

Green River Covered Bridge – Alternatives Presentation
October 6, 2014

PRESENT: Dick Clark (Chair), Troy Revis, Jr., Anne Rider

TOWN STAFF and OFFICIALS: Katie Buckley (Town Administrator), Herb Meyer (Co-EMD), Candace Stoumen (Co-EMD), Dan Zumbruski (Highway Foreman/Road Commissioner)

PUBLIC: See attached sign-in sheet

Dick Clark called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Sean James introduced his team of engineers - Chris Dunlap (Engineer - roadway specialist) and Kimberly Peace (Engineer - permitting/resources specialist) and outlined the presentation. He presented some background that was provided during the 8/25/2014 Local Concerns presentation. He discussed the purpose, need and scope of the study. He talked about the site selection methodology of the various alternatives.

Kimberly Peace – Shared information about resource constraints:

- The Town Plan was an important reference document; it lists the values that are important to us as a community.
- She went on the list the various resources used to determine constraints.
- Resources regulations (permitting) were listed; they are many.

Chris Dunlap– Shared details of Alternatives A – E (all options with the exception of the GRCB):

- Design criteria of the roadway – uses Federal, State and Town standards
- Roadway Criteria - width of 28', gravel surface, speed limit of 30 mph, etc.
- Bridge Criteria – used VTrans Hydraulic Manual, width = 31', 1' Freeboard over Q25 for local roads, 1' above floodplain
- Alternatives C, D & E (3 options south of the GRCB) were presented together since they all share the same resource constraint issues. These alternatives were so costly and lengthy in the permitting/construction that they were eliminated from the study. Any bridge constructed in this area would have to be between 300'-600' in length!
- Alternative A – is the bypass road to be constructed just north of Br. 09 (concrete bridge next to Kratz's Mill). Dolores Clark asked for clarification on the definition of "property takings". Chris explained that if "friendly," then there would be a negotiation; if "adversarial," then eminent domain would be used. It would involve some steep grades (10-14%) in a section. Permitting would be somewhat insignificant. Estimated cost \$1.7M (this includes about \$85K of repairs to Br. 09). Project duration – 3-5 years.

- Alternative B – would involve a significant grade down the 25-30' slope; it would be an extremely high and long (300') and very expensive bridge. Estimated cost \$5.2M. Costs include: roadway, bridge, survey, bidding, utility coordination, permitting, property taking, etc. Estimated Project Duration – 3-5 years.

Sean James talked about Alternative F = Green River Covered Bridge. There were 6 options related to the GRCB:

- Upstream or downstream bypass bridge issues (similar concept to what Brattleboro did with the Creamery Bridge):
 - North - Archaeological mill remains, crib dam, wing walls
 - South- House and garage in the way and the alignments don't line up with the roadways
 - Not feasible
- 4-tons (current load) - maintenance repairs only – this involves the scope of work for which the town has already received funding of \$315, 000 through the VTrans Transportation Alternatives Program. Project duration – 1 year.
- 8-tons
 - Need to do a detailed structural analysis deeper than VTrans
 - Bottom chord, upstream truss, ends of the bridge need to be addressed
 - Estimated Project Cost - \$550,000 (the Town already has \$315,000)
 - Project duration - 2 years
- 12-tons
 - Will require the addition of steel beams (30-36" deep – 24" would most likely show), concrete caps and abutments, raise in approach grade to deal with flood plain
 - VTrans Covered Bridge Committee may not approve
 - Estimated Project Costs - \$1.6M (the Town already has \$315,000)
 - Project duration - 2-3 years
- 20-tons
 - Will require supplemental steel beams, replacement of stone masonry abutments with concrete, raise in approach and grade
 - VTrans Covered Bridge Committee will likely not approve
 - Estimated Project Cost - \$2.5M
 - Project duration - 3-4 years
- Relocate GRCB and put modern bridge in its place
 - Replace abutments
 - Significant regulatory issues (understatement)
 - Estimated Project Cost - \$3.6M
 - Project duration - 3-5 years

Funding Sources

- Town Highway Bridge Program – falls into a priority schedule based on need; goal of the program is to maintain existing infrastructure not fund new projects; 5-7 year timeline for project acceptance.
- Town Highway Structures and Class 2 Roadway Program – this could be used for Option A repairing Br. 09 – short timeline 1-2 years
- Transportation Alternatives Program – Historic Preservation funding; \$375,000 application cap – could only be used for GRCB options that don't compromise the historic integrity of the bridge.

Dick asked Sean James if there is any chance that the weight limit on the bridge could go back up to 8 tons after the wing wall and abutment repairs are made. Sean explained that these repairs were unrelated to the live load capacity issues that are associated specifically with the structure of the bridge itself.

There was discussion about the background surrounding VTrans' requirement on the Town to lower the load rating from 8-tons to 4-tons. Anne asked if we got back to 8-ton what would be the problems associated with this? Dan talked about some of the ways the Town Highway Department has dealt with the 8-ton load for years. Anne questioned if the GVFD would get their equipment through at 8 tons.

There was a lengthy discussion about Alternatives A and F.

Steve Lembke asked the Selectboard if they will make a decision on this topic during their next meeting Tuesday, October 14th at 8:30 AM. Dick replied that they would; he felt the public has had enough time to weigh in on this matter already. Anne disagreed. She felt that the board is not yet ready to make a decision and this timetable feels too rushed. There was general discussion that followed. It was decided that the Town would need to take the time it needs to be thoughtful about how to proceed and not let funding deadlines force a shortsighted decision.

Richard Clark, Chair

Troy Revis, Jr.

Anne Rider