

**BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT**

SUBJECT: Monthly SHPO-FHWA-ACOE-NHDOT Cultural Resources Meeting
DATE OF CONFERENCES: August 2, 2012 and August 9, 2012
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building
ATTENDED BY:

FHWA
Jaime Sikora

NHDOT
Sheila Charles
Jill Edelman
Marc Laurin
Don Lyford

NHDHR
Laura Black
Edna Feighner
Peter Michaud
Elizabeth Muzzey

(When viewing these minutes online, click on an attendee to send an e-mail)

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August 2, 2012

Bridge Inventory Management Meeting

Participants: Laura Black, Edna Feighner, Beth Muzzey, NHDHR; Sheila Charles, Jill Edelman, NHDOT

J. Edelman gave an update on the status of the Historic Bridge Inventory Management project, including the High Pratt Truss Management Plan, and future undertakings of the inventory and management plans.

J. Edelman indicated the Phase I inventory and management plan identified approximately 209 bridges and 20 recognizable bridge types.

J. Edelman believes that the Historic Bridge Inventory Management Project funds, totaling \$209,000^[NHSL1], are depleted and that these funds did not cover the inventory of the High Pratt Trusses.

B. Muzzey had understood the MOA for the Lebanon-Hartford bridge replacement project committed funds to cover the inventory and plans for the High Pratt Trusses, as well as the other

bridge types in Phase I. The former meeting minutes would have more information on funds associated with Phase II. B. Muzzey would like to know where those funds stand.

A review of the MOA associated with the Bartlett Bridge demolition indicated there was \$15,000 designated for the inventory of the High Pratt bridges and there was an additional \$30,000 match for a proposed Transportation Enhancement grant application. Since DOT's grant application was not successful (statewide applications are difficult to gather support for), B. Muzzey asked if the \$30,000 match was still available.

Questions also arose regarding the funds for the Lebanon-Hartford Bridge. The lead agency for this project is Federal Highway. J. Edelmann pointed out that she understood there are no remaining funds, although she will see if any funds remain associated with the Lebanon-Hartford project. Jill will need to talk to Alex Vogt about these funds. J. Edelmann will also look into the \$30,000 associated with the Bartlett Project (Historic Bridge Management Project Phase I).

J. Edelmann indicated \$27,000 had been set aside for Garvin's bridge book, and it is possible this money derived from the bridge mitigation funds. B. Muzzey explained that those funds came from FHWA's State Planning and Research (SPR) program. B. Muzzey asked about the date associated with utilization of the funds for the bridge book. It is J. Edelmann's understanding that even if the funds (\$27,000) are not depleted during this calendar year, NHDOT Assistant Director of Project Development/Bureau of Environment Acting Administrator Craig Green indicated the money (SPR funds) can be recovered at a later date.

B. Muzzey suggests that in the future, the bridge management plans for each bridge should be compiled with input from multiple organizational representatives (e.g., Federal Highway, SHPO office personnel, DOT environmental bureau managers and bridge designers and maintenance personnel) to get information on costs, elements of bridge design and maintenance, to be able to incorporate their needs and goals into the bridge management plans.

J. Edelmann indicated that Mark Richardson had reviewed the draft of the High Pratt Truss plan but had no comments either way on it.^[NHSL2]

L. Black suggested an additional good contact with an extensive bridge background would be Principal and Architectural Historian Patrick Harshbarger of Hunter Research, Inc. J. Edelmann agreed it might be beneficial for Patrick Harshbarger to review the current High Pratt Bridge Plan, compare it with current historic bridge management plans in other states, and make recommendations.

The newly established goal is to schedule a meeting, including representatives of SHPO, FHWA, NHDOT (including bridge representatives), and bridge historians (e.g., Patrick Harshbarger and/or Richard Casella). Prior to the meeting, a packet of background information would be compiled and distributed to the participants. The discussion might include examples of other individual bridge cases, such as Deering, Peaslee (Weare), and Pingree, as well as the option of resource relocation and reuse.

Peaslee Road Bridge Project in Weare

L. Black summarized the situation regarding the **Peaslee Road Bridge Project in Weare**, which is subject to the consultation process under NHPA Section 106. As part of a municipally managed NHDOT project, the Town proposes to replace the c.1940 bridge (No.125/141) over the Piscataquog River. The bridge was added to the NHDOT Municipal Red List in 2008 as there are substantive problems with roadway flooding and the bridge, transition, and end approach rails are substandard.

Following a November 12, 2009 cultural resource agency meeting in which the NHDHR requested reviews, a Phase 1A archaeological study determined no further survey was necessary and the DHR concurred on 6/24/2010. An Individual Inventory form was prepared for the bridge and the bridge was deemed eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as a relatively rare example of its type (1 of 5 known in the state).

Apparently there is some confusion among some residents of the Town regarding the steps in the Section 106 process, the various roles in project development under the process, and the opportunities for involvement by interested and consulting parties. The engineering consultant, Thom Marshall of Kleinfelder, suggested documentation, while the Heritage Commission presented some creative mitigation options, including the creation of a website and/or a small booklet about the history of the bridge, its engineering, and function. Rumors are flying about high costs of the Heritage Commission's suggestion. One estimation was as much as \$6,500 to \$8,000; although 80% would be reimbursed by the State. However, HAER documentation is likely to be even higher. Tanya Krajcik, Chair of the Weare Heritage Commission indicates misunderstandings are causing negative reactions to the Heritage Commission.

B. Muzzey suggested a letter of support clarifying the process be written prior to the upcoming August 6 meeting. L. Black will write a letter to the Town Administrator explaining the mitigation process, requirements of an MOA, and that all reasonable options will be taken into consideration by the Corps (who represent the lead federal agency), as well as the FHWA, DHR and DOT.

Followup:

J. Edlmann spoke briefly with Thom Marshall who concurred the Heritage Commission should not be placed in the middle of the negativism, and indicated he would contact the town as he believes he knows where the problem lies. Edlmann affirmed the Heritage Commission was asked to provide creative mitigation options and had done so. Their proposals were not binding, but the project will require mitigation for the loss of the historic bridge and to "do nothing" was not an option. T. Marshall thought the Section 106 Process was never explained to the Town officials. T. Marshall also concurred that the Heritage Commission's mitigation suggestion would be cheaper and more beneficial than archival documentation (e.g. archival documentation for Hancock's (13778) 1939 I-Beam stringer bridge with a concrete rail cost \$11,229.70; and Lebanon's (13951) 1930 six span deck girder bridge cost \$11,840.49).

L. Black issued a letter on August 6, 2012 to Naomi Bolton, Weare Town Administrator.

August 9, 2012

Berlin 12958B

Participants: Laura Black, Peter Michaud, NHDHR; Jaime Sikora, FHWA; Sheila Charles, Jill Edelmann, Marc Laurin, Don Lyford, NHDOT

J. Edelmann indicated that by Spring 2013, all building in the project area will have been demolished. Highway construction is scheduled to be advertised in Fall 2013. Two seasons of construction are anticipated, pending weather issues.

J. Edelmann indicated the current mitigation specified in the MOA was reviewed and found to be not economically viable. Costing out expenses associated with full appraisal indicates this action would be too expensive. In addition, only three property owners expressed an interest in participating in the easement process, indicating an underwhelming response to this mitigation option.

Meeting participants concurred that the existing MOA needs to be changed, and other mitigation need to be considered that would be more beneficial to the community. A preliminary discussion with Berlin City Planner Pamela Laflamme indicates concurrence with this modification.

In the ensuing discussion on proposed alternative mitigation actions to replace the easements, the DHR wants to ensure that the alternative mitigation honors the intent of the original mitigation, which was to mitigate the loss of the buildings in the historic paper mill community district, established c.1892.

The following alternatives are all preliminary and very conceptual, and need the City's input, but the discussion included:

- 1. Sidewalk updates** - Is there a sidewalk plan that the City has already formulated that incorporates this district and/or other areas? Is this something to apply additional funding too?

J. Edelmann proposed improved sidewalks along Third Avenue would result in a major streetscape enhancement. M. Laurin also noted improvements would also result from road re-striping of Third Avenue and altering parking to establish diagonal street parking. J. Edelmann displayed the Charrette pamphlet that also proposed different colored sidewalk pavements. D. Lyford indicated that red colored crosswalks are to be constructed along First Avenue at the crosswalks at Third Avenue, at the Police Station and at Hillside Avenue.

DHR concluded this alone does not mitigate the impacts to the neighborhood, and overall there definitely was less enthusiasm for initiating sidewalk upgrades in the District as mitigation.

- 2. Formalizing scenic vistas and including interpretive panels** – In looking at the charrette pamphlet, scenic overlooks were proposed (see page 5 of the charrette book), which could be formalized. Interpretive panels could be designed to specifically focus on the history of

the neighborhood and the former and existing streetscape elements. This option might also highlight and preserve that “walking neighborhood” feel that was discussed at the charrette.

3. **Formalizing the entrance at the intersection of Green Street and the new Route 110** – At the charrette, there was discussion about creating a new entrance sign, formalizing the entrance to the neighborhood. Work could be done through a local artists juried process – where part of the requirements would ensure the artists incorporate historic elements of the neighborhood into the design of the sign. Inspiration could be drawn from the extensive stonework found throughout the district and result in a sculptural art form for the Berlin Heights District.
4. **Interpretive panels placed at the above new intersection** – These panels would supplement the signs established at the scenic vistas, and the State historic markers to be erected in front of the police station and at the new intersection of Third Ave and Wight Street. The panels would provide more detail than the basic state historic markers. Does the City have any interpretive panels now? How are they working? Is vandalism as problem? These signs could include more detailed historic context and historic images of the neighborhood.

L. Black indicated in a recent visit to Belfast, ME, she liked the signage erected along a city walking tour. She will share photographs of these signs.

P. Michaud indicated signage text can draw upon the historic documentation (Lisa Mausolf) that was compiled for this project and that this option honors the intent of the mitigation action. J. Sikora affirmed these signage options are more cost effective than sidewalk construction.

5. **Expand a walking tour to include this area.** There was mention earlier that Berlin and other communities have signed walking tours. Would the new road, and the history of the area make another good walking tour?
6. **Further the efforts of the CDFA MOA signed back in 2010.** Laura Black, after talking with Nadine Peterson, wondered if any of the stipulations in this MOA could be expanded upon for this district. The town might be interested in creating similar actions for this area of Berlin. The mitigation actions of 2012 resulted in the development of a 4th grade curriculum. Is there additional curriculum that could be incorporated? Alternative curriculum could be developed for another age group? L. Black mentioned Berlin developed large format posters that were published and have been mounted and displayed, and the data included on the website. Would expansion of the website be of interest to the city?

Once the mitigating direction is determined, J. Edelman will contact the three parties interested in the easements and let them know that the Department will not be moving forward with that effort. J. Edelman will ask for their opinion and input on the new mitigation efforts, and see if there is anyway to incorporate them or their comments into the process.

Follow up:

D. Lyford suggested that perhaps a separate independent project number, 12958H, should be assigned for the preliminary engineering and construction of this mitigation effort. D. Lyford also remarked, “As you mentioned it might be easier for people to visualize what to do at the Green Street intersection once the roadway construction is complete. That could also be true with the scenic vista areas. Plus there might be more local input from the Avenues once they can walk to these areas and see what is available. We could certainly hold workshops or whatever might be appropriate while the roadway construction is going on to get people thinking about the potential solutions. And the "construction" for the signs or sculptures won't be the normal roadway contractors anyway.”

J. Edlmann emailed Pam Laflamme on August 9, 2012, summarizing the meeting discussion. Pam Laflamme responded that she agreed “with Don’s comments about separating the activities out from one another...and waiting to see what happens once construction is complete – but I do like suggestions 2, 3, and 4 – some hybrid of all three of those items I could see happening and I love the idea of a local artisan doing a nice entrance sign...that would be very cool to have it be historical and local in its design.” P. Laflamme also wondered if it would be possible to wait“ as Don has suggested for the details, but indicated the City is supportive of some version of 2, 3, and 4.”

Memos/MOA's:

Submitted by: Sheila Charles, NHDOT Cultural Resources

<http://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/environment/units/technicalservices/crmeetings.htm>