



TOWN OF GRAFTON
GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
30 PROVIDENCE ROAD
GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519
(508) 839-5335 ext. 1201 • FAX (508) 839-4602
www.grafton-ma.gov

**SELECT BOARD
PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, March 28, 2023
7:00PM**

**Community Meeting Room A/B
Grafton Public Library
35 Grafton Common
Grafton, MA 01519**

RECEIVED TOWN CLERK
GRAFTON, MA
2023 APR 20 1 AM 9:45

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. In attendance were Chair Colleen Roy, Vice Chair Mat Often, Clerk Andy Jefferson, Ann Marie Foley, and Ray Mead (arrived at 7:14pm). Staff in attendance were Town Administrator Evan Brassard and Department of Public Works Director Paul Cournoyer.

1. PUBLIC OUTREACH: George Hill Road

Mr. Brassard gave the George Hill Road Renovation and Paving Project presentation.

A resident asked about using federal grants for this project. Mr. Brassard spoke on Grafton's success in acquiring grants and stated that this project would be eligible for a MassWorks grant.

A resident asked if this project would be eligible for funding from the infrastructure package that was passed, as it focuses on stormwater runoff. Mr. Brassard stated that George Hill Road is difficult to prioritize for this type of funding because it does not connect to any high-density or business areas.

A resident of 41 George Hill Road stated that the road should be wider than the proposed twenty feet to allow for passing trucks, sewer, water, and drainage.

A resident at the corner of George Hill and Stowe Road noted the poor design of the George Hill and Stowe intersection. He stated that the proposed plans do not help manage speed. Mr. Cournoyer stated that unfortunately, keeping the road narrow is the way to reduce speed. The resident stated that the Cape Cod berms are wasteful and will be torn up very quickly. Mr. Cournoyer explained that they are a means to keep water on the road while allowing vehicles to pass. The resident asked how flooding on properties would be managed. Mr. Cournoyer described how capturing the water in the basins would help alleviate some of those issues. The resident asked if ARPA money could be put toward this project. Mr. Brassard listed the ways that those funds had already been designated by the ARPA Committee.

A resident noted that this road used to be milled and overlaid approximately every seven years, but the last two cycles were missed. He and Mr. Cournoyer agreed that the proposed width of the road could be compared to the current width of Adams Road.

Bill Nelson of 88 George Hill Road spoke on the deterioration of the drainage system on George Hill Road over the last forty years. He asked if there had been any consideration beyond the road itself for fixing the sources of this damage. Mr. Brassard noted that this was challenging because the municipality does not own the land that the resident was referring to.

The resident of 41 George Hill Road stated that the road should be four feet wider than the proposed twenty feet because vehicles will go over the berms. Mr. Brassard suggested that adding this width may take away the character of the road by eliminating scenic trees and stone walls.

Mr. Mead stated that the Town wants to fix this road, but they need a way to pay for it. He encouraged the residents to focus on passing the debt exclusion at Town Meeting and assured them that the road would be engineered correctly.

A resident highlighted the importance of pursuing grants for this project because he does not believe Grafton would vote in favor of the debt exclusion. He recommended using stabilization funds to help decrease the total debt exclusion. He noted that the Town has paved many other roads.

Randy Preston of 126 George Hill Road asked if they had considered splitting the project up over a two- or three-year tranche and using stabilization funds. Mr. Brassard stated that municipal projects become much more expensive when they are done in phases. He also explained that he does not support using municipal stabilization funds for this project because it would move the Town away from their goal of having five to seven percent of the annual budget in stabilization.

Kevin Moriarty of 30 George Hill Road suggested that the Town should have fixed this road instead of using funds for salary increases and repairs to other roads. Mr. Brassard noted the work that was done to prepare for this meeting which starts the process of fixing the road.

Mr. Preston asked Mr. Brassard to describe the next steps and the project's timeline. Mr. Brassard stated that if the debt exclusion passes at Town Meeting in May, the funds will be available July 1, then the Town can get the project out to bid. He predicted that the project would start the following spring. Mr. Cournoyer noted that conservation meetings, utility meetings, Planning Board meetings, and negotiations for easements would also be necessary before work can begin on the road.

Mr. Brassard assured a resident that escalation had been taken into consideration for the \$7M cost of the project.

A resident and Mr. Cournoyer discussed DPW's plans to make some routine repairs to the road in the coming weeks.

A resident asked where the money came from for the Stowe Road bridge project. He stated that the poor condition of George Hill Road could be a liability for the Town. Mr. Cournoyer responded that the bridge was funded by Chapter 90 and cost about \$800K.

Mr. Mead spoke about his intention to look at all funding options and complete this project for a safe and efficient road. He highlighted the importance of Town Meeting attendance.

Ms. Foley noted that any increase in the width of the road would increase the total project cost.

A resident asked if Mr. Cournoyer had met with residents to review the portions of the plans in front of their properties. Mr. Cournoyer stated that the process would be like the Main Street project, during which he met with almost every resident.

Mr. Brassard stated that an electronic copy of the plans would be posted on the town website the following day. He also stated that the Conservation Agent had reviewed the plans and the Conservation Commission would review them in the future.

The resident of 41 George Hill Road recommended directing water on the north side of George Hill out to the wetlands to avoid flooding at the bottom catch basin. He also recommended getting easements to widen the road, which would be worth the additional cost.

Mr. Brassard invited those in attendance to view the printed plans at the front of the room and ask any questions about them.

Mr. Cournoyer directed residents to call the Town Administrator's office if they are interested in scheduling a meeting with him or if they have any additional questions.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11pm.

Meeting materials are available at: <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/AgendaCenter/Select-Board-4>

A full recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/wuT5PLMaM2o>