

MINUTES

DRAFT

ATTENDING

- **DAC:** Doug Bennett, Ann Carroll, Larissa Darcy, Natasha Goldman, Deb King, Margo Knight, Cathy Lamb, Victor Langelo, Mike Lyne, Gary Massanek, Nancy Randolph, Gary Smart, Don Spann, Sande Updegraph, Bruce Van Note, Will Wilkoff
- **Absent:** Jim Howard
- **Staff:** Anna Breinich, John Shattuck, Linda Smith, Jared Woolston

CALL TO ORDER @ 6:05pm

- Chair Bruce Van Note and the Committee welcomed its newest members, appointed by the Brunswick Council at their meeting on MON 2016-08-01:

Larissa Darcy
Natasha Goldman
Deb King
Margo Knight

Mike Lyne
Gary Massanek
Sande Updegraph
Will Wilkoff

- The Chair then introduced and welcomed representatives from the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) and TY Lin, the Department's consulting engineers on the Brunswick-Topsham Bridge project:

William Pulver, PE
Joel Kittredge
Norman Baker

MDOT Director of Project Development
MDOT Project Manager
TY Lin International Senior Project Manager

MINUTES

- **VOTED:** On a motion by Don Spann and a second by Victor Langelo, the Committee voted unanimously (the newly appointed Brunswick members abstaining due to absence) to approve/amend minutes of the last meeting on WED 2016-07-20.

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

- **Committee officers:** The Chair noted that he had been elected Chair, and that the Vice Chair position was left vacant, before the Committee included the Brunswick members and suggested new votes for these positions would be in order.
 - **VOTED:** On a motion by Mike Lyne and a second by Larissa Darcy, the Committee voted unanimously to elect Bruce Van Note as Chair. Bruce abstained.
 - **VOTED:** On a motion by Deborah King and a second by Sande Updegraph, the Committee voted unanimously to elect Mike Lyne as Vice Chair. Mike abstained.

- **Committee charge and scope:** For the benefit of the newly appointed Committee members, Bruce reviewed the DAC's charge and scope:
 - The DAC was created by the Topsham Selectmen's 2016-06-02 Resolution Regarding the Topsham-Brunswick Bridge. That Resolution includes the following statement of the Committee's purpose and scope:
 - To ensure that the final design of the new bridge best meets both the State's responsibility to meet the public's transportation needs, and incorporates, to the degree that is financially feasible, the aesthetic and functional needs and preferences of Topsham and Brunswick, we will appoint, jointly with Brunswick, a Design Advisory Committee to work with the Maine Department of Transportation to optimize the final design for the new bridge.
 - In accordance with the Selectmen's Resolution, Chair Van Note stated that the DAC's focus and discussions will be limited to issues regarding the design of a new bridge, but also noted that no final decision regarding the replacement or rehabilitation of the existing bridge will be made until the conclusion of the US-DOT §106 process.
 - Residents interested in providing input on the possibility of preserving the existing bridge are encouraged to participate in the concurrent §106 process.
- **Committee staffing:** Bruce introduced the two municipal staff members supporting the committee's work:
 - Linda Smith, Brunswick (207) 721-0292 lsmith@BrunswickMe.org
 - John Shattuck, Topsham (207) 650-0012 jshattuck@TopshamMaine.com

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

- **Communication with the Committee:** Bruce requested that communications to the committee be directed to both of the supporting staffers, copying the Chair or the entire Committee.
- **Communication with MDOT:** The Chair, noting that it was important that the Committee speak with a single voice in its communications with MDOT, asked that all requests for information and recommendations should be forwarded to MDOT only after the Committee has acted to authorize or delegate the communication.
- **Website:** Staff will be creating a webpage to provide Committee members, and the public, access to the DAC's agendas, minutes, documents and other information. This DAC webpage which will be linked from the municipal websites of both Towns, and is expected to be online in the coming week.
- **Anticipated DAC schedule:** These are the dates and location for the remaining DAC meetings:

WED 09-14	Brunswick Room 206 Conference Room
WED 10-12	Topsham Donald Russell Meeting Room
WED 11-09	Brunswick Room 206 Conference Room
WED 12-07	Topsham Topsham Donald Russell Meeting Room

- **Background information for DAC members:** Bruce presented a brief slide show (attached), excerpted from MDOT's presentation at the 2016-04-27 public hearing. The presentation provided a summary of MDOT's analysis of the condition of the existing bridge and its consideration of alternative solutions in determining that the preliminary preferred alternative for this project was to replace the existing bridge.
 - The slide show included two new images provided by MDOT, which showed the alignment of the proposed bridge imposed on an aerial photograph of the river – one with a high flow of water and the other with a low flow. These images demonstrated the proposed bridge would leave most of the Lower Falls exposed, including the northern end where water passes over the falls even during low flows.
 - Bruce noted that placing one of the viewing overlooks in this area would provide an exceptional view of the most active portion of the Lower Falls. Please see images attached to the end of these minutes.

RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

- **Comments from Bill Pulver, PE, MDOT's Director of Project Planning:** Bruce invited Bill Pulver to summarize the current status of the Brunswick-Topsham Bridge project. Bill thanked the Committee members for their efforts and provided the following updates:
 - He noted that while the Department, in March, had made an initial determination that a new bridge with an arched, upstream alignment was MDOT's preferred alternative for this project, this was only a preliminary recommendation and not a final decision.
 - Bill also stated that a final choice between the rehabilitation of the present bridge and the construction of a new bridge would only be made when the related NHPA §106 process and NEPA process are and was completed.
 - Finally, Bill explained that the repair work outlined in the recent inspection report that resulted in the FWB being posted with a load limitation are short-term repairs necessary to keep the bridge operating with reduced loads, and not a rehabilitation of the bridge.
 - More information on the inspection, the posting and the short-term repairs are available at MDOT's project web page:
 - <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/projects/brunswick/frankjwoodbridge/>
- **MDOT responses to previous RFIs:** The Chair reviewed the answers received so far from MDOT in response to questions previously submitted by the Committee:
 - **Underpass:** A walking underpass beneath the end of the bridge presently appears to be unfeasible at the Brunswick end and at least unlikely at the Topsham end.
 - **Grade:** The elevation of the bridge at the Topsham end will be substantially unchanged, while the Brunswick end will be raised approximately two feet to accommodate the greater width of the proposed replacement bridge, and maintain access for driveways at Fort Andross. The roadway crossing the bridge inclines up from Topsham to Brunswick at about a 1% grade.

- **100 year flood level:** The bottom of the current bridge is approximately 1.5 feet above the 100 year flood level; the lowest point of the proposed new bridge would be about 1.5 feet higher, or approximately 3 feet above the 100 year flood level.
- **Bridge dimensions – below & above deck:**
 - **Measurements:** The measurements below are given as distances or heights below or above the top of the deck, ie: the road surface. These distances are believed to be accurate, based on measurements of the existing bridge and the preliminary plans for the proposed bridge, but are not precise to the inch. The measurements below the deck do not include the piers, and for the proposed new bridge, they do not include the “haunches,” which are flares in the supporting steel beams at the piers. Please see images attached to the end of these minutes.
 - **Below deck:** The height of the supporting structure below the road surface of the existing bridge is 6.5 feet, and the height of the supporting steel beams for the proposed bridge would vary from 5 to 9 feet, depending on the span. For the central spans, the height is 8.5 feet. Please see images attached to the end of these minutes.
 - **Railing height:** For both the existing and proposed bridges, the top of the railings are approximately 4 feet over the road surface.
 - **Above deck:** The height of the truss structure above the road surface of the existing bridge varies from 28.5 feet (Topsham span) to 47.5 feet (center and Brunswick spans). The proposed bridge would have no structure above the road surface, other than railings present on both bridges (see above).
 - **Total height:** The total height of the existing bridge varies from 35 feet to 54 feet (to top of trusses), while the total height of the proposed bridge varies from 9 feet to 13 feet (to top of railings).

PUBLIC INPUT - Bike-ped & handicap infrastructure & access issues

- The Committee invited members of the local bicycling, pedestrian and handicapped communities to share their concerns and suggestions with the Committee during this for this scheduled public input portion of the meeting.
- The following shared their suggestions and concerns with the Committee:
 - **Rich Cromwell**, Co-Chair - Brunswick Bike-Ped Advisory Committee
 - **Tony Barrett**, East Coast Greenway board member
 - **Allison Harris**, Brunswick Town Council
 - **Jeanette MacNeille**, citizen commenting on bicyclist and neighborhood issues
 - **Sandy Bickford**, President - Merrymeeting Wheelers
 - **Kathy Wilson**, Brunswick Town Council, Brunswick Bike-Ped Advisory Comm
 - **Patrick Pryor**, citizen commenting on handicap access and disability issues
 - **Tony Muench**, Landscape Architect
 - **Richard Fisco**, citizen commenting on pedestrian access issues
- The following is a summary of their comments, arranged by topic:

- **Rehabilitation v. replacement**
 - All the speakers supported the replacement of the existing bridge with the improved/widened amenities for both pedestrians and bicyclists shown in the rendering of the preliminary design concept for the proposed bridge
 - One speaker asked the Committee and MDOT to pay close attention to the impact the new bridge location would have on Summer Street residents and the views from the Riverwalk.
 - Several speakers stated that they were pleased that, both from the bridge and from the shore, views would be much improved by the absence of a superstructure, allowing people to see previously obscured views up and down stream, as well as views of the mills from across the river.
- **Sidewalk design**
 - Multiple speakers expressed strong support for having sidewalks on both sides of the bridge that connected with the existing sidewalks on the Main/e Streets in both towns.
 - Several speakers supported a wider sidewalk on the upstream side - various approaches were proposed
 - Combine the two proposed 5 foot sidewalks into a single 10 foot sidewalk.
 - Combine the 5 foot sidewalk and the 5 foot bikeway/shoulder into a single 10 foot sidewalk.
 - Some speakers suggested that a 10 foot sidewalk could serve as a multimodal path for both pedestrians and bicyclists, while others were opposed to combining these uses, even in a wide sidewalk
 - One speaker expressed the hope that the sidewalks would be designed to maximize access for handicapped users.
- **Railing location & design**
 - Many of the comments on railings were closely related to sidewalk design issues as there were several requests for a railing, on at least one side, separating the sidewalk from the roadway. Speakers supporting such an internal railing noted that it increased their sense of safety and made it easier to manage children and pets while walking across the bridge.
 - Several bicycling advocates opposed internal railing stating that they represented a crash hazard for bicyclists who, as a result, would move away from the curb edge of the bikeway and closer to the vehicle lane.
 - One speaker was concerned that the significant curb height could present a hazard to cyclists, who might hit the curb with their pedals.
 - Several speakers expressed support for railings that were more open for better visibility, and suggested the railings should be more attractive than the utilitarian style shown in the images of the proposed bridge.
 - Two speakers noted that pedestrians routinely walk on sidewalks right next to the vehicle lanes without feeling endangered in the downtowns of both Topsham and Brunswick.
- **Road design & traffic calming**

- Many speakers noted that if they felt very uncomfortable and unsafe bicycling across the existing bridge on the roadway, and no one described the current design as adequate for cyclists, even those who regularly bicycle across the bridge on the roadway.
- One bicycling advocate suggested that the vehicle travel lanes should be increased from the proposed 11 feet to 12 feet, but two other bicycling advocates expressed a preference for narrowing the lanes to 10 feet, with one of them noting that the Bicycle Coalition of Maine advocates for 10 foot lanes in downtown settings.
- Several speakers proposed that coloring or texturing the bikeway/shoulder lanes would help calm traffic and discourage vehicles from encroaching on this space.
- One pedestrian noted that, if pedestrian underpasses are not possible, then very well marked crosswalks (perhaps with an elevated table and or flashers) at both ends of the bridge will be necessary.
- Some speakers mentioned that they would like to see structural or design traffic calming methods incorporated in to the new design.
- **MDOT & TY Lin responses**
 - In response to the suggestion that the two 5 foot sidewalks be consolidated into a single 10 foot sidewalk, Norm Baker (TY Lin) stated that MDOT was committed to having two sidewalks to increase pedestrian safety by reducing pedestrian-vehicle conflicts resulting from the need to cross the road to access a single sidewalk. He noted, therefore, that increasing a one sidewalk to a 10 foot width would actually require widening the bridge deck.
 - In response to the suggestion that the a 5 foot bikeway/shoulder and the sidewalk on one side be consolidated into a single 10 foot sidewalk, and simply eliminate the bikeway/shoulder on that side, Norm Baker (TY Lin) stated that current road design standards required that both vehicle lanes have a shoulder, so this alternative would also require widening the bridge deck.
 - Responding to statements encouraging adequate handicapped access to the sidewalks, Bill Pulver (MDOT) noted that maximizing handicapped access is a core policy that MDOT is happy to support, and one that is required by law.
 - Regarding various comments encouraging traffic calming designs, Norm Baker (TY Lin) stated that MDOT is actively pursuing a variety of traffic calming techniques and that any ideas in this area are welcomed and will be considered.
 - In response to comments regarding vehicle lane width, Norm Baker (TY Lin) stated that 12 foot lanes are typical for higher speed highways and 10 foot lanes can work in high density residential areas or downtowns with lower speeds and less heavy truck traffic. He observed that 11 foot lanes were a good compromise where lower speeds are desired but which must also accommodate a significant level of heavy, large trucks. He reported

that the existing bridge serves nearly 20,000 vehicles a day, about 5% of which are heavy trucks.

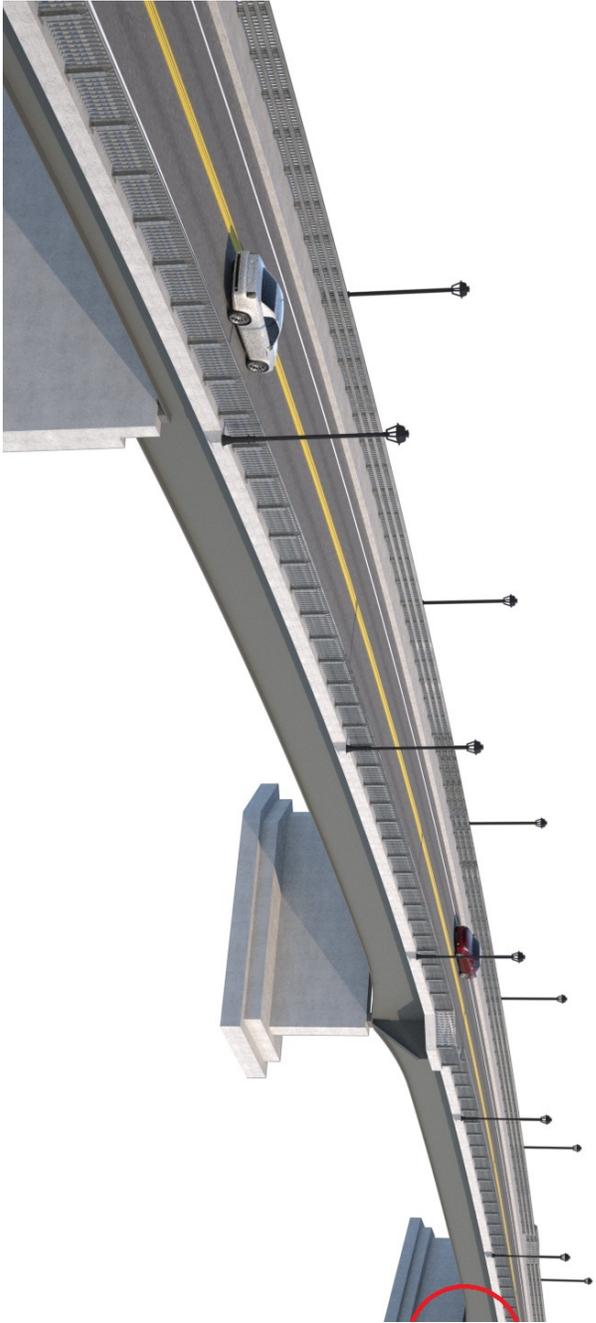
- **DAC comments:** Committee members made the following comments, arranged by topic:
 - **Sidewalk design**
 - Several members expressed their appreciation for a wide sidewalk like the one on the Martin's Point Bridge, but expressed concerns about the cost of widening the bridge deck.
 - Emphasizing that he was not using figures provided by MDOT for this project, Bruce noted that his experience suggested that widening this sort of bridge structure would add about \$400,000 of cost for each additional foot of width.
 - **Railing location & design**
 - The Committee should be sure to seek input from both towns' public works directors on the impacts that different railing designs and locations might have on their work, especially in connection with plowing.
 - **Road design & traffic calming**
 - One member noted that structural or design traffic calming methods have proven to be far more effective than simply posting a low speed limit.

WRAP-UP & NEXT STEPS

- **New RFIs for MDOT:**
 - Please provide examples of railing design that would meet crash barrier requirements. Committee members are also welcome to research for attractive, crash barrier designs.
 - Please provide examples of light pole designs. Committee members are encouraged to consider how bridge lighting would blend into the two different styles of streetlights on Brunswick's and Topsham's Main/e Streets.
 - Please provide examples of materials or methods used to reduce road glare spillover into residential areas.
- **Next agenda:** The DAC's next meeting is on WED 2016-09-14 in the Room 206 Conference Room at the Brunswick town office. By consensus, the public input portion of the meeting was changed from Water Street residents and Main/e Street businesses to aesthetic considerations & Water Street residents.
 - The Committee still needs to schedule public input for Main/e Street businesses and municipal officials, particularly public works.

ADJOURNED: 7:15pm

HAUNCHES



SPANS



LOWER FALLS

