

The Londonderry Street Naming System Task Force held its ninth meeting on December 15th, 2009 in the Leach Library Meeting Room. The Meeting began at 7:00 pm.

Present: Task Force Members: Jim Bilodeau, John Vogl, Cindy McCann and Karen Marchant.
Residents: Renee & John Despres, 8 West Eglin Blvd
Doug & Betty DeViney, 8 East Woodbine Drive
Fred & Fran Hessier, 9 East Woodbine Drive
Jean Goyetch, 4 West Eglin Blvd
Clarissa & Peter Navarro, 11 East Woodbine Drive
Wayne Hall, 5 East Eglin Blvd
Paul & Ellen Biando, 10 East Woodbine Drive
Lou Nackman, 9 West Woodbine Drive
John Baumann, 14 East Woodbine Drive

Workshop regarding East and West Eglin Boulevard, East and West Woodbine Drive and East and West Yellowstone Drive

Karen Marchant opened the meeting at 7:00 pm. She provided an overview of the Task Force mission and the meeting agenda. She explained the process of Council adoption and the next steps that residents should be aware of, including notification. She said that the purpose tonight was to answer questions people had before going to the Council for the name change adoption. Jim Bilodeau then discussed the 9-1-1 concerns and dispatch issues particular to these streets and other confusing streets in town. He then opened the meeting to questions.

Specific questions follow:

Q - Is the Task Force correcting all the streets at once?

A - Karen Marchant explained that we are moving sequentially through the list. This meeting is for 3 streets. The remaining streets will be corrected over time. She estimated it might take 2 years to get through the remaining streets.

Q- How long will residents have to carry out address changes?

A - John Vogl said that the change would become official 60 days after adoption by the Town Council. He reaffirmed that residents would be notified by certified letter of the action and date. He said that the Town would notify the Post Office of the Council's decision. Because of this, the Postal delivery change should be automatic. The Post Office would then hold both addresses (old and new) for up to 1 year. It would be up to residents to inform the utilities, friends/family, banks, DMV and others of the changes.

Q - How do residents notify utilities/billing groups?

A - John Vogl said that most bills have a change of address form on the bill. He said that residents should complete that form and submit it. Cindy McCann said that she had a NH Department of Motor Vehicles form that residents should fill out and submit to the DMV. This needed to be filled out within 60 days of the change and will provide proper notification for drivers licenses and vehicle registrations.

Q - How do we change Passports?

A - Cindy McCann said she wasn't aware but that she would investigate and provide the answer directly to residents and have it available for future meetings.

Q - Is the address change a "done deal"? Is the street (Woodbine) really so confusing that we need to change it?

A - Jim Bilodeau answered that this change is for dispatching purposes who are located in Concord. He said that local responders would find properties by virtue of the local maps but the difficulty is communicating an address to a dispatcher who is unfamiliar with the particular circumstances of an area. Part of the issue is making sure that callers provide the right address when they call 9-1-1. Correcting street names and eliminating confusing names helps make it easier to communicate an address.

Q - How do responders know where the houses are located on the street, particularly the Woodbines where the changes would it such that people enter the street in the middle of an address range, not the beginning?

A - Jim Bilodeau said that Londonderry responders utilize address maps that illustrate every structure in town. John Vogl added that it is up to the property owners to label the mailboxes or front doors appropriately so that people making deliveries or visits without address books can locate the structure.

Q - How do street names get assigned? Who decides on them?

A - Karen Marchant said that developers submit street names at the time of subdivision. The names are part of the submitted plans and go through the Town's design review process whereby they are vetted by all the town departments. The assessing department reviews the names with the following criteria: tries to avoid names that are homonyms with existing names, tries to avoid names that are difficult to pronounce - particularly for children, tries to avoid names that are complex.

Q - What about names with multiple names, such as Route 102 which goes by "Nashua Road," "NH 102", "West Broadway"?

A - Karen Marchant answered that the Town recognizes one name: Nashua Road.

Q - Will the town replace Granite Posts with carved numbers?

Q - Residents said that changing numbers on the Woodbines will create more confusion, causing people to be unsure of which direction to turn to find an address. They said that it would create further delay.

A - Karen Marchant responded that when the plans for this neighborhood originally came in, She anticipated these sorts of problems and suggested a solution then. The current numbering system still was approved. She said it is awkward but that the town needed to take measures to address the 9-1-1 concerns. Cindy McCann repeated that the issues with 9-1-1 are with a dispatcher located in Concord who needs to be able to communicate an address with certainty to the local responders. The changes are being carried out to avoid communication problems.

Q - What is the schedule or implementation?

A - Karen Marchant said that the first available opportunity for adoption would be the February 18th Council meeting. Changes would become official 60 days after a Council decision. Residents would have up to a year to transition as the Post Office would keep both addresses on file for that period.

Q - One resident expressed concerns about the timing. He says he runs a business from his house and is concerned about the cost of changing addresses on office supplies.

A - Karen Marchant said the Post Office would keep both addresses for up to 1 year. Cindy McCann said that some things, like registration notice are required by law. Other things like billing addresses are not mandated and should happen within the 1-year period or at the owner's discretion. She said this would likely be ample time for businesses to run through office supply stocks.

Q - Regarding the Eglin properties where numbers might not change, do residents still have to notify change of address forms?

A - Karen Marchant said that yes, the represents still need to use the correct street name so that mail is forwarded correctly.

Q - What information resources are on line to inform residents?

A - John Vogl said that the town puts up meeting notices and minutes. The Task Force is working on a FAQ page that will include many of the questions asked tonight. He said that it will be posted once the document is finished.

Q - When do new street signs go up?

A - John Vogl said that he would like to see them go up once the name becomes official.

Q - One resident said he would like to see a sign displaying number ranges posted on the street signs at the entrance to the Woodbines.

A - Jim Bilodeau said this would have to be taken up with Public Works.

Q - Is this a "done deal"? Is there anything residents can do to protest the change?

A - Karen Marchant said the final decision is up to the Council. She said any residents can appear and provide comments at the meeting and that they would receive notice beforehand. It is not a done deal till the Council votes.

Q - How much is this costing the town?

A - Karen Marchant explained the cost of mailing and signage. Mail and notification are the largest expense.

Q - One resident noted there was a poor showing from residents at the meeting.

Q - Can we identify which properties are affected in the Woodbine section, and what the new numbers will be?

A - Jim Bilodeau said that because of the awkward numbering system presently there, every number will be reassigned. Street numbers will be assigned from northeast to southwest, in accordance with the Town's address policy. Final numbers will be announced by certified mail.

Jim Bilodeau described the issues surrounding the "Swanzey Case" that predicated this task force and the reiterated the reasons for which action was necessary. He said that similar recommendations were presented to the town in 1995 but that 9-1-1 only had the power to recommend. Currently, after the Swanzey finding, the failure to adopt the recommendation has potential to open the town up to liability should disaster occur.

Q - Would it help to put up bigger or lit signs? Occasionally, signs are shaded or absent.

A - Cindy McCann answered that part of the problem is people on cell phones. Many times, cell phone callers don't know where they are and transmit bad information.

No more questions or comments were raised. Workshop was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Minutes recorded by John Vogl