

Obery Street Study Committee Minutes – September 15, 2005

The first regularly scheduled meeting of the Obery Street Study Committee was held on September 15, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. at the Plymouth Library, 132 South Street. The following members were in attendance Nicholas Filla, Larry Conley, Richard Sullivan, Frank Turso (representing Margie Burgess) and Jeffrey Welch. Jean Loewenberg arrived late. Lee Hartmann and Valerie Massard, Planning staff, were also in attendance.

Mr. Filla opened the meeting, discussed the planning process and stated that the Planning Board is looking for the committee's support and guidance. He asked each member to make a few brief comments.

Mr. Turso, School Committee Chair, said that he was interested in the long and short term plans for Obery Street especially as it relates to the Plymouth North High School property.

Mr. Conley noted that he moved into his family's house on Whiting Lane and shortly thereafter the street began to change drastically. He said it is time to look at healthy types of growth and saving the neighborhood.

Mr. Sullivan stated that he would like to see what impacts the Courthouse and Registry of Deeds will have on the neighborhood before other changes occur. He also said that having the school in the neighborhood is a good thing.

County Commissioner Welch noted that the County is the largest landowner on Obery Street. The commissioners are undertaking efforts to preserve the remainder of the County Farm.

Mr. Filla said that the committee should look at the proposed hospital expansions and the traffic and infrastructure studies being conducted by the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Hartmann handed out and reviewed a series of maps. He noted that the purpose of the maps is to get the committee to begin think about the area in different ways.

Brainstorming

What do you like about Obery Street?

- A beautiful tree lined street
- Accessible to Route 3, downtown, the beach, etc.
- Far enough out of town but also close
- The school provides a positive atmosphere (like a college campus)
- The school provides public open space
- A well established neighborhood with mature trees (especially near Sandwich Street)
- The County Farm
- The green space (island) at the South Street intersection
- The hospital is of a nice size and is in scale with the neighborhood

- It is a relaxing and visually appealing place to drive along
- The new access way to the hospital is a benefit
- The Obery Street/Sandwich Street area is the most beautiful part of town
- People care and are involved

What do you dislike about Obery Street?

- Major aesthetic improvements to the high school campus are needed (it is an eyesore)
- Dislike of the commercial uses on the street (coffee shop with drive through)
- Helicopter noise
- A fair amount of road side trash exists (cups, lottery tickets, trash that was headed to the dump)
- It is more difficult getting onto Obery Street from Whiting Lane

What most concerns you?

- Being able to maintain the current look and feel of the neighborhood while allowing for reasonable land uses
- Expansion of retail commercial uses
- The future of the high school site
- Signage (need to maintain cohesiveness, consistency and scale)
- The lights, traffic flow and timing of the lights at South Street
- Overwhelming the street with traffic

What do you want to see in the future?

- If the school moves, the high school campus could be a higher education facility

Valerie Massard suggested that the committee members think about things they like on other roads and what is missing.

The next meeting was scheduled for October 6, 2005 at 7:00 p.m.

Requested information

- Zoning Districts and uses
- Does the County Courthouse include a restaurant or food services?

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Lee Hartmann
Director of Planning and Development