

CLASS V ROADS STUDY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, September 18th, 2018
4 PM
TOWN OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: Bret Ryan, Karen Henry, Frank Bowles, Mike Smith, Kevin Sahr, Ernst Kling, Bill Malcolm, Steve Williams

Agenda

Minutes approval

River Road reroute: Completing stabilization of old road. As of 9-15 still waiting on AOT permit.

Bridge aid from NHDOT: Applications sent in for Pinnacle Hill Road and Flint Hill Road bridges. 9-20-18

Request from Select Board for the Roads Committee to advise Board regarding (the full length) River Road weight limits, speed limits and trucking restrictions. (Kevin)

Dennis Thompson's preliminary proposal to reopen Shoe Strap Road Plan to move 300 feet of critical section of road to the North. Review previous documentation and photos.

Other Business

The meeting was called to order at 400 PM by Karen Henry (filling in for Sue MacKenzie who is on vacation).

Minutes – The minutes from the 9-4-2018 meeting were approved as presented.

River Road Reroute – Kevin reported that the Select Board anticipated receiving an Alteration of Terrain (AOT) Permit from the NH Department of Environmental Services on 19 September 2018. Karen asked about the status of the stabilization of the current road, but there was no more information on this aspect of the project. Kevin reported that nothing of archeological significance was found, and that no rare plant species were found. These studies had to be completed before the AOT Permit would be issued. Mike asked about the timeline once the DES permits are issued. Kevin replied that first the closing on the purchase of the right-of-way would occur, but that things would move along very quickly.

There was discussion about whether the Town was purchasing the property or an easement. Kevin checked on the specifics of the agreement and reported that the Town is purchasing a 3.7 acre easement, providing the right to construct and operate the road. He further reported that the Town's Counsel has stated that this is currently the most common for Towns when they need to construct new roads practice (the normal practice in NH). Kevin also remarked that the Select Board had decided to begin construction before the final purchase and sales agreement was executed in order to provide enough time to have the construction completed in 2018.

Bridge aid from NHDOT—Steve said that Sue MacKenzie researched this topic and found that two places in Town qualified for this aid and that applications were sent in for Pinnacle Hill Road and Flint Hill Road. Sue's notes to the Committee are that the applications will be submitted on the 20th of September 2018 (note that this is two days from this meeting). Kevin verified that this has been started.

Preliminary proposal to reopen Shoe Strap Road Plan to move 300 feet of critical section of road to the North – Karen reported that Sue said that Dennis Thompson (Northern New England Field Services – NNFS) said that he could fix Shoestrap Road for \$10,000. Steve reported that Miller Construction said that they could do it for a minimum of \$50,000. The NNFS approach would move the road to the North of its current location. Steve commented that the Town could also move it over. Committee members commented that the bank is steep on both sides of the road, and that it would require a Town meeting vote to reopen the road. Frank, Bret and Karen expressed concern that the “uphill” bank is unstable. Karen reported that Sue has asked Dina to gather documentation of past actions regarding Shoestrap Road. There was some discussion of when it became a Class VI Road – Bret thought that it was approximately 2007 – 2008. He further commented that the Road has developed shear failure surfaces in the past and that he thinks that it will eventually fail, pushing the problem further upslope.

Request from Select Board to the Roads Committee to advise regarding River Road weight limits, speed limits and trucking restrictions. (Kevin)

Kevin explained that the Select Board would like the Committee to consider the full length of River Road and ask whether it is classified properly. When considering that there are now several failure areas and the Hewes Brook bridge is in poor condition, perhaps the Town should put limits on vehicle weights and possibly limit traffic on the whole length of the road. Steve commented that the asphalt is in terrible condition on the southern portion of the road near the Hanover Town Line. Kevin re-stated his request by asking what can be done to preserve River Road in its current condition as long as possible?

Karen requested that everyone weigh in on this question. Steve commented that Town maintenance vehicles damage the pavement on the southern portion of River Road where the pavement is already severely damaged, and that no through trucking should be allowed there. Bill asked about whether speed or weight is the problem. Steve answered that it was primarily vehicle weight.

Bill asked whether lowering the speed limit would discourage traffic on the road. Steve suggested that a “local traffic only” posting might help. Bret commented that enforcement (current and any changed laws) would be key in having an influence on traffic volumes. He also said that traffic volume (repeated loading) does cumulative damage.

Karen pointed out that trucks (due to weight) inflict considerably more damage than passenger vehicles. More discussion followed about the equivalency of trucks vs. passenger vehicles, speed limits and enforcement of speed and weight restrictions. Bill said that truck traffic could not be limited on River Road because most of the trucks are there to specifically make a delivery to a River Road address. Mike said that the Committee should be considering the school bus cost because this influences our tax rates. (Mike said that the school bus is currently driving on the weight restricted portion of River Road.) Kevin replied that it is important to consider the current capability of River Road, and what might cause irreversible loss of the road (due to slope failure). Kevin suggested that a subject matter expert could be helpful. He is not comfortable with the current management of River Road, and perhaps we

could be more pro-active about managing the traffic on River Road in order to preserve it as long as possible.

Bret commented that the school bus issue should be specifically addressed—they are often excepted for weight limits. Mike said that the Committee should prioritize the problems and the survival times, and communicate a plan (for repairs) that the Town citizens will understand. Bill said that we should be considering what can we do besides spending money. More discussion ensued about how to limit or discourage non-local traffic on River Road. Frank mentioned speed bumps. Ernst thinks that there will be major issues with logging efforts that would need to use River Road. Bill asked about labeling a road as a scenic road – would that help in any way?

Karen summarized that there have been two main ideas discussed – 1) an approach to limiting traffic and 2) an overall repair and maintenance plan. Frank suggested then, that we start with the study regarding problem areas on River Road that was done in the recent past. He feels that the steep slope across from the Voegel's property is the greatest unknown risk and potential cost to repair. Karen asked about how to optimize the use of limited funding and whether there are places that would cost approximately the same to repair after failure vs. repairing to prevent failure. Bret commented that there are areas that will fail that will force the closure of portions of River Road. Ernst agreed that River Road will eventually be broken up into a number of sections. Mike commented that the best way to postpone this eventuality is to limit car traffic on River Road. Karen replied that we should be considering reducing truck traffic. Kevin commented that part of the management plan could be education of the citizens of Lyme (e.g., not having packages delivered to River Road addresses). There was more discussion, and Steve commented that he thinks that there are many through trucks even though the Town has posted no thru trucking on many of our roads.

Karen summarized the discussion as providing two main ideas – 1) limiting traffic and 2) long term planning for when we actually do “lose” River Road. She also asked if Wilder Dam were gone, would we still be facing the same issues? Bret said that the Town will still lose River Road. Mike said that the water level would probably lower 10 to 15 feet should the Dam be removed and added that the silting up of Wilder Dam is making it less economical to operate.

Karen asked Kevin what his thoughts were on at this time on the Select Board's request. He replied that one possibility is that he could work with 2 to 3 people to help frame an approach to this problem, and that there is an opportunity to help manage River Road better than we are now to prolong its life. Steve commented that other bridge and road repairs (other than River Road) in Lyme that are needed are currently estimated to cost in the millions of dollars.

Kevin asked if he was on the right track. Mike said yes, and that we must stick with this topic until we can reach a conclusion/solve this problem.

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5PM.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Karen Henry