

NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON **September 25th, 2018, Post-Selectman's Meeting.**

Valley Cross Road Bridge over Wildcat Brook
Jackson, NH

DATE PREPARED: October 31, 2018

LOCATION: Jackson Town Offices
54 Main Street
Jackson, NH 03846

ATTENDEES: Richard Bennett, Selectman
Bob Thompson, Selectman
Pat Kelly, Road Agent
Burr Phillips
Public Attendees
John Watters, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
Ron Headrick, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
Stephen Langevin, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.

Presentation:

The goal of the meeting was to understand the Town's concerns about the project and to talk in preliminary terms about viable options to be developed in the Engineering Report.

John Watters began the meeting with a brief introduction of the project, the purpose for the meeting and the GPI presenters introduced themselves, John being the project manager, Ron being the landscape architect and Steve being the bridge designer.

Ron began the presentation discussing the project in context and how the bridge fits into its surrounding environment, focusing on how the bridge is tied to Jackson Falls. The bridge connects Valley Cross Road across Wildcat Brook atop the Falls where a nearly half mile climb up the waterfalls is culminated. Someone reaching the top of the Falls tends to look back downstream over their accomplishment, which takes place on the bridge. The bridge, which appears in most pictures, is a large visual component of the Falls making its aesthetics important. The sequence most people take is to enter the middle of the Falls, make their way up along the paths to the top, take a look back, then walk back down to their cars. There is a change in character/use upstream of the bridge where there is a residence and golf course that implies privacy and tends to direct people back downstream or to the road.

Steve then presented information about the existing bridge and noted the goal of the meeting is to identify what features and characteristics the Town wants to preserve and which features could be improved upon. He talked about how the superstructure was built in 1983 and features non-structural trusses attached for aesthetic purposes. The roadway on the bridge is 16 feet wide with timber decking and running planks. There is a closed 4-foot-wide cantilevered sidewalk located on the downstream side of the bridge that has historical handrail. Next, the substructure was described as being concrete abutments built in 1931 and founded on bedrock. The abutments appear to be in good condition. The wingwalls are stacked stone masonry. The northwest corner was destroyed by Hurricane Irene in 2011. He talked about options to consider for the wingwalls including grouting the stones together to provide a more cohesive unit or replacing with concrete wingwalls that acts as an even larger unit. The bridge approaches were shown to

have a gravel sidewalk connecting the bridge to the nearby park area. The east approach has no sidewalk or path for pedestrians. Neither approach has any guardrail and the need for guardrail to protect errant vehicles was discussed. There is a timber fence along the southwest approach to prevent people from walking down the slope behind the wingwall where revegetation efforts are ongoing. This is a footprint project with anticipated extents limited to about 100 feet beyond the bridge. Other considerations included bridge closure during construction to reduce the construction schedule that results in a 1.3 mile detour because the bridge is not wide enough to allow traffic during construction and the effects that would have on emergency response. There are overhead wires carrying power across the bridge. De-energizing them during construction for a matter of hours may be necessary due to the presence of construction equipment. Any environmental or Right-of-Way concerns were solicited. Steve finished by talking about different bridge replacement options, such as a new truss, or a beam/concrete deck superstructure with either the historical trusses attached to the new bridge or not. Steel backed timber guardrail is crash test certified and has a rustic appearance that fits the bridge surroundings.

Ron closed out the presentation talking about the bank where there's fencing and revegetation efforts are located due to people using the area as a path to the bridge. Does there need to be a set of stairs or not? He provided graphics showing rustic stone slab stairs to match esthetics of the corridor. Graphics also included a proposed bridge utilizing existing trusses, a cantilevered sidewalk and timber guardrail. Timber guardrail would protect pedestrians from traffic. He discussed how there isn't any existing sidewalk in the area, except on the bridge making it serve as an overlook to the corridor. There was also a graphic showing a pedestrian area for looking out over the Falls and for picture taking. Concrete abutment and wingwalls with a stone facing similar to the appearance of existing wingwalls was presented. The rustic look of the blocks lends itself to its setting, if feasible.

The meeting then switched to a question and answer format to get feedback from the Town.

Following are the major points that were discussed during the public forum.

- The new bridge should accommodate snow removal. The existing bridge is maintained for snow removal by the Town Road Agent.
 - Distance between steel is 15 feet.
- Can the road be widened and can the Town pay for it?
 - Will be based on impact to the abutments and justifying any increase in width to NHDOT
 - Any increase in width would be welcomed by The Town.
- One resident asked if any consideration was made for a walking bridge only. The response was that it was not.
 - There are a lot of pedestrians to the site in both summer and fall.
 - Diana's Bath in Conway has issues with the high number of tourists both for parking and environmental issues.
 - The decision to replace with a pedestrian bridge would require direction from the Town.
 - Another resident countered that closing the road to traffic at the bridge would leave only one road into town.
 - Bob Thompson talked about having a short conversation about closing the bridge to traffic about a year ago. Fire and safety concerns and cutting off anything on the other side to parking for the Jackson ski touring lot (available winter months) had downsides that eliminated the idea.
- Bob Thompson: Question/Comment
 - The Town was looking for ways to preserve the character of the bridge.

- The Town felt that the historical significance of the trusses would allow for the Town to have them refurbished and reinstalled.
 - First reaction to graphics with rails inside the trusses – not enough room now, but with potential for widening, both wider roadway and bridge rail possible.
 - Widening the bridge to two lanes didn't seem like an appropriate expectation that the State would pay for the increase in cost for going from one to two lanes as well as a sidewalk
 - Widening enough to get rails within trusses, from a safety aspect, would cover a lot of Town concerns.
 - A resident pointed out that a main access to town is a one lane bridge.
- The proposed graphics look to be on track with what one resident would like
- What is the desired width of road on the bridge?
 - Limited to width between trusses.
 - The width of a Town plow is roughly 14 feet.
 - A lot of collision damage to trusses due to narrow road width. Having pressure treated post that can be replaced is easier than having a welder perform repairs to the steel trusses.
 - Town would prefer widening to an 18-foot travel way on the bridge.
 - John: 18-foot travel way, timber rail, curb, trusses add up to a certain width that may or may not be within the width allowed by the existing abutments. With survey complete, the width will be investigated further.
 - Big truck can get through bridge now, but plow wings need to be up as there is very little room.
- Roadway surface: Concrete deck preferred for maintenance
 - Timbers in decking loosens and breaks requiring constant repairs.
 - Damaged and broken boards create loud noises.
- Would a concrete deck be bare or paved over?
 - Burr Phillips: Wood aesthetically looks better.
 - Either bare or paved is possible.
 - Bare is allows direct assessment of the deck condition, paving does not since it covers the concrete. Both are functional solutions.
 - Bare is preferred over a paved deck for speed reduction.
 - Bicycles use bridge. Bicycles having issues with broken timber is not uncommon, so concrete deck preferred over timber decking that is routinely damaged.
 - Burr Phillips: Pedestrian access could use more aesthetic option than roadway due to weddings, pics, etc.
 - Stamped concrete, colors, other options are a possibility.
 - Burr: Not necessarily timber on sidewalk but not plain concrete, looks too industrial
- Overlook at approach is not where pictures are taken. An overlook similar to shown in graphics, not necessarily as big, on the bridge sidewalk would be beneficial, perhaps elliptical.
 - Sidewalk has been closed for two years.
 - Sidewalk wasn't maintained during winter for snow removal.
 - Sidewalk is an observation point.
 - Bob: Jut out on bridge was talked about a year ago, too. Makes sense. Town strategy: willing to do what State will pay 80% within reason.
- Bob: Are stairs shown in graphics something that the State would approve funding for?
 - This is a question for the State.

- Conservation Commission is part of revegetation effort on bank and trying to do anything with that bank will cause members of the Con Com to come out with their war feathers on in opposition.
- Building up the wings will be supported by Con Com. Soil is being lost to storms and stones, too. But bank should not be touched.
- Bob: Back to question to Ron. Opened up egress with fencing there designed to provide egress. Question: would the stairs be something that could be included in cost and approved by DOT?
- Ron: Answer was going to include checking with the Con Com. Demonstrate stairs are part of stabilization of slopes and roadway. If measures in place now are not effective as people are still trying to get from the Falls to the vantage point, stairs may be justified as a way of directing ped traffic where it should go. Would need to work with Con Com to come to terms but it is reasonable argument to be made. Or if what's been done a little farther downstream is serving the same function, maybe stairs aren't necessary.
- Wild and scenic river, concerns about doing the work
 - All work will be coordinated with State. DOT will have input. There are a lot of environmental checks and balances. Environmental input from the Town is occurring first.
- Con Com has plan in place to manage the Town owned park. All other areas are privately owned
 - Park will be maintained properly.
 - John: Parks are important for funding. Limits of park are important.
 - Park is to end of parking area.
 - Below, from parking lot to Wentworth hotel is owned by Wentworth. Residential district from parking and above, commercial district below.
 - Full access to Falls is allowed on Wentworth land.
- Parking near the bridge:
 - Richard Bennett: Ongoing discussion on parking problem. A lot of visitors but little parking.
 - Town is split on need for more parking at bridge
 - Signage: Minimal is better.
- Burr: Guard rail will limit parking at bridge
 - John: parking at bridge with guardrail will be geometrically challenging and may, by default, be eliminated by final product.
 - Ron: Guardrail may encourage people to park east of the bridge.
- Bob: Advantage of steps in landing area limits ability to park near the bridge. Carter Notch Road is a state road, parking controlled by State. Valley Cross Road from State ROW to bridge is minimal parking. Losing a little parking space for a new bridge is a minimal cost.
- Pat: Graphics do not show flare out of roadway
 - John: Also, an angle in the roadway. Highway design will assess those issues to smooth out the roadway.
- Burr: An 18-foot-wide road will effectively be a two lane bridge?
 - Will look into highway design standards to determine if that would categorize as a two-lane bridge.
- Drainage issues. Timber deck, no curb, water drains down. Solid deck will require catching runoff off bridge. One consideration - catch basin, but collects sediment, requires Town maintenance.

There may be an environmental solution of vegetated swales for storm water runoff. No answer yet. Any sumps or catch basins Town is maintaining?

- Pat: Just a handful
 - Burr: Catch basin is less desirable. Do not want more water where slope is already eroding
 - John: Stone stabilized lined swale option. Avoid drainage that leads to more erosion. Default erosion already occurring at northeast corner. Could possibly accommodate drainage on other end of bridge. low point off bridge, maybe a cross slope.
- Burr: An 18-foot-wide road will effectively be a two lane bridge?
 - Color of bridge?
 - Keep it the same
 - Preserve truss?
 - Richard: Putting the same trusses back in would please many people
 - Refurbishing: a lot of vandalism has taken place, a lot of damage and deterioration
 - John: Confident in feasibility of successfully refurbishing the truss. Showed example project (Kingston) in worse condition that looks new now.
 - Hand rail may be challenging. Existing rail has character but is not safe. Taking the opinion that people like the rail. Need to determine if rail should be refurbished or replaced with similar
 - Key to rail is safety
 - Criteria is 4" maximum opening in rail
 - More robust, safe rail will incorporate some historical details
 - Stone wingwalls:
 - Burr: Stone look upstream
 - Have to check with DOT. State may not participate with cost. GPI could provide cost.
 - Burr: On wings, least expensive stone option favorable
 - Pat: Longevity with a new bridge, weigh what is best for whole project and prioritize avoiding future erosion.
 - Repairs after Hurricane Irene were arduous.
 - Right of Way: Immediate ROW abutter concerns?
 - ROW still being researched
 - Downstream is Town owned
 - Immediate abutter (Dick) not present
 - Closure of bridge for one summer, hopefully not longer
 - Power company
 - Eagle Mountain House gets power across bridge, some residents do, too. De-energizing lines during construction is not an option
 - Temporary pole relocations may be an option
 - Request for formal feedback from Town by October 5th
 - Next step is the Engineering Report in electronic format, then once finalized it will be submitted to NHDOT

These notes are based on hearing video provided by the Town. Please advise within ten (10) days, in writing, of any exceptions or corrections.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SL', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen Langevin, PE,

cc: Attendees