

Monkton Planning Commission
Complete Streets Public Meeting
Final Minutes (Approved on 9/16/14)
September 4, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Wendy Sue Harper, Chair of the Planning Commission. After welcoming the community members, she gave a brief history of the process the Planning Commission had used when deciding to undertake this project. After asking the members of the Planning Commission to introduced themselves, she turned the meeting over to Thea Gaudette, Planning Commission member and Monkton's representative to the Addison County Transportation Committee (the TAC).

Thea went over the work of the TAC and discussed the funding for the Complete Streets Study. She then reviewed the Local Concerns Meeting Summary of the project kick off meeting, which was held by LandWorks (the study consultant) on June 27, 2013. She also reviewed the Complete Streets Planning and Feasibility Study that was presented by Landworks at a Select Board meeting on June 3, 2014. (Both Documents were handed out at the meeting and will also be posted on the Monkton website.)

The 4 key questions were asked at the kick off meeting:

- 1: Define study area
- 2: Do you agree or disagree with the project purpose and need statement
- 3: Would a permanent park and ride location be useful to Monkton residents, if so, where would the best location be.
- 4: Were there other issues or improvements that would enhance Monkton ridge making it feel more like a "complete street"

Some key factors from this meeting were:

- It was mentioned that Monkton didn't seem like a village to outsiders.
- The primary concern for the Monkton Ridge area is the volume and speed of traffic and safety of this area.
- There were also multiple areas in Monkton Ridge that were in need of improvement for pedestrians

Thea then opened the meeting to comments from the floor. She said that there were two issues before us, the Complete Streets Study and the Park and Ride. She asked which topic people wanted to talk about first.

Park and Ride Discussion:

The Town has received a grant from agency of transportation (AOT) to build the Park and Ride.

Public Concerns: When would this go up? Would the Select board consider making this something the public could vote on?

The Select board has started on the process for the Park and Ride because of the Grant that was received from the state.

The Park and Ride would be a minimum of 10 parking spaces but no more than 20 parking spaces, and the town is looking at the lot being 15 parking spots at the moment.

Other locations for the Park and Ride were discussed: suggestion considering parking in the lower part of the parking lot at school, but this location is not as centralized and spaces are used for other events.

The reason the Park and Ride would be built on the ridge, is because the land is owned by the town. It is not a large lot, it would be a gravel lot, with low impact lighting that would not be invasive and would not affect the dark sky policy. It would be built to be set back and lowered as to not impact the view.

Public Concerns: There was a concern that this might not be a secure location, and there would be pollution from cars. It was asked again if there would be a chance to vote, but the select board has already approved this plan. Mr. Pilcher suggested to put in a petition since this had already been approved. There is a plan to have a bench for sitting, it could be a place to have farmers markets, etc. and would be a great community resource. This would be a low impact way to utilize property.

There is also public concerns that this will bring in more congestion/commotion around the existing residences who moved out to the country setting to avoid this, that it will become a local hangout which would be undesirable, and there are concerns about installation of sidewalks impacting the houses, septic systems, etc.

It was also mentioned that the Vermont Housing conservation had a lot adjacent to the school as a Park and Ride, but that location is wrong and it does not seem feasible to park in the Morse Park Park and Ride due to it being out of the main flow of traffic.

It was suggested to put it by the fire department embankment, but this is private property. With the concern of having the Park and Ride 24 hours creates a problem with traffic, noise, and other disturbances. But a way to prevent it being 24 hours is to ordinance a curfew/time restraint, but others want the access to include overnight. A state funded park and ride has to be 24 hours.

When a new town hall is built, the parking lot will become the new parking lot for commuters and the Park and Ride will most likely be moved further west. The existing town hall is an issue due to space and there is no way for the employees to work in privacy. There is also limited storage space. The benefit of the Park and Ride is that the state funding builds the parking lot for the new town hall building.

In reference to why this location was picked, Landworks did a study and felt that the selected location would be the safest. Since the town is running out of construction time this year, the grant is good through the end of December 2015 so there is time for discussion.

AOT waived location requirement of being on a state funded highway since they felt the need and made exceptions based on Monkton's unique location.

In regards to the traffic congestion this would create in the area, there is a suggestion of having a traffic circle, which would have to go on both ends of the town to slow traffic. One other suggestion was that the town could put in a bypass, which would divert traffic away from the more congested areas.

Complete Streets:

- The plan is to build a Park and Ride where there will be access to ACTR. Goal would be to have a bus route 2 times a day. We understand that Monkton is now an active part of the planning process for ACTR.
- The plan is to build the Park and Ride in front of the library, but this would add to the existing congestion.
- There was discussion about lowering speed limits as speed and safety are always a concern and topic of conversation.
- There is also a need to make it safer for people to walk around town.
- The select board voted in June 2014 regarding accepting the park and ride grant.
- Roundabouts are high cost project. Roundabouts work, however, in regards to keeping traffic moving, and forcing traffic to slow down.

Speed and Traffic Concerns Discussion:

Citizens felt that by the town adding the stop signs it has created a lot of noise with cars squealing tires, and aggressive acceleration of vehicles from these stop signs. Some of these were not put in based on the survey, but from the town trying to slow traffic.

Other low cost ways to slow traffic include narrowing the of road, possibly by painting the road to make the road to appear narrower and the "optical illusion" that could make cars slow down. Speed bumps and speed tables become problematic to road crews. Posting a sign "now entering" and "now leaving", and/or plantings of trees etc. to encourage traffic to slow down seems to be effective since it makes the road seem more narrow. Fog lines also give bikers and walkers a lane and safe zone. There is a need for sidewalks for pedestrian traffic.

Lowering the speed limit is worth the discussion in the problem areas. Urgency should be put on safety, and something needs to be done to slow traffic, and citizens would like to see something done. The impression of some citizens is that the attention has been on the Park and Ride project. The Park and

Ride has only come to the forefront more because the town was able to get a grant, and not because they did not feel like the safety and speed issue were a concern.

Townpeople asked about lowering the speed limit.

Landworks suggested changing the visual travel portion of the travel lane to slow traffic. Make 11 foot lanes and create a 3ft section for walking and bikes, etc. The center line cannot be moved since the roads are engineered to be precisely crowned. This could only be changed if the roads were to be completely repaved and designed to have the center be in a different location. There were some questions about the legality of the width of the roads. There will be some research as to what is the legally acceptable width of the road and travel lanes.

Crosswalks were suggested, and the higher cost of this type of project comes from requiring 4 signs.

Adding some stop signs has been considered in certain problem areas, but they were deemed more hazardous than helpful.

It is less expensive to redesign road then to add a traffic circle. There are many issues at the intersection of State Prison Hollow Road and Monkton Ridge. The Addison County Sherriff Dept. will be asked to patrol more areas more actively.

In regards to the increased noise concerns, the noise ordinance does not apply to vehicles.

Respectfully submitted,

Miranda Boe

Meeting Scribe