Main Street Corridor Project – Temporary, Permanent, Utility Easement Acquisition

Dear Resident/Property Owner:

Since 2010 the Town has been working on the design of the Main Street Corridor Project. The Project includes improvements to Main Street between Wood Street and Ash Street including alignment of the Cedar and Grove (Routes 85 and 135) intersection, undergrounding of overhead utilities, reconstructing the roadway surface, new sidewalks both sides of the street, new traffic control systems, new street and pedestrian lighting, a two-way separated bike lane, new drainage system, and new streetscape features.

As you may recall the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) held a Public Hearing on this Project at the Hopkinton Senior Center last year, January. The Project Team will continue to hold public meetings on the Project throughout the remainder of 2019. The latest meeting held was on March 19th to provide an update to the Board of Selectmen.

This is an estimated $15.45-million dollar project funded from several sources including $3.4 million from the Town, $8.8 million from Federal and State funding, and $3.25 million in private funds. MassDOT intends to advertise the project so that construction will be expected to start sometime after the 2020 Marathon. Construction is expected to take at least two full construction seasons to complete.

A major undertaking of the Project, as mentioned above, is the undergrounding of overhead utilities from about Summer Street to Ash Street. This will require bringing utilities underground to and into your building or residence from Main Street. All work associated with this task is being covered by the Project including any work necessary to replace and/or upgrade the utilities from the street into your building or residence. The Town will be contacting you shortly to schedule an inspection of your existing electrical panel and other utility terminations. Any cost associated with work on your property or within your building or residence to connect utilities from Main Street to your property is included in the Project.

Prior to MassDOT advertising the project for construction the Town is required to acquire all temporary and/or permanent easements on private property that are necessary to carry-out the work on the project. Temporary easements are needed to demonstrate your permission, as property owner, for the undergrounding of utility work and are also required to allow workers to form sidewalks and blend existing driveways, walkways, and lawn areas with the new street and sidewalk surfaces. Permanent easements are typically required to construct and maintain sidewalks currently on private property, to install traffic controllers or devices, install utilities, to modify the alignment of intersections, and to widen the existing right-of-way.
A temporary easement grants the Town restricted use of a specific area of your property for a limited period of time. A permanent easement grants the Town permanent use of a specific area of your property to locate, build, and maintain roadways, the public right-of-way and public utilities on a permanent basis. It should be noted that a Permanent Easement is not a conveyance of land but rather a grant for a permanent right to use that land. You would continue to own the land but the Town would have a permanent right to use the land to maintain the roadway, sidewalk and any utility purposes (traffic devices mainly).

Permanent and temporary easements are usually acquired through donations, owner compensation or negotiations. Property owner rights for easement acquisition are protected under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 79, and are further defined under Title III of the Real Property Acts of 1970, as amended. The funding from the state and federal government for this Project is not eligible to cover the cost for easement acquisition.

It is my sincere hope that you will consider donating the easements on your property in recognition of the benefits all users will realize from the Project. With over 200 temporary and/or permanent easements included in the Project the cost to the Town to compensate property owners for all of them will be high and ultimately comes at the expense of the Town residents. The lower the overall Project cost the less money the Town has to use from the Article approved at the May 2019 Annual Town Meeting.

Enclosed are Certificates of Donation. The Certificate assumes your desire to waive compensation. You are asked to return the Certificate only if you prefer donating the easement(s) to the Town. If you prefer to be compensated please contact the Town Engineer, David T. Daltorio, P.E. at daltorio@hopkintonma.gov or at the Engineering Department at 508-497-9740 so we can make other arrangements. By law, if an easement is not donated, the Town of Hopkinton must compensate all property owners who make a compensation request. The amount compensated is determined through a federally approved appraisal process. All costs associated with the appraisal process are included in the Project.

On behalf of the Town your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated. The Town has been excited about the Project especially since passing the Article for funding at Town Meeting last year. Upon completion of the Project the Main Street Corridor will see significant improvements and will serve the public better. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Very truly yours,
Norman Khumalo
Town Manager

cc: David T. Daltorio P.E., Town Engineer