

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF WEXFORD BOROUGH DISTRICT HELD AT 3.30 P.M. ON MONDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL, CARRICKLAWN, WEXFORD.

Presiding: - His Worship the Mayor, Cllr. L. Kelly.

Councillors: - J. Hegarty, G. Lawlor, M. Bell, G. Laffan, D. Hynes, T. Forde.

In Attendance:-

- Mr. Tony Larkin, Director of Services.
- Ms. Angela Laffan, District Manager.
- Mr. Sean Kavanagh, Senior Executive Engineer.
- Mr. Shay Howell, Senior Executive Architect.

PART 8 – PROPOSED GYM FACILITY AT FERNDALE PARK

Mr. Shay Howell, Senior Executive Architect, presented indicative plans for the development of facilities at Ferndale Park following a review of the green areas and existing amenities within the estate. Outlining the detail of the proposal, Mr. Howell advised that a pre planning meeting has taken place with the Planning Department who are generally in support of the proposal which will include

- A gymnasium / boxing / community facility with adjacent car parking spaces.
- A MUGA (multi use games area) which would be particularly beneficial for winter use.
- A levelled green play area.
- Removal of sections of boundary walls to open up the area visually and improve safety and security being overlooked from nearby dwellings.

In response to Members, Mr. Howell advised that funding is not currently available but funding streams can be explored once planning is secured.

In relation to the gym facility, Mr. Tony Larkin, Director of Services, advised that a S.183 Notice will be required in due course to lease / dispose of the land to a boxing club or other community group.

Following discussion, to which all members contributed, it was agreed on the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor, seconded by Cllr. T. Forde, to proceed with the Part 8 process.

DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY AT SPAWELL ROAD / 1798 STREET

The attached report, copies of which were previously circulated, in relation to the disposal of property at Spawell Road / 1798 Street was considered and discussed.

Noting that this matter had previously been presented to Members at Borough Meetings held on 22nd July, 2019 and 18th November, 2019, following which the property was placed on the open market at the request of Members, Cllr. T. Forde sought clarification with regard to the variation in the sale price/market value – initially recommended at €20,000 in July, 2019, €30,000 in November, 2019 and now recommended at €35,000 almost double the original agreed sale price.

On the recommendation of the Director, it was unanimously agreed on the proposal of Cllr. G. Lawlor seconded by Cllr. T. Forde, to proceed with the disposal subject to Property Management responding to Members queries in relation to the sale price / market value. Formal Section 183 Notice will be presented to the next County Council meeting for approval.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The Bullring:

Following the completion of the traffic model requested by Members regarding traffic in a number of locations in the town centre, Mr. S. Kavanagh, Senior Executive Engineer, outlined in detail the results of the model which examined traffic volumes and distribution at 3 peak times - 8.00 a.m to 9.00 a.m., 12.00 p.m. to 14.00 p.m. and 17.00 p.m. to 18.00 p.m.

During discussion, the following three possible options were considered by Members

1. Retain the status quo – From The Quays through Common Quay Street / The Bullring
2. Reversal of traffic flow through Cornmarket towards The Bullring/The Quays
3. Revert to 2 way traffic flow in both directions

In relation to the suggested reversal of traffic flow through The Bullring/Cornmarket, Mr. Kavanagh highlighted the negative impacts including:

- Increased traffic delays on the Quays northbound resulting in traffic backing up along the Quays, Trinity Street and William Street.
- Increased traffic volumes traversing the Bullring
- Pedestrian Safety due to increased traffic and limited sight line approaching The Bullring from Cornmarket
- Traffic delays exiting out onto the Quays and backup of traffic on Common Quay Street as a result
- Issues for delivery vehicles accessing Main Street
- Access for large buses into Clayton Whites Hotel

Noting Members concerns in relation to the stated impact of the one way system on local business, Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Service, advised that the situation needs to be regularised and the recommended solution put out to public consultation.

Expressing the view that "footfall brings business not traffic", Mr. Larkin also highlighted the increased need to improve pedestrian areas and public realm /outdoor dining etc. during the current Covid pandemic.

Mr. T. Larkin and Mr. S. Kavanagh advised Members that the current arrangement is strongly recommended as the best solution and stressed that reverting to 2 way traffic flow is the least favourable option and not recommended from a traffic management / pedestrian safety point of view.

On the proposal of the Mayor, a vote was taken in relation to **Option (1)** – To retain the status quo – from The Quays through Common Quay Street / The Bullring which resulted as follows:

In Favour: Cllr. L. Kelly (1)

Against: Cllr. J. Hegarty, Cllr. G. Lawlor, Cllr. M. Bell, Cllr. D. Hynes, Cllr. T. Forde, Cllr. G. Laffan (6)

The majority being against the proposal, Option (2) and Option (3) were then considered.

In reply to the suggestion from Cllr. D. Hynes to revert to two way traffic flow, Mr. S. Kavanagh again stressed that **Option (3)** is dangerous from a pedestrian point of view as the volume of traffic in the area would double and also advised that the new footpath providing safe pedestrian access into The Bullring and the Borough offices is required to protect public health and safety.

Mr. T. Larkin strongly advised that he would not under any circumstance recommend returning to two way traffic, the least favourable option, but if the Members voted in favour, the issue of the footpath would be looked at.

Noting the advice of the Engineer highlighting the dangers for pedestrians, Cllr. G. Lawlor proposed **Option (2)** - a reversal of the traffic flow, from Cornmarket towards the Quays - for a trial period to gauge the impact on local businesses and to help Members make an informed decision taking all factors into consideration.

Mr. T. Larkin advised against reversing the traffic flow until after the Christmas period and recommended a set trial period of 3 months.

The above proposal to reverse traffic flow for a 3 month trial period was seconded by Cllr. T. Forde and a vote was taken which resulted as follows:

In favour: Cllr. G. Lawlor, Cllr. M. Bell, Cllr. D. Hynes, Cllr. T. Forde,
Cllr. G. Laffan (5)

Against: Cllr. L. Kelly, Cllr. J. Hegarty (2)

The majority being in favour, it was agreed that the status quo will remain until early to mid-January at which time the direction of traffic flow will be reversed for a trial period of 3 months following which a final decision will be made and the matter will then proceed to public consultation.

School Street:

Further to discussion at the July and September Ordinary Meetings, Mr. S. Kavanagh, Senior Executive Engineer, outlined the detailed results of the traffic model with regard to the proposal to implement a one way traffic system in a northbound direction on School Street to improve pedestrian safety in the area.

Having regard to the findings and recommendation of the Engineer and following discussion on the distribution of traffic to other areas, it was proposed on the proposal of Cllr. J. Hegarty seconded by Cllr. G. Lawlor to proceed to public consultation stage. A vote was taken which resulted as follows:

In favour: Cllr. L. Kelly, Cllr. J. Hegarty, Cllr. G. Lawlor, Cllr. M. Bell, Cllr. T. Forde,
Cllr. G. Laffan (6)

Against: Cllr. D. Hynes (1)

The majority being in favour, it was agreed to proceed to public consultation.

Monck Street:

Following the recent grant of Planning Permission for the redevelopment of a number of properties on Monck Street, Mr. T. Larkin, Director of Services, briefly referred to a proposal to bring Monck Street into the public realm in conjunction with the developer including the upgrade of the street surface.

Mr. Larkin suggested that the Special Projects Team and the developer attend the October Ordinary Meeting to fully brief Members on the proposal.

Members were informed that should they support the proposal, pedestrianisation of the street will be required during certain hours and will be critical to the success of the Scheme.

It was agreed that the matter will be further considered at the October meeting.

