

Project: Charlestown  
Project Number: 42484

Br. No. 181/058  
NH 12 over NECRR

PO/PI Meeting Notes  
November 23, 2020

Public Officials/ Public Informational Meeting

Date of Meeting: November 18, 2020

Location:

Charlestown Municipal Building

Community Rm Located under

Silsby Free Public Library

226 Main Street, Charlestown NH

Participants were invited to participate

both in person and via Zoom

Presentation by NHDOT was conducted via Zoom

Attendees

New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Representatives:

Project Manager: David Scott

Senior Project Engineer: Bill Saffian

Design Engineer: Chelsea Noyes

Charlestown Selectboard:

All Selectmen attended in person

Albert St. Pierre                      Chair

Jeffrey Lessels                        Member

William Rescsanski                Member

Scott Wade                         Member

John Streeter                         Member

Charlestown Staff:

Jessica Dennis                        Town Administrator (Present via Zoom)

Kelley Wright                         Town Administrative Assistant (603) 852-8241 (Present via Zoom)

Patricia Chaffee

Charles Baraly

Keith Weed

Diane Town

Police Chief: Patrick Connors (Present via Zoom)

Members of the Public Participating via Zoom:

Individuals listed as shown on Zoom call or as provided by Town Administrator

Jon LeeClair

Amy Rumrill

John

Gabriel St.Pierre

Rick Huntley

Patricia Royce

Alissa Bascom

Mandy Wright

Members of the Public Participating in person:

John Streeter  
Duane Wetherby  
Dee Hassett  
Jeremy Wood

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The presentation of NHDOT project 42484 was included as part of the Charlestown Board of Selectman's regularly scheduled bi-weekly meeting

A disclaimer was read about electronic access (Zoom and phone), as well as personal attendance

All votes conducted during the meeting are via roll call

Bill opened the presentation by introducing himself and NHDOT staff in attendance. He then introduced the Charlestown 42484 bridge preservation project and outlined the presentation. Next he read a statement provided by the Bureau of Environment. The statement described the Department's responsibility to identify and minimize impacts to the surrounding natural, cultural and social environments. A review of the project found that the project will not substantially impact water quality, noise levels, air quality, hazardous materials, wetlands or flood plains.

Bill turned the presentation over to Chelsea.

Chelsea explained project location within the limits of Charlestown located on NH 12 over New England Central Railroad (NECRR) and the existing bridge conditions of State bridge number 181/058 including fascia deterioration on the north west side. She then described the scope of work including the removal and replacement of pavement and membrane, partial and full depth concrete deck repairs and the replacement of the northwest bridge and approach rail.

She then addressed the traffic control plan at the bridge using the plan view of the site and bridge cross-sections. The traffic control at the bridge will be one lane of alternating two way traffic controlled by signals. Additionally, the barrier layout requires the closure of the South Main Street slip ramp. As a result, two options were discussed for traffic needing to access South Main Street. The first option is for traffic to access South Main Street using the Charlestown Primary School bus exit. The second option would be to allow traffic to enter South Main Street from the northern most point, which is currently a "Do Not Enter" condition. This option would require modifications to the north end of South Main Street, where Option 1 would not. Both Options would require South Main Street traffic to detour onto other Town roads.

She then opened the floor to questions:

Question: Will traffic control be lights only?

Answer: Mostly signals, some flaggers during setup will likely be used

Question: Will a preemption system be included in the signal?

Answer: Yes.

Public Comment Regarding the nearby Walpole – Charlestown project: Charlestown noted issues with flaggers on the project not prioritizing emergency vehicles. They also indicated that the signals sometimes don't activate in response to the Whelen devices, although they do activate when using the handheld remotes.

NHDOT Response: We will have our Bureau of Construction reach out to Police Chief Patrick Connor to coordinate accordingly.

#### Items Discussed Regarding Traffic Control Options:

- Chris Young, Charlestown Primary School Principal, is okay using the bus exit option. He gave his concurrence during a phone call with David Scott 11/18/20.
- Police Chief Patrick Connor didn't need a sign package for detour, and he is fine with either Option but noted the abundance of traffic 20 minutes during school drop off and pick up.
- Road Agent, Keith Wright, asked about allowing S Main to be two-way at north end.
- Bill explained NHDOT's concerns with the island and other reasons why we preferred Option 1.
- John Streeter asked what would lead to one Option or the other? In response, Chelsea noted concurrence with the school and Bill noted Option 1 was the State's preferred option, and the State requests either Town concurrence with this option or strong reasons for choosing Option 2.
- A member of the public (Jeremy) asked about why we would want to put more traffic through the school parking lot. Chelsea explained it is only the local traffic to S Main St. that we are adding. Jeremy concurred.
- John Streeter confirmed that traffic looking to go south from the school would turn left on Lower Landing. David noted that was what Chris Young expected when they had spoken about using the bus exit.

Chelsea then requested additional information on typical topics:

It was stated that NH 12 is a known major Emergency Response route. Are there any others in the project area?

No, all other crossings of the railroad are ground level.

Ambulance and Fire Department are both volunteer.

The Fire Department does mutual aid to North Walpole and other towns to the south of Charlestown.

School begins the last week of August or first week in September and typically ends in mid-June.

Bus Routes: High school route heads out to Langdon and the middle school and primary school also use NH12.

No historic concerns or properties were noted.

The bridge and project area are not known as a bike or pedestrian route.

Are there any concerns with intersections nearby to the project area?

- Jeff said only when primary and middle school let out (Main Street might possibly back to middle school, which might require police coverage.
- Light may cause queue to back up to Lower Landing. However, the conversation resulted in them talking themselves out of this concern.
- They also mentioned concern of vehicles having to cross the at-grade RR crossing at Lower Landing. Town will request that buses don't use this route as a detour.
- NHDOT will add "Do Not Block Intersection" sign, per Chief Connors request, at Lower Landing Rd.

Are there any questions or safety concerns about the structure at that location?

- Jeff would like more brush cut.

Are there any special events that the Department should be aware of during the construction period?

- Memorial Day parade
- Yard Sale Day, third Saturday in July
- Alumni Day
- Old Home parade in July of 2021 (Shouldn't be impacted by Construction in 2022)
- Police Chief noted that the two parades are easily accommodated.
- Yard Sale Day won't affect traffic control although it generates 50%-75% additional traffic in town

Is there any preference to construction overlapping the beginning or ending of the school year? It will impact one or the other.

- No preference for construction impact to school was initially expressed. Construction schedule overlap with end of school year was decided as better than overlap with beginning of following school year after further discussion.

Abutter and resident comments:

- Jeff lives in proximity and thinks our plan will work fine.
- Amy lives on S. Main and said that the proposed traffic arrangements are fine. Residents have lived there long enough to know how to get around.

Are there any business impacts the Department should be aware of?

- No impacts are anticipated.
- Whelen, which has 800 employees, is located in town but no impacts are anticipated.
- Trucks come in from I-91 so no real concerns.

The Town Administrative Assistant requested a copy of the slide with the Charlestown 42484 project website link and contact information so they could post it on the Town's website.

Bill then discussed the MWZA. There were no questions and the officials indicated it would be passed along once signed.

Lastly the Town Officials expressed that there is problem with an area of 12A that does not have guardrail further south from the project area, which is located closer to the high school. There is a drop off near Fall Mt. Regional High School that they find concerning. They have sent letters to the Department expressing this concern. They will forward this information to NHDOT via email so that it may be passed on the appropriate individuals.

NHDOT Action Items:

- Reach out to BoC regarding the Preemption System and Flagger issues on the Walpole – Charlestown project
- Add “Dot Not Block Intersection” to the sign package for Lower Landing Road
- Notify District about the request to cut additional brush near the bridge
- Note relevant events noted by the town in the project Prosecution of Work
- Send the Contact/ Website slide to the Charlestown Town Administrator
- Forward information regarding the guardrail issue to the appropriate individuals

Notes Taken By: David Scott

Edited By: Chelsea Noyes and Bill Saffian