

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
**BUREAU OF BRIDGE DESIGN**  
**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**PROJECT:** Stewartstown, NH – Canaan, VT 15838  
A000(984)  
Bridge Street over Connecticut River  
Br. No. 054/163

**DATE OF CONFERENCE:** March 16, 2015

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** Stewartstown Community School, Stewartstown, NH

**ATTENDED BY:**        NHDOT                                PUBLIC  
                              David Scott                                See Attached Sign-In Sheet  
                              William Saffian

**SUBJECT:** Public Officials/Public Informational Meeting

**NOTES ON CONFERENCE:**

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) was on the agenda to speak about the project during a scheduled selectmen's meeting at 4:00 pm. However, upon arrival, it was learned that the town held the selectmen's meeting early at a different location so that this time could be devoted solely to the project. This meeting was, therefore, not held as part of an official selectmen's meeting and the Select Board did not officiate during the meeting. That meeting started at 4:15 PM and concluded at approximately 5:30 PM.

Introduction

D. Scott, Bureau of Bridge Design, introduced himself and other NHDOT and Vermont Agency of Transportation staff in attendance at the meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to explain the work proposed by NHDOT and gather feedback from the public regarding the project. Before the technical presentation started, one of the Stewartstown Board of Selectmen spoke to inform D. Scott that members of the Canaan Board of Selectmen were present as were the Canaan Fire Chief, District 1 State Representative, Emergency Management Officer and the Coos County Commissioner.

Technical Presentations

D. Scott read a prepared statement from the Bureau of Environment (BoE) of the NHDOT. This statement indicated that NHDOT has the responsibility for investigating the potential impacts that our projects will have on the surrounding natural, cultural, and social environments. The statement noted that identifying key resources early in the project development process enables the Department to avoid or minimize impacts as the design proceeds. D. Scott then made a request that if anyone knows of any resources that might be impacted by this project, that they contact BoE know tonight or via email.

W. Saffian, Bureau of Bridge Design, then detailed the specifics of the project scope. The presentation plans were oriented and the color scheme explained. A brief description of the geometry,

history, and current conditions evaluation of the existing bridge was presented. The scope of work then presented as follows:

- Removal and replacement of the existing deck
- Removal and replacement of select components of the superstructure steel
- Repair of the VT spill through abutment and repair to the VT thrust block
- Painting the superstructure
- Placing slabs on the NH and VT approaches necessary to construct the bridge joints

The phasing of the project was presented. The bridge will be closed to traffic during construction. The nature of the existing framing is such that floorbeams, which are orientated transverse to the deck, cannot be partially removed to support half the deck while the other half is replaced. Because of this, keeping the bridge open and doing phased construction is not an option. The detour was described as VT 253 to VT 114/Main Street to US 3 to Bridge Street with a total length of just under 4 miles.

The construction access was presented. NHDOT envisions that the Contractor will utilize a trestle placed along the west (downstream) side of the bridge to facilitate moving necessary components from/to the bridge during construction. The logical place for the trestle to match into the existing ground is at the edge of the parking lot of St. Albert Catholic Church on Church Street. This parking lot is approximately 12 vertical feet below the proposed deck level and will offer the opportunity to design a temporary structure that is not too tall but allows the Contractor's crane to reach to the extreme limits of the bridge. In order to have room for the Contractor to assemble/disassemble the crane and have staging room for materials, the temporary impact will utilize around ½ the existing parking lot.

W. Saffian then indicated that a formal Public Hearing will be conducted at the Stewartstown Community School on April 30, 2015 at 7:00 PM where the specific right-of-way impacts will be explained. Doors will be open starting at 6:30 PM so the public may examine all information that will be presented. The entire community is invited to attend that meeting. W. Saffian indicated that all the impacts would be temporary and that the side slope of the river will be replanted after the trestle is removed. W. Saffian noted that the approach to the bridge will be closed by barrier on the VT side at the intersection of Bridge Street with VT 253. On the NH approach, River Street will be closed at the intersection with Bridge Street. Access for emergency vehicles to River Street will be via Hillside Road and Bohan Street and that NHDOT has already coordinated with Chief Young of the Canaan Fire Department to check that this provided suitable access to River Street. Additionally, River Street will be closed to traffic at the intersection of Bohan Street. This closure will be specified as being done with barrels and only closing one lane of the roadway so that the resident at the one property that has a drive on this portion of River Street will not lose access to the property. The closing of River Street at Bridge Street will eliminate the need for a three-way signaled intersection and allow the left turn onto or out of Church Street to be controlled by stop signs and visual queuing by drivers attempting this turning movement.

W. Saffian then presented the project schedule as being ready to advertise by July 7, 2015 with an Advertising date of October 13, 2015. The project will take two construction seasons (2016 and 2017) to complete.

## Public Comments

The meeting was opened to questions and comments. The following comments were made and items discussed:

- Chief Young requested that the entrance to Hillside Road be improved to facilitate turning movements for emergency vehicles. D. Scott indicated NHDOT will provide.
- Concern was voiced by the parish priest that taking the parking lot to the extent proposed would severely impact the parking needs of the parish during scheduled services as well during unscheduled events such as funerals. He offered that the Contractor could utilize an old ball field located off Bridge Street just south of the rectory building that was flat and open. D. Scott indicated that the Department will reexamine the needs of the project to see if the temporary impacts can be made smaller but that the contract would not specify use of the ball field. The impacts deemed necessary for the project will be pursued by NHDOT. The Church could negotiate the use of the ball field in lieu of the parking lot with the Contractor directly during the project. D. Scott did indicate that wording will be placed in the contract indicating the Contractor will be required to coordinate with the Church in order to maximize use of the parking lot by the Church for weekend services and unscheduled events.
- The Town of Stewartstown and the Canaan Fire Department made a request that the guardrail from the bridge onto Church and River Streets be turned sooner or tighter to facilitate easier turning movements by large vehicles. W. Saffian explained that the project was doing very little work on the NH abutment and that the close proximity of the intersection to the end of the bridge did not leave many options. W. Saffian also indicated that turning the rail too sharply will present blunt rail corners and be a safety concern for traffic approaching the bridge. W. Saffian and D. Scott did agree to examine the intersection again to see what, if anything can be done.
- A request was made to have to the visual aids used at the meeting be made available on the NHDOT web site. D. Scott indicated that NHDOT will do that.
- Discussion was initiated by members of the public requesting placement of a dry hydrant and/or concrete platform for a pump as part of the project. However, after further input by other public figures about fire hydrants installed in recent years, this subject was removed from discussion.

### D. Scott then spoke to the board and public regarding the following:

- NHDOT's interpretation of NH State laws governing traffic control in State Project work zones is that NHDOT is responsible for traffic control with the project limits during the contract. This may be in contradiction to town statutes that require traffic control be done by local law enforcement. The Town is asked to sign a Municipal Work Zone Agreement (MWZA), which accepts that NHDOT will be solely responsible for traffic control within the project limits during the contract. If NHDOT deems that uniformed officers with or without vehicles are warranted for this project, local law enforcement may be utilized. The Town indicated that they will review the MWZA presented by D. Scott.

- As there is a sidewalk on the proposed structure, the Town of Stewartstown will be required to enter into a Sidewalk Maintenance Agreement with NHDOT mandating that the Town of Stewartstown be responsible for maintenance of the sidewalk with regards to snow and ice removal. Stewartstown voiced concern over verbiage in the Maintenance Agreement that could be interpreted as the Town's maintenance responsibility going further than just clearing of snow and ice. D. Scott indicated that he will review the document and reword as necessary to make it clear that the intent of the agreement is for just the removal of snow and ice.

The PO/PI meeting was adjourned. After the meeting, during informal conversation, a Selectman from Stewartstown and the Church Rector brought up the topic of drainage and pavement condition of Bridge Street from US 3 to the bridge. The pavement is in poor condition and heavy rains carry stones and pieces of pavement down Bridge Street during heavier rains. When the runoff reaches the intersection at the bridge, it turns down and then crosses Church Street and dumps over the bank toward the river. A request was made to consider drainage and pavement work as part of the project scope between US 3 and the bridge. D. Scott indicated the NHDOT will review for scope of work and funding.

SUBMITTED BY:

  
William P. Saffian  
Senior Project Engineer

WPS

Noted By: David Scott

Distribution: File, Town of Stewartstown, NH, Town of Canaan, VT