

## Notes for March 19 Paths Committee meeting

**Members attending:** Wendy Saville, Kevin Boehmcke, Steve Rocco Antinozzi, Kate Lalley, Joplin James

**Staff attending:** Dean Pierce

**Others attending:** Linda Lavallette, Stephen Baietti

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Wendy Saville at 7:08 PM.

**Approval of Agenda:** Wendy Saville expressed preference to adjust the proposed agenda by advancing discussion of membership to the start of the meeting. The agenda was approved as modified.

**Membership:** Wendy Saville announced that Chris Trapeni chose not to be reappointed to the committee at the end of his term, so there is a vacancy. The student spot on the committee also is vacant. Dean Pierce noted if someone expresses interest in filling the vacancy the Selectboard might be able to appoint them before the April meeting. He encouraged the committee to make residents aware of the vacancy. The committee will announce the opportunity in Front Porch Forum. Dean Pierce also mentioned that if new members are appointed quickly they will be able to take part in the election of chair/vice chair, which will take place at the April meeting. A student member position is still vacant with our tentative student declining to pursue the appointment. Wendy will contact CVU to see if a student might be interested and will also post this opportunity in Front Porch Forum.

**Approval of Minutes:** Kate Lalley moved approval of the minutes for February, with Kevin Boehmcke seconding. The minutes were approved.

**Public Comment:** Residents Linda Lavallette and Stephen Baietti introduced themselves. They expressed they were attending the meeting due to the discussion of the Transportation Plan as it specifically relates to Bay Road and they would add their comments after the Committee discussion of the item.

**Sterling Construction Project:** Dean Pierce gave a report on the Town's exploration of costs relating to the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the LaPlatte River immediately west of the proposed Sterling project. Owing to requirements contained in the zoning bylaws, the developer of the project will be required to construct a sidewalk along Irish Hill Road a short distance east of the bridge. Dean went on to say that conversations with two engineering firms have resulted in an estimate of \$35,000 for engineering associated with a new pedestrian bridge, assuming the bridge is built consistent with the design proposed in the 2012 feasibility study prepared for the Town. The second firm indicated that the costs included in the feasibility study (exceeding \$350,000) may be somewhat high but should be considered useful at this point in time. Dean indicated that the input received from the two engineering firms suggests there may be no quick fix solution. As a result, he believes in the interim the Town should be planning for a way to accommodate pedestrians on the existing highway bridge. He added that the feasibility study explicitly recognized the possibility that portions of the sidewalk east of the bridge location would be constructed before the bridge itself. Thus, the lack of a separate pedestrian bridge should not be cited as justification for delaying construction of new sidewalk.

Steve Antinozzi disagreed with the suggestion that a separate pedestrian bridge might cost as much as is being mentioned. He indicated that he had investigated the cost of bridges and had been quoted a price of \$85,000 for a 90 foot bridge that is 8 feet wide. In his view multiple contractors should be approached for price quotes, which he feels confident would be much lower than the figures being discussed. He added that the cost estimates contained in feasibility report are excessive and that the amount of engineering expense mentioned is out of line with engineering costs paid during construction of the Webster Road path. Steve indicated the engineering costs for the Webster Road path were \$100,000. In his view the cost of engineering a new bridge should not be the same as for a one mile path.

Kate Lalley remarked that she also sees potential for cost savings, noting that sometimes recommended solutions are “gold plated.” Jeff Zweber observed that he thinks the \$350,000 estimate is probably in the ball park. In Jeff’s opinion, the question before the committee is effectively What type of improvements do we want to pursue? To create a space for pedestrians along the north edge of the existing highway bridge Kate Lalley suggested the Town might use a specific treatment she has seen used in Maine and elsewhere. The treatment, which was referred to as “plungers,” would be effective and affordable. Kate will investigate opportunities for plungers, and Steve will “work up specs” and speak with contractors.

**Comprehensive Plan:** Kate Lalley led a discussion of the draft Transportation Section of the Comprehensive Plan. She solicited comments on the text, starting with the subsection entitled “Streets, Roads and Highways.” Wendy Saville asked what is meant by the phrase “Street Typologies,” which is proposed to be added to Objective 2. Kate responded that a street typology is a way that specific types of improvements might be recommended on a local level rather than by simply following state standards. Wendy then asked what is meant by “access management” (Recommended Action 6). In response, Dean Pierce explained that access management programs limit and combine curb cuts along roadways. The result is the roadway will function safely and efficiently for longer than it would if intersected by numerous driveways.

Wendy then asked a question relating to parts of town where public transit should be promoted (the current focus is the Route 7 corridor). She also suggested adding safety as a component in Recommended Action 1 and mentioning bike racks in Recommended Action 9. Steve Antinozzi voiced support for bike racks. Before concluding the discussion the group briefly discussed proposed language on parking meters and potential location for a node in a “Citybike network.”

Comments were then provided by members of the public. Linda Lavalette expressed concern about use of Bay Road by groups of bicyclists and urged addition of wording that is more favorable to property owners who want to enjoy the peace and quiet of their properties. Stephen Baietti asked for clarification of the term “placemaking,” which Kate Lalley described as a type of design that emphasizes consideration of the existing context and finding ways to have new development “fit in.” There was some agreement that the text should clarify the term, perhaps with the addition of a definition. Mr. Baietti also asked about the reference to the 2002 Vermont Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Planning and Design Manual. He wondered if reference should be made to a more recent document. Kate Lalley indicated she has intended to include reference to a more recent document (Small Towns and Rural Multimodal Networks), although there was brief confusion about the location of the reference. [See

Recommended Actions 1 and 2 in the Sidewalks, Paths, and Trails section] Another reference that might be cited is the design guidance offered by the National Association of City Transportation Officials.

**Town Budget Opportunities:** Wendy Saville introduced the topic by referencing the agenda, which lists a series of four budget categories (line striping/crosswalks; capital projects; paving; and traffic safety) that might be of particular interest to the Paths Committee. Concerning paving, Dean Pierce distributed a sheet listing the highways Paul Goodrich anticipates paving during the summer of 2018. Dean did not know if Paul has been advised to linestripe Town highways with a particular travel lane width. Jeff Zweber will contact Paul and ask what widths he intends to use when restriping after paving. Dean Pierce urged Jeff to be clear with Paul about how lane widths are being measured. With respect to the other categories the following observations were made: the amount budgeted for line striping 'might not go very far'; the funds budgeted for traffic safety improvements are believed to include those that respond to the so-called Village Safety group. Kate Lalley and others wondered and encouraged use of a portion of the safety funding for the construction of the gravel path along the north side of Bay Road from the Ti Haul Path to the entrance to the Fishing access. Jeff Zweber offered to estimate the cost of such a path, which previously has been estimated to cost several thousand dollars. Wendy will contact Town Finance Director Peter Frankenburg for more information about the intended use of the funds in the previously listed budget categories.

**Laplatte Pedestrian Bridge Update:** Joplin James provided the group with an update on the status of the suspension bridge being planned to span the Laplatte River at a location within the Laplatte Nature Park. He started by addressing some issues raised by wording contained in the previously approved meeting minutes. Contrary to what is suggested by the minutes, no new group needs to be created; the group that will be responsible is the group that was created a number of years ago. On a side note, Joplin then described some of the challenges he has encountered identifying a contractor who could assist with the installation of the bridge. Kate Lalley encouraged Joplin to seek advice from Charlie Prout of Distinctive Landscaping. Also, with respect to funding, the official budget figure remains \$12,000. The amount has been increased by fifty percent on an unofficial basis only. Joplin then shared copies of an updated inspection/maintenance plan. The plan had been revised to address comments received regarding the first draft. When the document is finalized it will be printed and signed by members of the bridge advisory committee. Dean Pierce encouraged Joplin to work with Joe Colangelo promptly in light of the fact Joe may be leaving Shelburne for a new job in Massachusetts.

**Other Business:** Jeff Zweber shared news of a recent development relating to the installation of Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) crossing signals. In December the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced it had withdrawn its previous approval of the signals. The change was due to the fact that the signals contain patented components, and FHWA policy prohibits the use of traffic control devices that include such components. The Vermont Agency of Transportation has announced that it will allow already-installed RRFBs to remain in place. But it will not authorize the installation of any new RRFBs.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the committee will be Monday, April 16.

**Adjournment:** Kate Lalley moved, with Kevin Boehmcke seconding, that the meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.