

**New Castle-Rye Bridge Project  
Summary of Meeting  
Cultural Resources Coordination Meeting  
June 8, 2017**

**Attendees:**

Sheila Charles, NHDOT  
Jill Edelman, NHDOT  
Victoria Chase, NHDOT  
Bob Landry, NHDOT  
Marc Laurin, NHDOT  
Bob Juliano, NHDOT  
Kevin Nyan, NHDOT  
Joe Adams, NHDOT  
Jamie Sikora, FHWA  
Laura Black, NHDHR  
Dick Boisvert, NHDHR  
Jim Murphy, HDR  
Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, FHI  
Esther Kennedy, Consulting Party (by phone)  
Kitty Henderson, Historic Bridge Foundation, Consulting Party (by phone)  
Steve Skoglund, Consulting Party (by phone)

The seventh coordination meeting with New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) and Consulting Parties on the New Castle-Rye Bridge Project was held on June 8, 2017 at the offices of the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). Jim Murphy, Project Manager with HDR, opened the meeting, providing a brief summary of the project history and the meetings that have occurred to date. Stephanie Dyer-Carroll, a Cultural Resources Specialist with Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI), said the focus of the meeting would be on the comments received on the Environmental Assessment Excerpts provided to NHDHR and Consulting Parties following the April coordination meeting. She said the Project Team had reviewed the comments provided by NHDHR and the Historic Bridge Foundation (HBF) and prepared draft responses. She referenced a Draft Comment/Response log sent by Jill Edelman to NHDHR and Consulting Parties the previous day and said those comments requiring clarification appear shaded. The intent of the meeting was not to review all the comments and responses, but rather to focus on those comments requiring additional clarification. She said they would also like to discuss the Effects Forms submitted to NHDHR in July 2015. Stephen Skoglund said he didn't receive any files by email. Jill Edelman said they would send a hard copy by mail together with additional project documentation that had recently been distributed electronically.

Stephanie Dyer-Carroll then turned the conversation to the Draft Comment/Response Log. She said the first comment the project team wanted clarification on was related to the coordination of the Section 106 and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes. Laura Black with NHDHR said that this comment was drafted by Beth Muzzey. She explained Beth may have meant that the project team has implied that issues would be addressed in the NEPA documentation, suggesting NEPA was being substituted for Section 106. Stephanie Dyer-Carroll clarified that NEPA is not being substituted for Section 106 but rather that the two processes are being coordinated in accordance with guidance provided in the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) Handbook.

Laura Black went on to say that she and Edna Feigner have spent a long time reviewing the documentation provided and drafting questions so she wasn't sure how much more she could add. She said it might be more useful to have new people make the clarifications, and that that's why Dick Boisvert, also with NHDHR, was in attendance. Dick said that he'd received a voicemail from Donald Coker with the Portsmouth Harbor Council indicating he has concerns about the project. Esther Kennedy said Mr. Coker wrote a letter in support of a bascule bridge.

Stephanie Dyer-Carroll then moved on to the next comment which indicated NHDHR hasn't concurred with the effects findings or mitigation measures presented in the EA Excerpts, with the exception of the specific adverse effect of demolishing the historic bridge. She said the EA Excerpts document the conversations that have occurred to date, including those pertaining to mitigation. She indicated the list of mitigation measures was intended to be preliminary and that the project team anticipated additional discussions with NHDHR and Consulting Parties about mitigation. Stephanie then asked participants for input on additional mitigation measures.

Esther Kennedy said she attended all the Public Meetings and that New Castle residents want a fixed bridge. She said the City of Portsmouth wanted a fixed bridge because it would allow a new water line to be run from the south to serve New Castle. However, the City recently upgraded a water line from 8 to 12 inches as part of their work on the wastewater treatment plant, and therefore it may not be necessary to run a water line across the new bridge. Jim Murphy said he believed the two projects were independent of each other but that he would confirm this. Esther Kennedy then asked where the US Coast Guard (USCG) stands on a fixed versus bascule bridge. Jim Murphy said they won't know officially until NHDOT goes through the permitting process. He said there is no consensus from the public on a fixed versus bascule bridge. Laura Black said she spoke with Chris Bisignano at the USCG in 2016 and that he wasn't in favor of a fixed bridge. She said she believes the USCG favors a bascule but they don't have the numbers to justify it. Esther Kennedy said she thinks the limited number of lifts is due to the required four-hour notice.

Stephanie Dyer-Carroll then requested clarification on an additional comment from NHDHR about mitigation. The comment indicated that the mitigation measures outlined in the EA Excerpts don't take into account several key issues. She therefore requested additional input from NHDHR and Consulting Parties about potential additional mitigation measures. She went on to explain that in 2014 the project team contacted the archives of the Portsmouth Athenaeum and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard to assess whether they had documentation pertaining to the NH 1B Bridge and World War II. It appeared at that time that neither organization had substantive documentation, and therefore developing a comprehensive World War II context was determined to potentially be infeasible. The New Castle Historical Society expressed an interest in portable panels for educational purposes that would document the history of bridges at the crossing, and thus NHDOT added that to the list of potential mitigation measures. Rick Boisvert suggested a website might be a more appropriate mitigation measure.

Stephanie Dyer-Carroll then turned the discussion to effects. She indicated that NHDOT submitted effects forms for each of the five properties in July 2015. Laura Black said NHDHR found them to be deficient and that additional analysis needs to be undertaken. Jill Edelman said NHDOT didn't know NHDHR had any issues with the effects forms. Jamie Sikora with the Federal Highway Administration

(FHWA) said they want to get through the project with concurrence, and that he wanted to understand what is lacking.

Steve Skoglund, a Consulting Party, asked if the USCG will deny the permit if the clearance under the bridge isn't 16.5 feet, and Jim Murphy said they believe that to be the case. Kitty Henderson with the Historic Bridge Foundation asked when the effects memo will be revised. Jim Murphy said it will be completed this summer. Steve Skoglund then asked when there will be a follow up conversation about impacts. Jim Murphy responded that this will likely occur in August or September. Jill Edelmann asked Laura Black if she could provide an example of effects tables that NHDHR has been pleased with. Laura said she will send examples from the Northern Pass Transmission Project. She went on to say that the comments provided on the EA Excerpts broadly cover NHDHR's concerns with effects. The project documentation as it currently stands focuses on the loss of the bridge, and there are other issues that have been pushed to the side. Dick Boisvert said there should be more attention to the qualitative issues surrounding the bridge replacement, including important views and aesthetics.