STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

IN RE: RIGHTS-OF-WAY

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Date: April 21, 2022

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: Portsmouth Town Hall

2200 East Main Road

Portsmouth, Rhode Island

MEMBERS PRESENT: Raymond Coia, Chairman Ronald Gagnon, DEM Patricia Reynolds

Anthony DeSisto, Esquire, Legal Counsel

STAFF PRESENT: Jeffrey Willis, Executive Director Lisa Turner, Recording Secretary

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COASTAL RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Thursday, April 21, 2022

(The proceedings commenced at 6:00 p.m.)

THE CHAIRMAN: We'll call this meeting to order.

This is the rights-of-way subcommittee meeting. Today is

Thursday, April 21, 2022.

This is the Coastal Resources Management Council.

Prior to commencing the agenda, I would call on a public official to instruct as it relates to fire exits and the like.

MR. CROSBY: Yes, thank you. We typically do this for out public meetings. Our fire exits, if there's a fire alarm, the exits are here and here, and we can go either out to the north or out to the south, and we're all to gather across the street at that school building to make sure everybody gets out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. And this is a public hearing on five proposed public rights-of-way. I'm going to turn it over to my legal counsel, Anthony DeSisto, for our procedure for this evening.

MR. DeSISTO: Okay. Good evening, everyone. This is a subcommittee of the Costal Resources Management Council specifically for the determination of rights-of-way. There are five rights-of-way that are the subject of this public hearing tonight, and that is

2021-03-046, Beach Street at Cedar Avenue. Approximately six feet wide path that leads from Beach Street to Cedar Avenue to the water's edge, dividing lots 33 and 34 of plat 21.

The second one is 2021-03-48, Cedar Avenue.

Approximately 20 feet wide that leads from Cedar Avenue to the water's edge, dividing lots 47 and 48 of plat 21.

Approximately 30 feet wide that leads from Fountain

Avenue to the water's edge, dividing lots 168 and 169 of plat 21.

The third is 2021-03-050, Fountain Avenue.

The fourth is 2021-03-051, East Power Street.

That's a paved street bordered by plat 31 lot 54, plat 34 lot 56, and plat 31 lot 53, leading to the water's edge.

The final one is 2021-03-073, Cory's Lane right-of-way. Approximately 12 feet wide paved asphalt path that leads from Cory's Lane to the water's edge, dividing lots 31-1-A and 32-1-B.

This is a straight public hearing, which means we'll ask the town planner from Portsmouth, Mr. Crosby, to discuss each one of these as they're introduced, then it's time for the public comment. That will be added to the record that CRMC for these rights-of-way. Then there will be a determination of the subcommittee, and then the

full council will take the matter up.

Public participation is required by statute, and it is very important for the determination of these public rights-of-way. So all that will be done tonight is the taking of public testimony on these five rights-of-way. So before we begin, typically what the right-of-way subcommittee does is take each one separately, but rather than going in order, I would just like to ask the interested parties that are here tonight and are going to speak which ones you're interested, and we'll take those first.

Is there one or other of these rights-of-way that persons here -- the people that are going to be testifying on? We'll take it first.

VOICE: I would like to speak, if I may. I want to say first of all that I'm very grateful to be here. Oh, I better tell you who I am. I'm Abigail Brown.

MR. DeSISTO: Okay.

MS. BROWN: I'm the Portsmouth Harbor Commissioner.

I'm head of the Portsmouth Harbor Commission.

MR. DeSISTO: Thank you, Ms. Brown, for coming.

MS. BROWN: For the last nine years I have been working with the Harbor Commission to personally go out, and every October we go out and look at each and every

one of these rights-of-way. Reports are given back to me. I have been writing reports, and I send it to CRMC. Usually, I send it directly to Kevin Cute via retrainer (phonetic).

2.0

As far as the Harbor Commission is concerned, we agree about all of these rights-of-way that are up today. Several of them. Three of them, I believe -- yes, three of them are town rights-of-way already, but it does not hurt to have them be CRMC. And it is our intention to go forward for the next however many years, every two to three -- two to three -- I'll try again -- get two to three rights-of-way approved every year, because there are a lot of them in the Town of Portsmouth, and they have been neglected up to this point.

I'm very pleased that you are all here, and I respect the fact that you have come. Thank you very much.

MR. DeSISTO: Thank you. Is there one or another of the rights-of-way that should be taken first, or just go in order?

Just go in order. Okay.

Mr. Crosby, if that's okay with you, what I'd like to do is call out the right-of-way that we're doing and just if you could give us a brief description from the

town's perspective on these, and then we can open it up to the public.

MR. CROSBY: I'd be happy to. In fact, I can group the first three together. They're all similarly situated in the process.

For a number of years these three rights-of-way are not CRMC designated rights-of-way, but they have CRMC signs on them. And I have no idea how long they have been there, but it's been since I've been here. So it's been two decades that those CRMC signs have been there.

Now, I was doing, similar to what Abby Brown was doing, I was examining the 17 rights-of-way also, and determined that there were four of our 17 CRMC rights-of-way that did not have signs. So I approached Kevin Cute with the notion of removing the signs of these three that are not CRMC rights-of-way, asking for one more sign, and making sure that the CRMC designated rights-of-way have their signs. He and I discussed it a bit, and we agreed the better approach might be for us to just go ahead and go through the process of leaving the signs in place, that the neighborhoods have been using these with the confidence that they're CRMC rights-of-way forever, and leave those in place and just go through the process of researching the deeds and so forth and having

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them designated as CRMC rights-of-way, and then settle the sign issue after that took place.
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So all three of those first ones, Beach Street,
Cedar Avenue, and Fountain Avenue are all in that same
category.

MR. DeSISTO: Thank you. Do any of the subcommittee members have any questions for either Ms. Brown --

MS. BROWN: I have photographs.

MR. DeSISTO: -- or Mr. Crosby?

We actually have your photographs.

MS. BROWN: These are the ones that we took.

MR. DeSISTO: Thank you.

Is there anybody from the public who would like to speak to those first three rights-of-way: Beach Street at Cedar Avenue, Cedar Avenue, and Fountain Avenue?

VOICE: My concern is one --

MR. DeSISTO: First identify yourself.

MS. MACFARLANE: Sharon Macfarlane. I live on Beach Street. That right-of-way I have a concern with. I'm pleased that it's there and the people can come down and use our beach, but at the bottom it is very dangerous. I think the state -- the town owns it. I'm not sure who owns it. It's all rocks, the drain from the street goes down into the cove, so that all of the road water with

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the salt from the winter is going into our cove. But when these people try to go down to the beach, it's all dug up, and rocks, and it's very dangerous.
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MR. DeSISTO: Okay. Thank you.

MR. GAGNON: Would you clarify where that was again?

MS. MACFARLANE: That's the beach at Cedar.

MR. GAGNON: Thank you.

MR. DeSISTO: The gentleman next to you.

MR. PLOURDE: Jack Plourde, 606 Park Avenue, Island Park in Portsmouth. I have a question on the one on Fountain Avenue. There's an emergency vehicle access on one end of Fountain. The other end of Fountain is -- it's on the corner of Fountain and Thorpe Street, and they refer to it as plots. My first question is, could you tell me where that right-of-way is that we're talking about on Fountain?

MR. DeSISTO: Okay. I'm going to defer to Mr. Crosby, who is more familiar with the area and could probably give you a better explanation than any one of us could.

MR. CROSBY: Yes. It divides lots -- it's between lots 168 and 169, plat 21. It's not at either end. It's currently through the middle. I'm not sure I have a plat

map to indicate that, but --

MS. BROWN: I do.

MR. CROSBY: That's the picture I sent you. It's between 168 and 169, about halfway between Thorpe and whatever that is at the other end of Fountain.

So it's three lots down from -- three lots to the west from the intersection of Fountain Avenue and Thorpe Avenue, 30 foot wide.

MR. DeSISTO: Sir, is your question answered?

MR. PLOURDE: Yes, it is. It is. I know where

you're talking about, just as it was said, I guess, by

Mr. Crosby, it's in the middle of Fountain Avenue.

MR. CROSBY: Yes.

MR. PLOURDE: That raises another question then.

There was a right-of-way on the corner of Thorpe Street and Fountain Avenue that was taken down a couple of years ago. There was some work done, I think by the town. I saw a town vehicle, a truck there. There was new signs put up, mainly, 15 mile an hour speed limit, one way, going down from Thorpe onto Fountain.

That particular right-of-way -- I've been down in Island Park with my family since 1948. That right-of-way that had the sign there up until a couple of years ago, it was part of the amusement park. My sister had called

the state, I guess, to tell someone at the state level that the sign was taken down on the right-of-way and was not put up again. It looked like something that was a state right-of-way as far as the post goes and all that.

So I thought this is what we would be talking about tonight. I have no personal interest other than the fact that I know it's been there since the amusement park was there, and, as I said, there's no sign there any more. Whoever my sister talked to at the state asked her a question, was it a state right-of-way or town right-of-way, and she didn't know, and neither do I.

So that's about all I have to say about that one.

So this is an entirely new right-of-way that had been marked. It's not part of these here tonight, but it was always a right-of-way, mainly because of the amusement park down there.

The other side of the amusement park, which is on Ruth Avenue, that has a right-of-way sign, a state right-of-way. In fact, right next to it there's another property there with another state right-of-way, and that was all part of the amusement park. That's why those right-of-ways are there, as far as I know.

MR. DeSISTO: Sir, I know you are finished, but I'm

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1
    going to ask you a question.
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         MR. PLOURDE:
                        Sure.
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         MR. DeSISTO:
                        This right-of-way that you're
    discussing, what's the location again?
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         MR. PLOURDE:
                        It's on the corner of Thorpe Street
 6
    and Fountain Avenue.
 7
         MR. DeSISTO:
                        Thorpe and Fountain.
 8
         MS. BROWN:
                      Is this the one (indicating)?
         MR. PLOURDE:
                        Yeah, it looks like. Yeah, that's it.
         MS. BROWN:
                      That is the one.
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         MR. PLOURDE: And that had a sign a couple of years
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12
    ago.
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         MS. BROWN:
                      I agree with you. It's not there
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    anymore.
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         MR. DeSISTO: Sir, thank you very much.
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         We would like to follow-up on that one.
                                                    We can't do
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    it tonight because it's not noticed. We'd like to add
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    that into the queue for the future.
                                          The Harbor
    Commission -- you've done great work, by the way -= if
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    that could be added onto the list for the future?
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         MS. BROWN: Okay. I'll put it on the list.
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         MR. DeSISTO:
                        Thank you very much.
         MR. PLOURDE:
23
                        Yup.
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         MR. DeSISTO: Anyone else to speak on these three?
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(No reply)

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MR. DeSISTO: Okay. Thank you. We'll proceed now to East Power Street. Mr. Crosby?

MR. CROSBY: East -- again, these last two, East Power Street and Cory's Lane, had been in the works for a number of years. CRMC reached out to us, probably going on five years ago, to ask us about five rights-of-way that they were considering here in Portsmouth, and would I be willing to escort Kevin Cute around to do a field trip and decide which of those five would be best suited to be run through your legal process to determine whether they were designatable as CRMC rights-of-way, and we ultimately settled on these two. So they have been in the works, a request has been made, and they have been in the works for a couple of years now to go through the standard process that you have for designating rights-of-way. So both of those, East Power Street and Cory's Lane, are at that standard process.

MR. DeSISTO: Is there anyone here to discuss East Power Street and Cory's Lane rights-of-way?

VOICE: May I sit down at the end of the table?

MR. DeSISTO: Yeah, sure.

(Interruption by the court reporter)

MR. YOUNG: It's Philip and Debra Young, 24 East

Power Street.

Mr. Crosby, I don't understand how these towns can proceed with stealing the town's rights. I'm concerned with involving the state with ancient rights-of-way that we've controlled since Newtown was founded.

MR. DeSISTO: Actually, may I answer that?

MR. YOUNG: Yes.

MR. DeSISTO: This is a designation process. Title does not transfer from the town to the state. The only thing that happens is that CRMC will designate it as public right-of-way, will provide the town with appropriate signage, and for the person that spoke on the other ones, if it's a dangerous area, it allows to you apply for grants -- not to say you've going to get them, but you can apply for it.

This does not transfer title to the state at all.

This will remain, if this is a town property, it stays town property, and it's just designated as a right-of-way.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. DeSisto.

I'm still concerned that now the state will have something to say about anything the town does at any time.

And, now, onto the actual -- sorry --

MR. DeSISTO: I thought you wanted to sit with us.

MR. YOUNG: I do.

So it coincides with what Mr. Crosby said about five years ago, because this was drawn up on the title page by two students from Roger Williams University. As a taxpayer, I mean, I would prefer the many, many employees of CRMC did the work. But they kind of cast some shade on the town and the abutters and the parking. So I'm not going to go into all these things, because I was little bit upset that we found out about this a week ago last Friday and had to try to put something together over Easter vacation, school vacation, and tax day. It's kind of a rush to appear, just as a sidenote.

So I'll be brief. The only thing we're going to -I'm going to read a one-and-a-half page letter. It's
mostly to do with the parking and access to the road.

So my name is Philip Young, and my spouse Debra
Young and I have owned 24 East Power Street since 1997,
25 years. I'd like to provide additional clarification
regarding the current parking situation at East Power
Street.

East Power Street is a well-used and well-established right-of-way to the shore already. The street is approximately 275 feet in length. It's a

dead-end street which terminates at the beach. The town provides approximately 180 linear feet of parking on the north side of the street.

The pictures that are in here do not depict a busy day on East Power Street. There's room for ten cars.

MR. DeSISTO: Excuse me, Mr. Young, would you mind submitting that?

MR. YOUNG: I have a copy for you guys.

MR. DeSISTO: Thank you.

MR. YOUNG: And one for Mr. Crosby.

MR. DeSISTO: Thank you.

MR. YOUNG: The hours of parking on this road are from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. The same arrangement, and you can see clearly that the town has done a -- it took a long time, and lot of it prior to our 25 years on the beach, but it look took a long time for the town to find a way of signage to control the use, because the use can be very heavy, and it may become heavier if CRMC puts our right-of-way, the town's East Power Street right-of-way, on their website, on their map, with all of those great little widgets to help people find it beyond our neighborhood.

So this sign clearly says, this side of street 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. It helps with the noise. It

helps with, you know, sleeping.

This is the same arrangement that the town recently adopted at McCorrie Point. Now, McCorrie Point was a sore, sore issue for the town. It cost many of our friends and neighbors in McCorrie Point countless hours of misery trying to come up with a way to handle the beach. Perhaps you found -- not you, but the town has found a way to handle it, but we'll see over the coming years.

McCorrie Point was overly used. It was not controlled. The town doesn't want to be in the business of sending police cars down all the time, so something happened. Now, we have ten parking spaces, and if you show up with ten jet skis and a bunch of 25-year-olds, that's what happened to this beach, and it could happen to ours. But their limit in parking right is here clearly stated 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. So that's the north side.

The town prohibits parking on the south side of the street in its entirety to guarantee travel by vehicles. It's not a wide street. There's no breakdown lane. It's a two-lane street. Guaranteed travel by vehicles, including fire apparatus. To get to my house, for instance, they might to have fight their way down there

with a fire truck, and to provide access to the two homes which have driveways on the south side. So the south side has two driveway cuts.

The town prohibits parking at the end of the street, and this is to deter bottlenecks to the shoreline and to the 24 East Power Street curb-cut.

It is our personal, my wife and mine's personal observation that it is a natural compunction of drivers to park as close to the shoreline as possible. Everybody wants to get the front spot. This phenomenon causes blocking of access to the shoreline, which causes fights and trouble. So that's why there's no parking at the very end of the street. As well as, any parking at the very end of the street prohibits access to 24 East Power Street on the left side.

East Power Street is already, thanks to the town, a well-organized and well-used feature to a neighborhood of hundreds of homes within a 20-minute walk, one mile.

Most people don't walk. They drive down there with their kayaks, they drive down there with their children. They have ten spots to park, and, really, if they wanted to, they could maybe park on Johnnycake and Power Street too. But what I'm really trying to communicate is that this is a busy spot already, and when you put it on your CRMC app

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map, it may turn into McCorrie Point 2.
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         This is a picture at the bottom of the hill. So
    I'll leave this with you guys.
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                        Thank you. They're going to be part
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         MR. DeSISTO:
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    of our record, and your letter too. Thank you for coming
 6
    out.
 7
          (EXHIBIT 1 MARKED FOR IDENTIFICATION)
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         MR. DeSISTO: Is there anyone else for East Power
    Street?
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10
         (No reply)
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         MR. DeSISTO:
                       Okay. The final one is Cory's Lane.
12
    Is there anyone for Cory's Lane, to speak on Cory's Lane?
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                 I'd like to speak in general before you
         VOICE:
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    close the public hearing.
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         MR. DeSISTO: Go right ahead.
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         MR. JARBEAU: Good evening. My name is Mike
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Just really quick I'd like to say that Save the Bay supports the adoption of all five of these rights-of-way. We were happy to be part of the initial work in the title search that happened several years ago that kicked off some of this work in 2016-2017. And I think previous testimony has shown the desperate need, that a lot of

Jarbeau, J-a-r-b-e-a-u. I'm here representing Save the

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Bay.

people are trying to get to rights-of-way, trying to get to the water in any way they can, and to show that there's really a need around the state to designate more rights-of-way, find more ways for people to the beach wherever they can.

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I appreciate the subcommittee's time looking at these matters. I hope you'll vote to proceed to the full council, and I appreciate the staff's time looking at this as well. Thank you.

MR. DeSISTO: Thank you. Is there anyone else?
Yes, sir.

MR. GRIEB: Tom Grieb. I'd like to speak about Cory's Lane. And it's not a pro or con, it's a concern. When this was first started, the railroad, which basically was abandoned at that spot, now it's not trains, it's the rail riders or the rail explorers, which are essentially hand cars that you can't hear very well, certainly not like a train, that go up and down there. They leave from Melville or Common Fence Point, and they leave basically together. However, because they're pedal powered, certain people fall behind, certain people catch up, so there's no way for a prediction. I think the rail riders or rail explorers, if we're going to make this an area that's going to be a CRMC designated one, should put

up a flagman, which they do at other streets that they cross, to make sure that, you know, people are protected from these railcars that go up and down.

I'm talking in an afternoon, a Saturday afternoon, there could be 200 up and down.

MR. DeSISTO: Wow.

MR. GRIEB: We're not talking one or two. So I would think that is something that you might want to -- and this was not -- when it was originally designated or started to be designated, this group did not exist. So it's a new constraint, and I think you ought to have some way of making sure that people don't walk out in front of these, or something like that. And the way that's handled at other spots, Willow Lane, which is a CRMC designed right-of-way, they have, at least I've seen them, flagmen, that the rail explorers put out there to make sure there are no accidents.

And, again, because it's a pedal powered one, it's not like a train you hear coming down the track, and it can be on you before you even know it.

MR. DeSISTO: Thank you very much.

MS. BROWN: I agree with Tom Grieb about railcars. They were not an issue when we initially started this. And he's completely right, but it's not just on the

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weekend. Sometimes they go straight through the week. There won't be 200 like we have on the weekend, but if we have a cruise ship coming to Newport, sometimes they run back and forth. So it's always across a lot of these rights-of-way.
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So it's something someone has to address with Eric Moffett. He is the head of the railcar situation, and I've spoken to him on occasions because of the situation at the rights-of-way, and I just think that Mr. Grieb is extremely correct in his concern.

MR. DeSISTO: Thank you, and thank you.

Anyone else?

(No reply)

MR. DeSISTO: Well, I think the concludes the public hearing. I want to thank everybody for coming out. There was some good testimony. We'll add the documents to the transcript as an exhibit. Thank you for supplying those, sir.

MS. REYNOLDS: Tony, I'd like to ask one question.

MR. DeSISTO: Sure.

MS. REYNOLDS: Gary, I see on the description of four of the five of the rights-of-way it includes an approximate width, but there's no approximate width included for East Power Street.

MR. CROSBY: East Power Street, I think it's -it's probably in the testimony you just received. It's
either 25 or 30 feet, I think.

MS. YOUNG: There's cars parked on the both sides. You're not coming up and down. I've been stranded in there, trapped.

MR. DeSISTO: You have an estimate as to width?

MR. YOUNG: Twenty-five feet.

MR. DeSISTO: Okay. Thank you.

MS. REYNOLDS: Thank you.

MS. BROWN: Are you done?

MR. DeSISTO: Well, the practice of the board is, because actually the pace is picking up on the approval of the rights-of-way around the state, many Harbor Commissions, like the Portsmouth Harbor Commission has done great work. Our planners, like Mr. Crosby, have done great work. What we will do now is based on the testimony here at the public hearing and the documents that were submitted, a report will be drafted that will be presented to the right-of-way subcommittee at a future meeting, probably in a month, and then there will be a vote. After that if there is a recommendation that they go forward with the rights-of-way, and that would go to the full council for a vote.

And as I said on this, this is a designation of existing public rights-of-way. It allows for signage and other things too. Thank you for the testimony, and it will be taken into account. I need the transcript, of course. A report will be done, and then there will be deliberation on it. So thank you very much.

One of the main components of the whole process is the public testimony by statute. So that's why it proceeds in that fashion.

Yes, sir?

MR. YOUNG: Since the town planner is here in an official way, I would like to ask the town planner to please call East Power Street, in particular, to the attention of the town council. I think the town council should be aware that they may be headed down the road to a similar situation as happened at McCorrie Point and has happened at Pheasant Hill, Quail Road, Brant Road, that right-of-way. So I would just like to go on the record, please, Gary, consider that.

MR. CROSBY: Well, number one, I'm not here in an official capacity. I'm hosting.

MR. YOUNG: Are you being paid?

MR. DeSISTO: Actually, I'm sorry, Mr. Crosby. I'm stepping over you. One thing I would like to just say

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before we conclude, if you would like to be notified of
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    any CRMC matter -- any CRMC meeting where these
    rights-of-way will be discussed, before you go, let Lisa
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    Turner have your e-mail, and she will e-mail you the
 4
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    notices of the meetings so that you know what's going on.
 6
         And if you'd like, we'll also notify the Portsmouth
    Town Council when these matter are being discussed so
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 8
    that they can weigh in on them.
                     That's genius. Thank you so much.
 9
         MR. YOUNG:
         MR. DeSISTO: We have their e-mails on the website.
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         MR. YOUNG: Awesome sauce.
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                     This doesn't have anything to do with
12
         MS. YOUNG:
    it, but do you think there's any way to change your
13
    stationary to say not to come up to Wakefield to look at
14
15
    the plans in person? We made that mistake. We can't get
16
    in.
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         MR. DeSISTO:
                       That's the Covid thing.
                                                 I'm sorry.
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         MR. YOUNG: Can we be reimbursed for the toll,
19
    please?
20
         MS. YOUNG:
                     And the gas.
         MR. DeSISTO:
                       That's Covid.
                                       I'm sorry.
21
22
         MS. YOUNG:
                     It's been two years. You can't change
23
    the letterhead?
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We have to work on that.

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MR. DeSISTO:

CERTIFICATE

I, Linda M. Cordeiro, a Notary Public in and for the State of Rhode Island, hereby certify that the foregoing pages are a true and accurate record of my stenographic notes that were reduced to print through computer-aided transcription.

In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand this 29th day of April, 2022.

Linda M. Cordeiro

LINDA M. CORDEIRO, COURT REPORTER