



**Town of Amherst**

**Joint meeting - Town Services and Outreach Committee and Town Council**

**Special Meeting – Public Forum on Pomeroy Village Intersection**

**Thursday, January 07, 2021**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Virtual Meeting**

Members of TSO participating remotely: Brewer, DuMont, Ross, Ryan, Steinberg

TSO members absent: none

Other Members of Town Council participating remotely: Bahl-Milne, Griesemer, Pam, De Angelis, Swartz, Schreiber

Others participating remotely: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Taker Emily Reardon, Christine Brestrup, Guildford Mooring, David Ziomek

*Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, this meeting of the Town Services and Outreach Committee is being conducted via remote participation.*

**1. Call to Order**

DuMont declared the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM, and confirmed all members can hear and be heard

Griesemer declared the presence of a quorum, called the special meeting of the Town Council to order at 6:02 PM, and confirmed all members can hear and be heard

**2. Presentation and Discussion Items**

**a. Massworks/Pomeroy Village Intersection Project**

**i. Presentation**

DuMont said the council is faced with the decision of a roundabout versus a signalized intersection at the Pomeroy Village intersection. She said she hopes to hear residents' uses of the village center and what they would like to see in that area.

TM Bockelman introduced the other panelists. He said that this is part of the outreach for this project and there will be another meeting on Saturday at 2:00 PM for public comment. He said there will also be a pop-up tent event at some point, socially distanced, to address public comments. TM Bockelman said EngageAmherst is another tool to interact and post questions for town staff to answer. He said the grant that the town received will be focused on the intersection, but he sees this as a catalyst for other projects around town.

Brestrup presented the intersection challenges including lack of pedestrian access, no bike lanes, car-centered designs, and more listed in the powerpoint. She said the town was awarded a \$1.5 million grant from a State MassWorks program. Brestrup also presented the history of this project, dating back to the late 1990s when the design was developed. She said there was a MassWorks grant that was unsuccessful in 2013 and then were successful in 2020.

Brestrup said they are considering a controlled intersection or a roundabout. She presented the qualifications of controlled and roundabout intersections. Brestrup also reviewed the questions that residents can answer in their comments.

## **ii. Public Comments and Questions on Pomeroy Village Intersection Project and staff answers**

Adrienne Terrizzi – Terrizzi said she is a resident of Orchard Valley. She said she has been waiting for a long time to get to this point in the process regarding Pomeroy Village. Terrizzi commented that with the Groft Park rehabilitation and other improvements in town she sees Pomeroy Village as an asset. She said they are a diverse neighborhood in South Amherst. Terrizzi said she travels primarily by car and she would like to see more walkways and bikeways. She said she would also like to see more seating areas and cannot weigh in on the roundabout vs. controlled intersection debate yet.

Catherine Bell – Bell said she is a resident of South Amherst and is a business owner. She said she would like to be able to more easily access the businesses at the intersection and primarily has to travel by car to get to the businesses because there are no sidewalks. She said they have the opportunity to make a true village center and there is an issue with people driving through the intersection very fast and a roundabout would speed up traffic even more. Bell also said the area might be too small to have a roundabout and a controlled intersection would be better for businesses and pedestrians.

Claire Bertrand – Bertrand said she has lived at this intersection for 10 years and currently lives elsewhere but she still works in the office buildings near the intersection. She said her concern is

safety in that area and she would like to see traffic-calming mechanisms for not just the intersection but also for the general area. She said this would allow people to see what is going on in Amherst including all of the schools located in the area and she asked if there would be a lot of land taken with either of the options for the intersection. Mooring said it depends on the design. He said if they decide on a roundabout and need turn lanes on West Pomeroy or Pomeroy that will take away more land and if they just need turn lanes on West Street they could take less land.

Noah Loving – Loving said he uses the intersection frequently by foot and driving through. He said he would like to shop there more and the lack of the pedestrian controls in the intersection prevents him from shopping at the businesses more. Loving said he has an inclination to the roundabout option, but he would have to see the proposals in more detail. Loving added that he would be in favor of bike lanes and having areas to congregate.

Ginny Hamilton - Hamilton said they bike through the intersection at least once a week and her highest priority is pedestrian safety. She said she loves the enhanced signaling idea in the intersection and she strongly favors this over the roundabout option. She said she hopes to see more space for biking. Hamilton said she also likes the idea of areas for congregating.

Erika Zekos – Zekos said she comes to the intersection area to eat a lot and she would like to see increased safety and is leaning towards a roundabout because of the safety factor. She said she would like to see data about the safety for pedestrians. Zekos said that she would also like to see sheltered bus stops on both sides of the street and improved sidewalks that extend beyond the intersection.

Mary Hoyer – Hoyer said she mostly drives through the intersection and also uses the businesses there. She said she has a preference for a roundabout for the environmental reasons. She said the crosswalks for the roundabout in the diagram seem to be shorter and the time the pedestrians would spend on these crosswalks would be shorter. Hoyer said disabled people should be consulted on this. She added that landscaping can correct almost any bad design, but if you take current land that is devoted to the parking in front of the buildings and turned it into a plaza, the parking could be moved to the back of the plaza.

Elizabeth Davis – Davis said she supports the roundabout option because it seems to work well for the Atkins Farm area, but the sidewalks are also a concern.

Rosemary Kofler – Kofler said she is a resident of South Amherst and primarily uses a car to go through the intersection. She said the biggest issue is safety for pedestrians and she is concerned that roundabouts are less safe for pedestrians. Kofler said she would like to see an intersection where a pedestrian can push a walk button to cross the street and she liked Hoyer's idea of parking behind shops. She said she is also in favor of a bike lane and bus stops with shelters.

Ziomek said this was a team effort and he acknowledged the town staff at the Planning Department.

TM Bockelman said this was a great meeting and he would like to hear from more people. He encouraged participants to share the meeting link for Saturday with others and use the EngageAmherst site. TM Bockelman also reviewed the process that this project will go through, starting with a recommendation with the TSO and then having a vote at the Town Council level.

Brewer said she does not believe this is the time for councilors to speak and she clarified that they do not need a public hearing because they will have these types of meetings and more outreach. Griesemer said they would only need to have a hearing if they were amending some sort of bylaw or spending money.

### **3. Adjourn**

DuMont declared the meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM

Griesemer declared the special meeting adjourned at 6:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Emily Reardon

#### **Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented:**

03-11-21 DRAFT TSO Committee Minutes

2021 mar 20 Parking in Amherst 3

2021-03-25 TSO agenda

2021-03-25 TSO regular agenda

Apardian\_Alam\_2015\_CrossingRoundabout\_VisuallyImpairedPeds\_LitReview\_smaller\_size(1)

Arterial and Collector street segments

Conservation Commission – Pomeroy Village Intersection

DAAC email re Pomeroy Village 2021-03-09

local street segment list (1)

MassWorks\_Pomeroy\_Public Outreach 03-25-2021

Pomeroy Village Outreach – 03-25-2021 and 03-27-2021 (Dumont, Darcy A.) (3)

PROWAG ADA email, 2021-02-24

Public Engagement\_Harnessing Citizen Voices

TAC\_meeting\_3\_2021\_Roundabouts\_TZ\_Overview (1)

TSO DRAFT WORKPLAN updated 03-05-2021 -