting at 7:10 pm by welcoming attendees and leading introductions.

Tom Maziarz presented a short review on previous concepts that were considered in the Tolland Green area as well as the project team response to comments from the last Advisory Committee Meeting in May. Mr. Maziarz described the new traffic calming strategy and the workshop-based

process that ensued. A general overview of the traffic calming concepts to be reviewed at this meeting was also provided.

John Kennedy reviewed in detail each of the traffic calming elements in the new conceptual plan.

2. Advisory Committee Discussion

A summary of the Advisory Committee discussion follows:

Harvey Gilbert asked whether a bike lane could be used in place of the median islands for traffic calming. John Kennedy responded that bike lanes are most effective in traffic calming when bicycles are present. If they are not, drivers perceive a wider lane with the additional open pavement.

Kathy Bach commented that she agrees with the engineering principles in the plan, but the resulting aesthetic does not fit the historic nature of the Green. In particular, the yellow painted medians will appear very harsh and may not even be effective. Kevin Bouley asked whether there are any alternatives to the painted hatch marks without changing the accessibility that they provide. John Kennedy replied that there are some areas where the diagonal striping is not critical and could be removed. Steve O'Neill mentioned that there are other alternatives such as the use of textured pavement.

Marilee Beebe-Kostrun noted that it appears that a significant amount of green will be added in these new concept plans. John Kennedy confirmed that there will be a significant net increase in size or area of the Green.

Harvey Gilbert asked if additions to the Green could be used instead of the median islands. John Kennedy answered that the hourglass treatment may be used in other locations, but the overall roadway cross section will not be significantly reduced. Kathy Bach followed Mr. Gilbert's comment with a suggestion to use a serpentine alignment throughout the entire Green area. John Kennedy explained that the serpentine alignment was considered, but a large amount of Green and front lawn area was consumed in this design. Tom Maziarz reminded the Committee members that the sections of Route 195 and Route 74 adjacent to the Green will not be widened. The new traffic calming proposal fits within the existing roadway or paved area. Room for the medians was created by sacrificing the on-street parking lanes.

Kathy Bach expressed concern over the on-street parking spaces that have been removed in these concept plans, stating that these spaces are used regularly. Tom Maziarz replied that while on-street parking can serve as a traffic calming element, vehicles must utilize the spaces in order to slow vehicles down. It seems that these spaces are used on Sundays but not frequently used at other times. This open pavement gives drivers the perception of a wider driving lane, which tends to increase vehicle speeds.

Kathy Bach asked whether vertical elements could be used in the center Green intersection. Mr. Kennedy answered that a raised intersection or speed table was considered, but traffic volumes are too large to implement this type of treatment.

Barbara Cook mentioned that there are two houses that are very close to RT 74 northwest of the Green, expressing concern that widening in this area might be an issue. John Kennedy stated that the widening is flexible and can be completed on the other side of RT 74 rather than evenly on both sides of the road. Steve O'Neill added that the median width may also be reduced if needed.

Barbara Cook commented that the median islands don't fit the historic aesthetic. Marilee Beebe-Kostrun felt that the landscaped medians would add additional green space and pervious surfaces to the area and asked why these elements are not historically appropriate. Barbara Cook replied that wider medians might fit better, but this did not seem possible. Restoring the Green exactly or completely is not practical, but it should be preserved as much as possible.

Fred Daniels commented that these new concepts allow residents to use the Green with greater safety than exists today. This may change the look of the Green, but it has made it more useable and is the best plan to date.

3. Public Forum

Linda Calabrese felt that these new concepts show that the project team really listened to the community. There are several wonderful ideas in this plan, and while smaller details may still need to be worked out please do not lose sight of the benefits and increased safety in this plan.

Heather Gilbert stated that planting trees on the landscaped medians will help them better fit into the historic character of the Green. Mrs. Gilbert noted that she feels the center intersection looks too modern for the Green and was concerned about the intersections becoming traffic signals in the future. John Kennedy explained that realigning the road to a T-intersection does not make the installation of a signal any more likely than the current configuration. He noted that the poor geometry of the existing configuration might actually make it more likely that a signal will be needed.

Rod Hurtuk noted that this is an elegant solution to the issues that the Green is faced with. It may lose some of the historic look, but much more is gained with these concepts. Some of the details may even go unnoticed, but the concept does preserve the Green.

Sue Errickson believes that the proposed reconfiguration in the north Green will dramatically improve sight distances and increase safety.

Tom Calabrese agreed that this is an excellent plan with an emphasis on safety. Mr. Calabrese asked what the next step is to get these concepts implemented. Tom Maziarz explained that funding may be difficult, but that the next step is detailed design.

A member of the public asked whether there will be a public hearing before the plan is brought before the Town Council. Fred Daniels stated that it is up to the Council to decide, but this will be considered.

Mary Ann Delaney felt that the northern and center intersections were good concepts, but asked whether it made sense to keep the stop signs in the center Green area to slow vehicles down. John Kennedy mentioned that the project team did consider keeping the stop signs in place, however in order for this to work additional lanes would need to be added.

4. Advisory Committee Action on Traffic Calming Concepts

Kathy Bach asked whether the Committee will continue to meet to discuss the detailed plans for the Green. Kevin Bouley explained that the Town Council formed this Committee and it will be the Council's decision whether the Committee should continue or be disbanded.

Fred Daniels stated that the Council decision will depend on whether or not the study can be extended to address the other sections of the corridor that were dropped in order to fund the extra effort on the Green.

Fred Daniels made a motion, seconded by Harvey Gilbert, to accept the traffic calming plans as presented and recommend a public hearing prior to Town Council action on the plan. Steve Werbner and Kathy Bach abstained from voting. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Next Steps

Next steps include consideration by Town Council and review of potential funding sources for the design stage.

6. Other Business

There being no other business to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.