

TOWN OF NEWPORT
Heritage Commission Meeting
Municipal Building - Newport, NH 03773
Minutes of August 22, 2016 – 6:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting and Public Hearings

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Cathryn Baird, Chair; John Hooper II, BOS Representative; Dean Stetson

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Jackie Cote, Virginia Irwin

STAFF PRESENT: Julie M. Magnuson, Planning & Zoning Administrator

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Baird called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. followed by a roll call.

MINUTES: On a motion by Mr. Stetson, seconded by Mr. Hooper; *the Commission approved the minutes of the June 13, 2016 meeting as presented. The motion passed 3-0-0.*

NEW BUSINESS: Presentation by Thom Marshall & Amanda Taylor, Kleinfelder Engineering, on the Oak Street Bridge Project

Chairperson Baird welcomed Mr. Marshall and Ms. Taylor to the Heritage Commission meeting. She asked them for their presentation.

Ms. Taylor stated she and Mr. Marshall were at the Heritage Commission meeting to review the Oak Street Bridge project, but specifically the historic concerns and considerations with the project. She introduced Thom Marshall, P.E. with Kleinfelder Engineering. She introduced herself as an architectural historian, she had been working on the project area for several months after the decision to make bridge improvements at the Oak Street Bridge (the Green Bridge).

Ms. Taylor stated that on the historical side of the project she had concentrated on the history of North Newport. She mentioned some of what she had discovered. She asked Mr. Marshall to first present his information on the engineering study that had been done this past year and where the project was currently.

Addressing the Commission members, Mr. Marshall used enlarged site plans as well as the Oak Street Bridge Reconstruction Project packets to explain the engineering aspects of the bridge project. He gave a synopsis of the Oak Street Bridge Project engineering results and gave the five project alternatives available to the Town in its reconstruction phase. He stated that the alternatives had been presented to the Newport Board of Selectmen (BOS) and that at a previous BOS meeting, after taking into account different factors the Board had chosen Alternative 4 (*see Town website for the slide presentation at www.newportnh.net as well as the BOS minutes for February 15, 2016 for additional project information*). Mr. Marshall then turned the presentation over to Ms. Taylor, who would delve into the historical aspects of the project.

Ms. Taylor addressed the Commission and explained that after the original assessment of the Kleinfelder Engineering firm, because it was a Municipal Bridge Aid Project using State and Federal dollars, Section 106 Consultation review under the National Preservation Act of 1966 came into play. Ms. Marshall asked the Commission if they were aware of Section 106 in Newport. She was told no.

Ms. Marshall explained that anytime there was a project using Federal money; the community had to consider the projects impact on the historic resources. It was required of the engineering firm to also

conduct research into the historical aspects of the Oak Street Bridge Project area to ascertain the direct and indirect historical impacts of the construction.

They had sent New Hampshire Department of Historic Resources (NHDHR) a request for a project review form. Ms. Taylor gave an overview of her physical as well as cerebral research of the historical areas around the bridge. She explained that she, Mr. Marshall and a representative from Newport had next gone to a Cultural Resources meeting to present the case for three specific areas around the bridge.

At the Cultural Resources meeting they expressed what areas would be directly or indirectly impacted by the construction at the Oak Street Bridge and whether or not they were eligible for documentation and listing on the National Historical Register. She listed the places and items discussed:

- ❖ Oak Street Bridge (with Warren Truss), 1937. They determined it to be eligible to be on the National Historical Register under Criteria A&C (Engineering, Transportation, Politics).
- ❖ Sibley Scythe Factory, 1929. They determined it to be eligible to be on the National Historical Register under Criteria A&C (Architecture, Industry)
- ❖ Draper Corporation Bobbin Factory and canals, 1907. They determined it not eligible due to disrepair; much of Newport's factory was no longer intact.
- ❖ Euro-Americans. Archeologists checked the site for any remains of them. They determined it not eligible as a site of Native American remains.

Ms. Taylor reiterated they were at the Heritage Commission meeting to review the Oak Street Bridge Project, but specifically the historic concerns and considerations there will be with the project and to get the Commissions feedback on what had been done with the historical aspect and their input on the project as a whole thus far.

Mr. Marshall was asked about the availability of additional Federal Funds if the sites were deemed eligible for the National Historic Register. Mr. Marshall stated that the amounts in their packets were the total project costs (for the 5 different alternatives, not Newport taxpayers costs). He explained the engineering costs were with project funding through the NHDOT. Construction costs would be covered primarily by Federal funding.

Mr. Marshall was again asked what the BOS had recommended (after the Kleinfelder Engineering presentation at the February 15, 2016 meeting) for reconstruction of the Oak Street Bridge. He stated Option #4; Selectman Hooper stated that that decision had been before the discoveries made concerning the historical impact. The presentation given to the Commission had not gone before the BOS yet. Mr. Marshall stated they were also awaiting any additional vetting of historical data.

Mr. Marshall was asked about the different alternatives, the physical difference and the changes to the bridge structure between the different alternatives.

- He stated that if the Town decided on Alternative 1 or 2 there would be little physical difference to the (Warren Truss) bridge.
- Using Alternative 3, the construction company would have to replace a lot; few of the original structural truss members would be retained. It would look similar, but was cost prohibitive.
- Alternative 4 would be to construct a steel girder type (similar to Pollards Mill Road) bridge. It would lose its original character.

A member stated for clarification that #1 and #2 would retain the lattice work shape that people were used to; going with the other Alternatives the bridge would be a flat deck with side rails. Mr. Marshall said yes.

Mr. Marshall stated that Alternative 4 was a lower maintenance bridge. He stated that trusses were very high maintenance due to the necessity of having to paint and rehabilitate the bridge.

Selectman Hooper stated that Alternative 4 also provided for a wider two lane bridge.

Mr. Stetson stated that access to North Newport was limited. The Town should have one real good bridge to get into the area. Mr. Marshall was asked the design life of the bridge (before necessary maintenance). He stated 25-30 years before major rehabilitation was needed.

Chairperson Baird stated that Mr. Marshall had summed up the project nicely; safety and sustainability were the two most important aspects of the project. For clarification she stated that the area around the bridge would be restored. Mr. Marshall stated that if the Town continued with Alternative 4 Kleinfelder Engineering would provide some mitigation efforts for the historical areas. Continuing, he stated that they wanted local input for the State and Federal levels.

Mr. Stetson asked if there was a decision or recommendation they were requesting from the Heritage Commission. Mr. Marshall stated that the work that Ms. Taylor was doing required direct feedback by the Heritage Commission. When their reviews were complete they would include any issues that they received from the Heritage Commission meeting.

Mr. Marshall was asked what the timeframe for Alternative 4 for the reconstruction of the Oak Street Bridge. He stated one and one half construction seasons.

Mr. Marshall was asked, for clarification, if there would be a major inconvenience posed by the construction. He answered yes. There was a general discussion on the construction inconveniences.

Selectman Hooper excused himself from the meeting.

Chairwoman Baird thanked Mr. Marshall and Ms. Taylor for their informative presentation.

Mr. Marshall invited any Commissioner who would be interested to attend a meeting between the NHDOT Cultural Resources, NHDHR and Kleinfelder Engineering. Chairperson Baird asked him to inform the Heritage Commission of the meeting times and dates. He and Ms. Taylor stated they would do that. There was a short general discussion on the meetings.

Selectman Hooper returned to the meeting.

On a motion by Selectman Hooper, seconded by Mr. Stetson; ***the Commission voted to adjourn at 6:53 p.m. The motion passed 3-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Stetson
Scribe

Approved on January 9, 2017