

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING HARTFORD VILLAGE BRIDGE
Wednesday, March 10, 2021
Draft Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Susanne Walker Abetti, Robin Adair Logan, Pat Stark and Chair Jonathan Schechtman.

Selectboard Liaison: Dennis Brown.

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: VTrans Architectural Historian Kyle Obenauer, VHB Preservation Planner Kaitlin O'Shea and resident Lannie Collins.

A remote meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law was held on Wednesday, March 10, 2021. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He proceeded to read the "Remote Public Meeting Script for Opening a Meeting" related to Act 92. Matt Osborn noted that the special meeting was scheduled to review the railing and lighting designs for the Hartford Village Bridge replacement. He introduced VTrans Architectural Historian Kyle Obenauer.

1. Hartford Village Bridge Replacement: Kyle Obenauer started by introducing VHB Preservation Planner Kaitlin O'Shea who is working with VTrans coordinating the Section 106 review. Kyle stated that the purpose of the meeting is to provide the Hartford Historic Preservation Commission an opportunity to provide input regarding the railing and lighting designs for BO 1444(60) Hartford Village Bridge as part of the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). The Act requires federal agencies to consider the effects on historic properties of projects they carry out, assist, fund, permit, license, or approve. If a federal or federally-assisted project has the potential to affect historic properties, a Section 106 review will take place. Kyle noted that he works closely with engineers and bridge designers to provide the cultural heritage perspective. He stated that the Historic Preservation Commission plays an important role in the review.

Kyle noted that the VTrans proposes a new bridge with a new alignment. The bridge replacement will align with the Christian Street intersection. The existing truss bridge was constructed in 1929 and replaced an earlier truss bridge taken out during the 1927 Flood. Kyle noted that the Hartford Village Bridge is one of the longest spanning truss bridges in Vermont. The current bridge is planned to be demolished. Jonathan Schechtman asked if keeping the existing bridge was considered. Kyle responded that the challenge is the expense of maintenance and the Town had indicated that it didn't want to keep it.

Pat Stark asked if water and sewer lines run under the current bridge. Kaitlin O'Shea responded that a water line runs under the bridge but not sewer.

Kaitlin O'Shea noted that the estimated cost for the bridge is \$15 million and that the estimated construction date is 2025 but noted that both could change. Dennis Brown asked about the town match requirement. Kyle Obenauer responded that he did not know but will inquire.

Dennis Brown asked if the sidewalk is on one side or both sides of the bridge. Kaitlin O'Shea responded that it is on the east side only, the same as the current bridge.

Dennis Brown recalled that the proposed bridge is designed to last 100 years instead of 75 years and uses stainless steel rebar. Kaitlin O'Shea confirmed that is correct.

Kyle noted that the goal for lighting is to match the existing acorn lighting in Hartford Village. The HHPC agreed.

Kyle stated that the options for railings is more challenging. Kyle noted that all options have to meet crash test standards. He presented two options. Option 1 is a modified Wyoming railing that has some similarity to the Bridge Street Bridge in White River Junction and is made of galvanized steel. Kyle noted that for all railings, safety requirements dictate that openings be 6" or less. Option 2 is similar to the Saxton River Bridge near Bellows Falls, built approximately ten years ago that has concrete panels with a metal railing. Kyle noted that this railing has a greater sense of openness.

There was consensus from the HHPC that the Saxton River Bridge style was preferred.

Pat Stark asked if there would be a traffic signal at the intersection with Christian Street. Kaitlin O'Shea responded that a four-way stop is proposed.

Kyle noted that the standard for railings is galvanized steel. Jonathan Schechtman suggested using dark green similar to the Quechee Gorge Bridge railings.

Dennis Brown expressed concern about possible damage to concrete on the Saxton River Bridge style. He thinks railings would be easier to replace and maintain aesthetically. Kyle responded that is a valid concern.

Dennis Brown asked about a cost comparison between the Wyoming and Saxton River design. Kyle responded that he didn't have the figures but will inquire.

Lannie Collins stated that he would like to see the light poles on the bridge to be able to accommodate 3' x 5' American flags. Robin Adair Logan responded that she isn't sure flags on a bridge would meet traffic safety requirements. It was noted that the streetlights in Hartford Village and White River Junction accommodate small 2' x 3' banners.

Kyle stated that VTrans hopes to have a community meeting on the project in the next 4-6 weeks. It would be a broader public meeting to obtain input. He noted that engineering staff will be in attendance and better able to answer questions about cost, maintenance and longevity.

Chair Jonathan Schechtman thanked Kyle and Kaitlin for attending the meeting.

2. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.