

# REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

BELMONT, X-A001(182), 16202

NH 140 / SOUTH ROAD / JAMESTOWN ROAD

Commission

PUBLIC HEARING

May 8, 2013 -- Belmont High School -- 7:00 PM

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The following decisions are the Department's resolution of issues as a result of the testimony presented at the May 8, 2013 Public Hearing and written testimony subsequently submitted for the Belmont, X-A001(182), 16202, project described as:

This project will improve intersection safety by clearing trees in the northeast quadrant of the NH 140 / Jamestown Road intersection, and installing enhanced intersection warning signs. These measures will improve visibility both to and from the intersection. The project will also resurface NH 140 extending approximately 900' east and west of the intersection.

1. Police Chief Mark Lewandoski expressed support for the proposed intersection improvements.

*Response:* The Department appreciates Chief Lewandoski's support and will continue to coordinate with the Town and the project abutters as the design proceeds. The scope of work will be reduced to include improvements to intersection sight lines and NH 140 warning signs, and thus will address the most pressing safety concerns, while minimizing property impacts and limiting costs.

2. Selectman Ruth Mooney, Police Chief Mark Lewandoski, and Brenda Lawrence (340 Depot Street) suggested that the intersection of NH 140 and Main Street be investigated for improvements, either in addition to or in lieu of this project's subject intersection.

*Response:* The intersection of NH 140 and Main Street was investigated for improvement in the last decade under the Belmont 12792 project, and improvement concepts were developed. Due to the anticipated impacts and cost of the alternatives and a lack of project funding, these alternatives have not been pursued. Crash data show that 19 crashes occurred at the intersection from 2003 through 2012, with three resulting in minor injuries. The Department will continue to work with the Town and the Lakes Region Planning Commission to determine the proper course of action to pursue intersection improvements.

3. Public Works Director James Fortin, Ron Mitchell (586 Union Road), Michael Kennedy (parcel 10), and Kenneth Ellis (parcel 3) expressed concerns with the proposed stormwater infiltration system. Mr. Fortin felt that the sandy soils in the area would tend to clog the pipes and would require frequent maintenance. Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Ellis felt that the stormwater infiltration system could allow a chemical spill within the intersection to contaminate the aquifer. Mr. Kennedy expressed concern that the road work could worsen flooding on his property.

*Response:* Upon consideration of the full body of public hearing testimony and reevaluation of the project cost versus the Department's financial resources, the Department proposes to reduce the scale of improvements to be undertaken by this project to include new and enhanced intersection warning signs, limited tree clearing, and pavement resurfacing. The improvements will not include modifications to the intersection stormwater drainage system.

4. Camille Kennedy (parcel 10), Selectman Ruth Mooney, Andrea Colprit (parcel 13), and Heidi Johnson (parcel 15) expressed concern with the proposed tree clearing and

the increased traffic noise that would result. Ms. Mooney suggested that trees be planted to replace those that are removed.

*Response:*

Upon consideration of the full body of public hearing testimony and reevaluation of the project cost versus the Department's financial resources, the Department proposes to reduce the scale of improvements to be undertaken by this project to include new and enhanced intersection warning signs, limited tree clearing, and pavement resurfacing. Tree clearing intended to improve sight lines to and from Jamestown Road will be limited to parcel 10. The Department will work closely with the owners to compensate them for the property impacts.

5. Several attendees suggested that other improvement measures be considered in lieu of the proposed plan. Selectman Ruth Mooney, Andrea Colprit (parcel 13), Ron Mitchell (586 Union Road), and Michael Kennedy (parcel 10) suggested the installation of a flashing warning beacon to improve driver recognition of the intersection. Ms. Colprit and Guy Knowlton (339 Depot Street) recommended improvements to the intersection lighting. Regina Knowlton (339 Depot Street) and Heidi Johnson (parcel 15) suggested the installation of traffic signals, and Ms. Knowlton further suggested the addition of stop signs to NH 140.

*Response:* The Department will evaluate the intersection lighting to determine if the existing illumination is adequate. While the other suggested improvement measures have been evaluated and are not feasible or appropriate for this location, the Department does agree that a reduced scope of work is appropriate. Upon consideration of the full body of public hearing testimony and reevaluation of the project cost versus the Department's financial resources, the Department proposes to reduce the scale of improvements to be undertaken by this project to include new and enhanced intersection warning signs, limited tree clearing, and pavement resurfacing. These improvements will address the most pressing safety concerns, while minimizing property impacts and limiting costs.

6. Regina Knowlton (339 Depot Street), Heidi Johnson (parcel 15), Ron Mitchell (586 Union Road) and others expressed concern that vehicles commonly exceed the speed limit, and that the 40 mph speed limit on NH 140 is too high.

*Response:* Because the posted speed limit of 40 mph is already well below the statutory speed limit of 55 mph, a speed study may determine that the existing speed limit is too low and recommend that it be raised to better conform to prevailing speeds. The Department recommends that the Town undertake sustained targeted speed enforcement of the existing posted speed limit. Upon consideration of the full body of public hearing testimony and reevaluation of the project cost versus the Department's financial resources, the Department proposes to reduce the scale of improvements to be undertaken by this project to include new and enhanced intersection warning signs, limited tree clearing, and pavement resurfacing. The reduced scope of work will not widen NH 140 and thus will not encourage higher speeds.

7. Michael Kennedy (parcel 10), Regina Knowlton (339 Depot Street), Heidi Johnson (parcel 15), and others felt that widening NH 140 to add left turn lanes and shoulders will result in higher vehicle speeds, which will increase the hazard at the intersection.

*Response:* Upon consideration of the full body of public hearing testimony and reevaluation of the project cost versus the Department's financial resources, the Department proposes to reduce the scale of improvements to be undertaken by this project to include new and enhanced intersection warning signs, limited tree clearing, and pavement resurfacing. The reduced scope of work will not widen NH 140 and thus will not encourage higher speeds.

The Department also recommends that the Town undertake sustained targeted speed enforcement of the existing posted speed limit.

8. Andrea Colprit (parcel 13), Kenneth and Cheryl Ellis (parcel 3), and Michael Kennedy (parcel 10) expressed concerns with the impact of the project upon their properties. Mr. Kennedy felt that the existing right of way as denoted on the hearing plan is inaccurate and as a result his property would be disproportionately impacted by the road widening. Mr. and Mrs. Ellis felt that the proposed drainage outlet could impact future plans for their property.

*Response:* Upon consideration of the full body of public hearing testimony and reevaluation of the project cost versus the Department's financial resources, the Department proposes to reduce the scale of improvements to be undertaken by this project to include new and enhanced intersection warning signs, limited tree clearing, and pavement resurfacing. Tree clearing intended to improve sight lines to and from Jamestown Road will be limited to parcel 10. The Department will work closely with the owners to compensate them for the property impacts.

The Department's research into the existing highway layout has confirmed that the Route 140 right of way is correctly shown on the hearing plan, and NH 140 is not currently centered within the right of way. However, the reduced scope of work will not widen NH 140 and thus will not encroach upon the abutting properties.

9. Kenneth Ellis (parcel 3) and Michael Kennedy (parcel 10) questioned the justification for the proposed intersection improvements. Mr. Kennedy asked that current crash records be evaluated to determine whether recent improvements including tree clearing and the addition of a street light have improved intersection safety.

*Response:* This intersection was selected for improvement under the NHDOT Highway Safety Improvement Program based on its crash history. At the time of the project's inception in 2011, Department of Safety crash records showed that 16 crashes had occurred at the intersection from 2002 to 2009, nine of which resulted in injuries. More recent crash records for 2010 through 2012 show that there were no crashes recorded in 2010 or 2011, and one in 2012. Upon consideration of the full body of public hearing testimony and reevaluation of the project cost versus the Department's financial resources, the Department proposes to reduce the scale of improvements to be undertaken by this project to include new and enhanced intersection warning signs, limited tree clearing, and pavement resurfacing. These improvements will address the most pressing safety concerns by enhancing visibility both to and from the intersection, while minimizing property impacts and limiting costs.

4/30/15

Date



William J. Cass, P.E.  
Acting Commissioner  
N.H. Department of Transportation