Lancaster Selectboard Workshop Public Meeting Minutes

July 1, 2024 Work Session

Lancaster Town Hall, Second Floor

Roll Call:

Attendees: Chair Leon Rideout, Selectman Kathy Jean Lavoie, Selectman Shane Beattie, Land Use Coordinator Robin L. Irving, Jessica Cyr, Finance Director Michael Nadeau

Others present: Alan Savage, Robert Christie, Teri Anderson

A. Travel Reimbursement Policy for Town Volunteers

The Selectmen reviewed the draft prepared by Selectman Lavoie. The Board will read the policy verbatim at the regularly scheduled Selectmen's meeting at 1830H and vote on it.

B. NCC Transportation TYP Project List

The covered bridge referred to in the TYP list is Mt. Orne bridge.

LUC Irving has consulted with Public Works staff about anticipated projects. The application(s) would need scope defined and projected costs. Letters of support should be attached.

Selectman Beattie and Foreman Brown inspected a bridge joint out east near the sawmill and wanted to know if this bridge is under State Aid. McGary Hill bridge project is on the TYP for 2033, however, it is Beattie's opinion that the bridge will not last until 2033 (the bridge portion is fine but the expansion joint needs upgrade and repair). Beattie is concerned about the weight limit and whether it should be posted especially because people are cutting timber and traveling over a compromised bridge. Irving stated that it should be a red-listed bridge; Beattie indicated that the State inspects it annually. Selectman Rideout mentioned that the Town has some bridges, i.e. Martin Meadow Pond, that is essentially a culvert. He said that the State initially objected to the culvert design because they wanted a wider (more lanes) and winged design with shored embankments. Rideout asked if this bridge could be a culvert project like the MMP project? Beattie responded that it could not because it is too big and the volume of water is too high. Selectman Lavoie asked when the bridge was last inspected. Beattie requested that Irving find out if 1) the bridge is under State Aid, 2) who the contact at NHDOT is, and 3) what is the weight limit? Jessica Cyr verified from the NHDOT red listed bridges list that the McGary Hill /Bone Brook bridge is declared; last inspection was 10/11/2023 with a rating as "POOR.". Until the Board can read the inspection report, the deficiencies are unknown. As for grants for transportation, Irving said that TAC funds might be available. The Town should have the Foreman attend the LPA classes (Local Public Agency). The team discussed the locations of

other bridges throughout the town. Following this discussion, Beattie identified the bridge that they inspected as being over Garland Brook and not Bone Brook which flows out by the Community Camps; he felt that a box culvert might be able to be installed over Bone Brook but not for the bridge over Garland (would probably need a hydraulic study for the Garland Brook bridge). Rideout said that the Department should draft a list of bridges because the majority of potential TYP projects would most likely be bridges.

Sidewalk projects are also potential TYP projects. Although the downtown sidewalks have been upgraded relatively recently, if those sidewalks were submitted for TYP, the condition by the time the project rolls around may need repair and/or replacement. There was discussion about outdoor seating on the sidewalks and bicycles/battery-powered scooters traveling on the sidewalks (prohibited per ordinance and posted but not enforced). Rideout stated that the PD/Rec used to distribute helmets and conduct bicycle safety training. Beattie mentioned that he thought there was also a town policy that the sidewalks could not be blocked so this would include seating, retail tent sales, sandwich boards, etc. Enforcement of the policy has become lax, partly due to outdoor seating being encouraged throughout COVID, but mostly because the town's policies and regulations need to be updated. Lavoie asked who has jurisdiction over the sidewalks? Irving responded that the NHDOT right-of-way is to the storefront. Perhaps policy should be dictated by NHDOT's requirement to not have anything in their ROW; obstacles should at least not interfere with the pedestrian travel lane and comply with ADA requirements. The consensus is that there is not enough room on the sidewalks to have permitted seating.

Irving asked from what funding were the downtown sidewalks subsidized? Rideout responded that it was money divvied up among the towns from pooled, excess, rooms & meals tax. Given that those sidewalks were funded by monies other than those set aside into a capital reserve, those sidewalks would likely not be eligible for state or federal funding again. The sidewalk from the funeral home down Bridge Street needs to be repaired/replaced. Foreman Brown would like to use asphalt rather than concrete. It used to be one of the cheapest options but is now more expensive and concrete must be treated to endure salt. Bunker Hill sidewalks extend from top to bottom. Because the highest priority infrastructure project after Summer St is completed, maybe the Bunker Hill sidewalks can be proposed to coincide with the water/sewer replacement. The team agreed that proposals should focus on bridges and sidewalks. The proposals are due on Wednesday, July 3rd.

Selectman Beattie asked whether transportation project funding mandates the bumpouts and islands. Irving responded that those components are programmatic requirements, but there may be an opportunity to submit a waiver. An example of failure is Berlin because they keep losing plow blades to clipping the bumpout curbs. Complete Streets does require these features. Beattie would like to meet with NHDOT personnel to see how to change these requirements. Irving recommended having a parking study completed and see if bumpouts would significantly impact parking and or travel lanes, especially with all of the new apartments filling up the parking lots. Selectman Lavoie said that she felt like the town had enough parking spots throughout town, but

the issue is that these spots are not where people want them to be. Irving replied that the presentation for the Democrat building rehab focused on 'remote' parking as promoting "walkable, livable communities" and stressing that there is no 'right' to have parking in front of their living quarters—no one objected to this notion. Chair Rideout compared the issue with parking with the removal of crosswalks: people do not bother to walk to the next crosswalk to cross the street, so people are not going to want to walk to their apartments from a parking lot across the street. There was some discussion about crosswalks, i.e. which one(s) should be reinstated and what measures need to be taken. Beattie again stressed that there is a need to have a meeting with NHDOT. He mentioned that plowing only travel lanes (and not their ROW) is another topic to raise with NHDOT. Irving cited the 'white line rule' whereby NHDOT has declared that they are responsible for maintenance from white line to white line only. Beattie said that the ultimate goal of this approach is to have towns take over the drainage. The Board requested that Irving identify a NHDOT staff person to meet with.

C. Other

Selectman Beattie asked about the status of the engineer visit of the public works building. Irving prompted Horizons twice and there has been no response. There are few engineering firms with structural engineering departments within 50 miles. Beattie mentioned Stantec; he will send Irving contact details.

Chair Rideout asked about the status of the rate modeling. Irving responded that Charity has been working with the programmers but they have encountered difficulty with creating a model that produces the desired results.

Irving reported on the history of the Benoit Summer Street property. Prior planning board decisions confirmed references to the original garage have a 75-car limit. In Case #544, Benoit was approved to increase that amount to 200 cars for a used car lot. He had asked for 300 vehicles and it was reduced to 200 by the Board; Benoit also asked for a staging area to be dedicated to auto parts and salvage. There were no conditions of approval, but the conversation in the minutes references the board's concern over the condition of the vehicles. They discussed that 1) he had to remove all uninspectable vehicles, 2) the rows must be orderly, 3) vehicles must be in running condition, and 4) the site was not permitted to have junk as it was a used car lot and not a junkyard. Joyce McGee (former TM) sent many orders to remove vehicles per the Planning decision and it seems to have not proceeded to further enforcement—it appears that the case(s) were dismissed per the defendant's agreement to remove the vehicles. Irving intends to send Benoit a letter outlining the status of the Summer Street property and issue a cease and desist regarding transfer of property between the Summer Street and 600 Main properties. The town needs to make sure the new town attorney is involved in both properties.

Regarding Benoit's property at 600 Main, the priority is to get him connected to a drinking water source. Beattie asked Benoit to return to the Board with a status report in about 2 weeks. Benoit has not followed up with Superintendent Bilodeau. Benoit will be granted a little more time to

follow through with his promise to both NHDES and the AAG that he was going to work with the town to get water before there is enforcement from the Health Officer. August 5th would be the date to revisit his status.

Shane Beattie moved to adjourn at 1805H. Kathy Jean Lavoie seconded the motion. All members voted to adjourn at 1830H, no objections, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin L. Irving

Lancaster Selectboard:

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Leon H. Rideout, Chair

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Shane Beattie

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Kathy Jean Lavoie