

# BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Monthly SHPO-FHWA-ACOE-NHDOT Cultural Resources Meeting

**DATE OF CONFERENCES:** June 11, 2015

**LOCATION OF CONFERENCE:** John O. Morton Building

## ATTENDED BY:

<b>NHDOT</b>	Joshua Prescott	<b>FHWA</b>	Steve Hodgdon
Ron Crickard		Jamie Sikora	
Jillian Edelmann	<b>NHDHR</b>		<b>Consulting Party</b>
Melodie Esterberg	Laura Black	<b>VHB</b>	Susan Retz
Bob Juliano		Nicole Benjamin-Ma	
		Zachary Bowen	

## PROJECTS/PRESENTATIONS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:

*(minutes on subsequent pages)*

*Tilton 29335, X-A004(023)..... 1*  
*Franconia 24497, X-A002(899)..... 2*

*(When viewing these minutes online, click on a project to zoom to the minutes for that project)*

### **Tilton 29335, X-A004(023)**

Participants: Ron Crickard, Melodie Esterberg, Josh Prescott, NHDOT

The goal of this meeting was to determine the Section 106 effect for the undertaking. Jamie Sikora of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) started the discussion by recapping his conversation with MaryAnn Naber, FHWA Historic Preservation Officer, in which they discussed the possibility of the project resulting in a No Adverse Effect due to the nature of replacement. Because the improvements are being done to current safety standards, and the signal boxes and signs are being replaced with updated signal boxes and signs, the overall effect on the line is very minimal.

Laura Black was hesitant to agree the project resulted in a no adverse effect. Based upon survey of portions of the rail line, the elements proposed to be removed were considered character defining features, and may have been added around the 1930s. If that were the case, L. Black saw that removing the structures would result in an adverse effect. Ron Crickard asked for clarification on the process of evaluating the type of effect on the project. Laura explained the criteria and process for making such a decision on any project.

It was agreed, in the interest of moving the project forward, that removal of the signal box and cross-buck signs would result in an adverse effect. Based on project schedule and when monies needed to be encumbered, the Department does not have time to have this portion of the rail corridor surveyed by a 36 CFR 61 qualified architectural historian to determine eligibility and character defining features, so an assumption was made based of previous survey's along the corridor that this portion would be eligible and the accessories contributing and character defining.

Jill Edelman will draft the Adverse Effect Memo and email for all to review and sign.

Mitigation was discussed, and determined that the Department will seek to relocate signal box and cross-buck sign to any organization willing to receive them and keep them associated with a railroad. Some suggestions for contacts were the Ashland Historical Society, Potter Place, Alton, and the Winnepesaukee River Trail Association. Should an organization be interested, the Department will offer to develop a sign to be placed with the relocated structures. If no organizations are interested, the Department will complete an individual inventory form on the structures. The Department will also work to complete a Programmatic Agreement on how to handle these types of safety upgrades in the future.

J. Edelman will draft a Memorandum of Agreement for all to review.

**Franconia 24497, X-A002(899)**

Participants: Steve Hodgdon, Nicole Benjamin-Ma (VHB); Susan Retz (consulting party); Ron Crickard, Bob Juliano, NHDOT.

- Steve Hodgdon presented an overview of the public process and the development of the preferred alternative. This included a timeline of the meetings; results of the reports regarding the bridge conditions and work constraints; potential alternatives and the reasons for the preferred alternative. A more detailed version of this presentation, with the exception of the slides showing examples of stained concrete treatments, was used at the most recent public meeting, and is available on the DOT website for the project.
  - Alternatives included rehabilitation of the bridge, rehabilitation and widening of the bridge, or replacing the bridge entirely
  - Concrete of substructure shown to be in good condition, but superstructure concrete is much deteriorated
  - Widening the road deemed unnecessary because of relatively low traffic counts, and keeping current width would allow reuse of the current substructure thereby keeping construction time and impacts to a minimum. 24 feet meets minimum width for rehabilitating existing bridges that remain in place without fully reconstructing or replacing.
  - At public meetings, community expressed desire to keep the aesthetics and charm of the bridge (especially stone treatment and low profile), and scheduling bridge closure at a time that would have minimum impacts to businesses for whom summer/winter are both peak seasons – ideally, April and May.
  - Preferred alternative is to keep substructure and largely rebuild the superstructure – limits impact area and time needed for bridge closure.
    - New superstructure- retains stone pilaster and capstones, new construction of reinforced concrete with an exterior treatment that echoes stone of historic bridge – aggregate or cast faux stone (showed examples).
    - Recess on the precast beams on the exterior side walls echoes the current arch of the fascia
    - Approach railing is a safety issue – can do something (i.e. not a freeway type system but one that still meets crash-worthiness, design criteria, and

test level) to minimize project impacts because traffic volume is not high and not a high speed area.

- Jamie Sikora asked for confirmation that the plan would involve full closure of the bridge during construction. Steve Hodgdon confirmed this is the case. Susan Retz noted a similar recent bridge closure in the town that was also timed for minimal inconvenience to residents and business owners.
- Laura Black asked about the community input and their opinion. Susan Retz reported that the preferred alternative responds to the community's preference for the aesthetics of the bridge. She also noted the importance of not trying to directly copy the existing stone, but also making sure the size/profile of the new treatment "stones" are complementary.
- Laura Black noted the project would definitely be an adverse effect to the bridge, as the superstructure would largely be removed, but as there has been a good community response, the design team should continue to work with the community to work out the final details of the stone treatment (aggregate or cast faux stone) and railing. These discussions and resulting plans should be shared with DHR. A memo with these items will be sent to Jillian Edelmann.
- Laura Black asked about the possibility of using a brown (or other more aesthetically compatible color) coating on the guardrails. Bob Juliano and Steve Hodgdon noted that the coating is possible, but it tends to start showing its age quickly and its appearance may become an issue over time. Laura Black noted that there are not just engineering considerations for the project, but setting considerations too. Susan Retz reported another bridge with painted green guardrails that look jarring.
- Jamie Sikora asked if this qualifies as a Programmatic Section 4(f) use for the bridge – this will need to be double-checked (likely).
- Laura Black noted that the preferred alternative will have no adverse effect to Lovett's Inn (both the National Register-listed inn building and the larger, National Register-eligible inn property). There are no direct impacts, the preferred alternative is visually sympathetic, and there is not an impact to the use of the inn due to short construction time.
- Jamie Sikora asked if a design exception would be needed to carry over the 24' width. Steve Hodgdon noted that since it meets AASHTO, a design exception shouldn't be needed.
- Susan Retz asked when the construction drawings might be finished. There is still more work (NEPA), but Bob noted that the contract plans are anticipated fall 2016.
- Laura Black asked about the possibility of reusing the current facing stones? Steve Hodgdon noted that the way the stones are embedded in the mortar makes their removal impractical, and that several of the stones are cracked or in poor shape. Bob Juliano added that the stone/mortar design allows water to penetrate and becomes a maintenance issue (which is a problem in the current bridge).
- Susan Retz asked about the visible divisions of the panels of the current superstructure. Steve Hodgdon noted that the new design would be cast in pieces of same dimensions– the pilasters that separate them are staying, and this makes casting and installation faster.

Submitted by: Sheila Charles and Jill Edlmann, Cultural Resources

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