

MEETING MINUTES

WILLOW ROAD STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING (Meeting #15)

April 28, 2008

Attached are meeting minutes from the Steering Committee Team Meeting for the Willow Road Context-Sensitive Enhancement Plan held April 2, 2008 at the Village Hall in Northfield.

Steering Committee Members

	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Present</u>
Ken Behles, Village of Winnetka	_____	<u>X</u>
John Birkinbine, Village of Northfield	_____	<u>X</u>
Peter Fischer, Village of Northfield	_____	<u>X</u>
Fred Gougler, Village of Northfield	<u>X</u>	_____
Becky Hurley, Village of Winnetka	_____	<u>X</u>
Mark Kurensky, Village of Winnetka	_____	<u>X</u>
Ian Sherman, Village of Winnetka	_____	<u>X</u>
Scott Turban, Village of Northfield	_____	<u>X</u>

Alternates

Carolyn Kurtz, Village of Winnetka	<u>X</u>	_____
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Staff Liaisons

Stacy Sigman, Village of Northfield	_____	<u>X</u>
Steve Saunders, Village of Winnetka	_____	<u>X</u>
Doug Williams, Village of Winnetka	_____	<u>X</u>

Consultants

Scott Freres, The Lakota Group	_____	<u>X</u>
Daniel Grove, The Lakota Group	_____	<u>X</u>
Kevin Clark, The Lakota Group	_____	<u>X</u>
Mike Kerr, Christopher Burke Engineering	_____	<u>X</u>

Additional Participants

Richard Kates, Resident, Village of Winnetka	_____	<u>X</u>
Jeffery Liss, Resident, Village of Winnetka	_____	<u>X</u>
Ervin Hobson, Resident, Village of Northfield	_____	<u>X</u>
June O'Donaghue, Resident, Village of Northfield	_____	<u>X</u>
Deborah Kushner, Resident, Village of Northfield	_____	<u>X</u>
Terry Gottlieb, Resident, Village of Northfield	_____	<u>X</u>

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- Lakota distributed meeting minutes for Steering Committee meeting #14. Scott Turban motioned to adopt, and Ken Behles seconded the motion.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

- Richard Cates of Winnetka asked if he could make comments early in the meeting, recognizing that he was not able to stay through the entire meeting to be able to present during the public comments. The Committee agreed to allow him to make his comments. Mr. Cates indicated that he had issues with the changes recommended in the plan to the Hibbard and Willow intersection. He indicated that the changes to the lanes, in his opinion, negatively impact an intersection that currently works by creating additional, unnecessary tapers. He added that these changes were not driven by public input, and therefore undermine the credibility of the process. Mr. Cates also submitted written comments that were circulated to the Committee. Based on Mr. Cates' comments, Steve Saunders offered a quick sketch or a potential change that would address Mr. Cates' issues.
- Becky Hurley made an introduction to the Committee to start the meeting. She emphasized that so far, the Committee has been able to agree on values, and discuss the issues with respect and integrity. She indicated that she hoped this would continue through the rest of the process. She asked if there were any other Committee comments before starting the content of the meeting.
- John Birkinbine discussed a recent meeting he had with State Senator Schoenberg regarding the process. Mr. Birkinbine indicated that the Senator desired that the process result in a recommended plan, even if that required the Committee to vote. He indicated that his discussion gave him the sense that the Committee had more power than previously believed, that the Committee was more than advisory, and that any recommendation that came out of the process would be acted on by the State. Pete Fischer asked if there was additional time to allow more discussion before a vote. Mr. Birkinbine indicated that he believed there was, but the limit was an unknown capital funding deadline. Mr. Birkinbine suggested that another one or two meetings be taken to finish the discussion on lanes, and either reach consensus or vote. Becky Hurley asked the two Village Managers if there was any issue from Northfield or Winnetka in extending the process. Both Stacy Sigman and Doug Williams indicated they had no issues with an additional meeting or two. Doug Williams recognized that Northfield has been burdening the majority of the cost of the process and volunteered that Winnetka would split the costs 50/50 for additional services relating to these additional meetings.
- After discussion, the Committee agreed to have one to two more meetings to discuss the report, focusing on the contentious issues that did not receive resolution. Committee discussed the possibility of having these meetings in the evening so that train and work schedules would not cut discussions short. Additionally, Doug Williams suggested finding two dates close together to allow for a continuity of discussion. Northfield staff will poll Committee members on possible dates.
- Scott Turban asked to speak to the group because he was unable to attend the previous meeting. He had the following comments regarding the process and the report:

- He indicated that he believed the process has been terrific, but that in the last meeting, Committee members' opinions started to enter the discussion.
- He reminded the Committee that the IDOT statement of Context Sensitive Solutions does not include any mention of capacity.
- The IDOT process stresses intangibles, not engineering, and the Committee should not be trying to engineer a plan.
- He stated that public input should be weighted for the decision making process. The input of the first two workshops heavily influenced the next steps, but he believes that the Committee got sidetracked by not taking the input from the third workshop to heart.
- The majority of the workshop participants were from Northfield and supported two to three lanes, and this should be reflected in the report.
- He believes the Committee process is not a place for personal opinion and personal opinion should not trump public input. If personal opinion is going to enter into the report, it should be called out as such, with Committee members names attached to their opinions.
- He indicated that he doesn't think Amenity X can be traded to allow for X Lanes, and that the Committee does not have enough information to make that determination.
- He doesn't think the Village Boards thought eight people in a vacuum would resolve this issue, that public meetings and the previous process are critical for coming to a final recommendation.
- He indicated that if the positions were switched, and public opinion was for four lanes and Northfield continued to hold out for two lanes, that there would be a major uproar from Winnetka.
- Ian Sherman countered that he didn't believe that the goal of this process was to just count heads at the Workshops. That the goal was instead for the Steering Committee to assess the facts and ideas. If the Committee members were not there to digest and synthesize all the information, then he believes they are unneeded. He indicated that he cannot deny that if the process was just based on the input at the Workshops, the recommendation would be for two lanes. He also stated he did not have a problem with the comments Scott Turban suggested as additions to the report, and he had no problem with "standing up and being counted" and having that documented in the report.
- Scott Turban commented that the process could have been dominated by Winnetka, that residents and groups could have organized but they did not. Northfield residents did organize, and that should be reflected in the report.
- Scott Freres pointed out that this was an augmented CSS process, and if it had truly followed the IDOT process then other adjacent communities that are openly four lanes would have participated. Instead, the State Senator, along with the Village Presidents of Winnetka and Northfield crafted a custom process as an opportunity for the Steering Committee to blend in the old process and take a leadership position to try to solve a decades old issue.
- Scott Turban indicated that he believed it was up to the Village Boards to figure out the political issues and decide what might or might not get built. He stated that he would not have volunteered for this Committee if he thought his role was to discuss the politics of the situation.

- Peter Fischer commented that at the last meeting, people argued against two lanes because they believed that politically it would never get built. Mr. Fischer added that based on the State Senator's comments as reported by John Birkinbine, this is not true. Additionally, he indicated that it appeared a lot of people put too much value on Mike Kerr's "off the cuff" analysis about the pedestrian safety of two versus four lanes from the previous meeting. Mr. Fischer asked that Mike Kerr be able to discuss an "apples to apples" comparison on pedestrian safety of two or three lanes versus four lanes at the next meeting.
- Mike Kerr commented that while his comments at the last meeting were "off the cuff" he stands behind several things:
 - The existing safety on the road is terrible
 - The lack of curb and gutters creates dangerous situations
 - The existing width, including the gravel shoulders, is wider than either scenario in front of the Committee.
 - There are no existing amenities improving pedestrian safety
- Peter Fischer commented that while a four lane plan could be generated that is safer than the existing conditions; a two lane plan could be created that is even safer.
- Ken Behles commented that he believes a four lane intersection design can be safer for pedestrians than existing conditions with four lanes.
- Mark Kurensky added that he believes the four lane plan will be safer for vehicular traffic as well.
- Scott Turban commented that the report needs to reflect this discussion. That it currently reads like the input was equal, but he believes it is not. If a Committee member is advocating for four lanes, then that should be reflected in the report, with the person's name.
- Mark Kurensky stated that he feels the Committee should be careful in how input is presented, that because one person or a group of people says something, the report just follows that blindly. Any comments or recommendations need to be placed in context.
- Scott Turban indicated his frustration with the idea of a "silent majority" that is supposedly out there supporting four lanes. He commented that he believes if these people cannot be allowed to skew the results of what was gathered in the proper channels of the Workshops.
- Ken Behles responded that nobody in the process represents a constituency.
- Scott Turban countered that if people did not bother to show up to the Workshops, then their voice should not receive the same support as those who took the time to show up. Only a small number of Winnetka residents attended, and the report needs to quantify the opinions of those who came.
- Ken Behles agreed that quantities should be reflected in the report.
- Becky Hurley also agreed that the quantities should be reflected in the report. She also reminded the group that before the third Workshop the Committee had a discussion where they agreed that they needed to evaluate the input, use judgment, and act as representatives and not just "count noses."

- Ken Behles agreed that the use of judgment was appropriate as long as it is documented in the report and accounted to specific people.
- Mark Kurensky raised the issue of an expanded Executive Summary to include more of the analysis and discussion. He suggested that it be more “open” about the issues.
- Daniel Grove added that Fred Gougler indicated in a phone conversation prior to this meeting that he believed the Executive Summary should be expanded to include more discussion of the Character Zones, more discussion of the process including descriptions of how inclusive it was.
- Ken Behles agreed that the Executive Summary should be expanded.

PUBLIC INPUT

- June O’Donaghue submitted written comments that were circulated to the Committee.
- Jeffery Liss commented that the Committee should try to formulate a plan that solves the problem once and for all. That the Village Boards will endorse the report at the end of the process, so that gives the Committee the power to craft a plan that solves the issues. Ken Behles commented that it is not predetermined that the Boards will endorse the plan, so the report needs to be prepared so that it stands on its own.
- Terry Gottlieb identified himself as a Northfield Trustee, and asked that a plan be presented to the Board, and not options. He added that he heard the issue described as a regional problem, and asked the Committee why a regional problem is being expected to be solved locally through changes to Willow Road, and not regionally through changes to a system of roads. He commented that he believes that a broader view should be taken that looks at regional solutions.

These minutes represent our understanding and interpretation of the issues discussed at that meeting regarding the project. Please forward any additional comments or clarifications to Lakota.