

Forest Home Improvement Association

Open meeting of FHIA officers, April 29, 2008, 7:00-8:30pm. FH Chapel

Present: Trevor Pinch, President; Michael Bend, Vice President; Amita Verma, Treasurer; Harriet Brittain, Secretary; Also Jonathan Miller, Abe Strook, Bruce Brittain and Doug Brittain.

Minutes

TP: opening remarks. Open officers meeting called in the spirit of transparency.

1 & 2. Traffic Planning

i) On March 13 TP and MB presented the FH TCP to the Town planning committee. Many other members of the community were present. Officers felt that the presentation went well. Whilst acknowledging that discussion of remaining disagreements is ongoing, they conveyed the general support of residents for the plan moving forward. Minutes were read out (see accompanying PDF).

ii) A Subsequent email from Jonathan Kanter has indicated likely partial financial support from Cornell for entrance features and speed tables.

iii) At the Town Planning meeting of April 3 the news of as yet unapproved partial funding for entrance features and speed tables was brought forward. Peter Stein again raised the issue of the rumoured controversy of the TCP within FH. TP stressed that residents were behind the plan. A letter was read out from Ruth Marr and AS which reiterated the Judd Falls/MacIntyre Place preference for fast implementation of speed tables over other features. Peter Stein wanted to be certain that residents actually want the measures of the plan. It was reported that there will be an open public meeting of the town at which residents can voice support. TP noted that the consensus is agreement on entrance features and speed tables. When the money is there we should go for it. The initial features have passed and funding is available.

iv) AS was concerned about possible discrepancy between what residents want and the official planning document. Suggested drafting a cover letter to go with the official planning document in order to allay general concerns about disagreement.

MB and TP reported that they have drafted a letter to the Town Planning Board to this effect which shows that we have a consensus, whilst being open about certain disagreements. The letter was read out and minor alterations were discussed. The letter would be accompanied by a summary of the oral and written comments received from the community on the TCP. (The draft was subsequently updated and approved by officers).

v) AS called for a more discrete democratic process for each street or geographic location. This was not felt to be useful (as what one street decides effects others), but it was agreed that more general community meetings were desirable, at which residents

might be able to vote for or against certain measures more directly before they were implemented. In any event it was agreed that there will be no major protest if entrance features and speed tables go through as proposed.

JM emphasized the degree of unanimity expressed by the community at the October meeting. Everyone said yes to moving forward. There was virtually no dissent. (It was agreed that the phrase “virtually unanimous” should be added to the drafted letter to the Town Planning Board.)

TP agreed that there would be a chance to discuss each features as it comes up, in the light of the plan, other considerations and previous implementations. HB noted that desires might be modified as the effectiveness of features become apparent.

vi) TP reported that he and Mike Koplinka-Loehr had been interviewed by the Ithaca Journal that day concerning the TCP. They had stressed the neighbourhood’s concern for safety and the environment. Abe suggested a mission statement on these motivations might go down well, especially in line with Cornell’s environmental impact concerns.

3. Upstream Bridge

John Lampman (Tompkins County Highway Division) has announced a meeting on the rehabilitation of the Upstream bridge to be held in the FH Chapel on May 7th. MB undertook to send a message out to the community as soon as possible.

BB gave a brief report on the two options for the bridge reconstruction: a) I beams with decorative trusses or b) rebuilding as a truss bridge. There are advantages and disadvantages to each option. Option a) would cause a 5 ft loss of headroom under the bridge or 5ft rise in deck height. If lowered there would be danger from a 100 year flood. Raising it would be very disruptive to nearby residents. Option b) would allow easy maintenance, but it would still have a 15 ton weight restriction, which is not adequate for some uses such a county salt trucks. DB stressed that the forthcoming meeting would be a chance for the community to say what it wants. Interim repairs to the deck will be carried out in the next couple of weeks.

4. Eco Park

An email from Carrie K-L was read out: progress limited on all fronts. CK-L has investigated Beautification Grants through Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Grants would be handed out through the Town of Ithaca. The town must be on board with the project. Grants range from \$500 to \$5,000, depending on the project. The dollars must be matched, and volunteer labor can serve as a match. For more information see http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/tompkins/community_beautification/index.htm

5. Deer update.

No further news since BB’s message went out to the community last month. Some questions were raised about the gate design of fence in the Mundy Wild Flower Garden. JM stressed to the assembled officers and residents that FH is likely to benefit

greatly from Cornell's deer management strategy in the long run. Other deer infested neighbourhoods do not have so much help.

6. UNC – Sound

JM reported that Steve Beyers of Cornell's Environmental Compliance Office is very much aware of the concerns of FH and other communities neighboring Cornell re increased noise. BB and DB took issue with some of the technical points concerning allowable decibel increases given out at the UNC meeting. It was suggested that Steve Beyers be invited to a meeting in FH, to which other UNC members would also be welcome, to clear up these issues. BB, DB, TP, MB and JM all expressed interest in such a meeting. JM to set it up.

Cornell Siren testing set for April 30th. HB agreed to send out an email to the community immediately.

7. Spring clean up

Spring clean-up was very successful. It was noted by AV that next year more heavy-duty trash bags would be serve us better as the volume and nature of trash in some areas was too much for the thinner kind. AV asked if there was interest in doing a community garlic mustard pull in the near future. The consensus was that this would be a stretch for people at this time. BB suggested that we make a general announcement about garlic mustard and encourage residents to pull it when they see it and dispose of it with their garbage.

8. Meeting with NE residents

TP and JM met with Stephen Wagner, a Northeast resident prominent in the Sapsucker Woods campaign. He was seeking advice and support on setting up a Northeast residents association. It was noted that Herb Engman's election campaign had included a mandate to get more neighbourhood associations going.

9. AOB

BB circulated a recent study showing where bicyclists ride relative to the edge of the road. The average was found to be around three feet from the edge of the pavement. The document is intended to support the possibility of textured edges to pavement as a traffic calming measure, something to which many residents took exception on the basis of bicycle safety. JM and HB both reported experiences of being pushed into the gutter around the Byway, scraping peddles and being unable to easily negotiate the gradient difference between black top and cement edge. DB assured them that there should not be a difference in height, and that future resurfacing will be "scrape and fill," in order to avoid this problem. TP circulated a map and photographs showing examples of cobbled pavement from the Cornell Campus and encouraged cyclists to test out riding on them.