

**Town of Amherst  
Historic District Commission  
March 4, 2014, Special Meeting Minutes**

The Historic District Commission met for a special meeting in the Barbara Landry Meeting Room of the Amherst Town Hall at approximately 7:00 p.m. Members present: Chairman Jamie Ramsay, Secretary Susan Clark, Selectmen's Representative Tom Grella, Planning Board Representative Sally Wilkins, Alternate Chris Hall, and Alternate Helen Rowe.

Members absent: Vice Chair Tracy Veillette, Alternate Katy Kennedy, Alternate Larry McCoy, Member Doug Chabinsky, Member Bruce Fraser, and Alternate Jeanne Rosenblatt.

Alternate Helen Rowe voted for Member Doug Chabinsky, and Alternate Chris Hall voted for Member Tracy Veillette.

**Public Hearing**

**1. Discussion – Manchester Road Bridge – Sean James, P.E., Hoyle, Tanner Associates, Inc.**

Sean James showed a 20 slide PowerPoint presentation. An abutter to the bridge was in the audience and said that this was the 445<sup>th</sup> day the bridge has been closed.

The current bridge was built in 1980. It is not in the Registry of the Amherst Historic District, nor is it eligible for the National Registry. The NH Division of Historical Resources will have Section 106 Review of the project. Funding is through the NHDOT Municipal Bond Program, wherein the State pays 80%. There will be a study, design, final design, bid phase, and pre-construction meeting. There will also be a Cultural Resources Committee meeting with the NHDOT. Hoyle, Tanner Associates and Director Bruce Berry will present the project to the Cultural Resources Committee.

The current design of the bridge is a 33' long three-span bridge, and the new proposal is for a 40' long one-span bridge in order to maximize hydraulics. HTA presented to the Amherst Board of Selectmen; and the hope tonight is that the HDC will provide input for the bridge design.

There will be improvements made to Manchester and Mack Hill Roads with a modification to the intersection. The existing grade will be maintained. A new sidewalk is proposed with an additional guard rail. During construction, there will be one lane of traffic open.

All of the current bridge structure will get removed. The new bridge will meet the legal load limits, and it needs to be 24' wide. The one span bridge will address flooding concerns and hydraulics. HTA did not push the use of wood because they wanted to maximize the opening, and wood requires more space. The proposed is for pre-stamped concrete beams, with a sidewalk on the down-stream side. The beams will be 18" by 8" on top. The concrete will be 5" thick then a membrane for protection, then pavement of 3". The lifespan of the new bridge will be approximately 75 years.

HTA has more confidence with concrete. The pre-stamped concrete has steel through it, but the steel puts the concrete always in compression which will help with cracks. There is an ashlar finish that can be performed which will give a stone-like façade.

50 The members asked if the stone from the old bridge could be re-used in the new bridge. Some of the  
51 stones may have come from the old Jail House. Identifying those stones is difficult, and not all of them  
52 are currently visible.

53  
54 The NHDHR has cautioned towns to not create a false sense of history, and it would be very difficult  
55 for HTA to incorporate these stones into the bridge. Sean James recommended salvaging the stone to  
56 the Town or to use the stone as a retaining wall with steps, or maybe incorporate them into the  
57 wingwalls. The stones could also be used on Town-owned land, or made into benches or a plaque.  
58 The stones vary in width and would be difficult to incorporate as part of a veneer. NHDOT has  
59 experienced a lot of problems with that design. They don't use veneers any more.

60  
61 There will be no culverts with the bridge. The current metal pipes will be removed. There will be two  
62 abutments, and they will go between the beams across as well. The one-span opening provides more  
63 area for the water to flow through. There was some concern expressed that this might mean that too  
64 much water will pass through. In looking at the water flow, HTA looked at that concern. The  
65 proposed opening does let more water in, but the span lowers the level upstream as well; and  
66 downstream the level rises one-third of a foot. The difference is upstream; a three-span bridge would  
67 not lower the flood levels. The one-span will mean less flooding, and debris will be allowed to come  
68 down stream with less tie-ups. If the design were to impact the neighbors, the Town would need to  
69 obtain an easement. It is possible there could be flooding with a 4" rising with a 50-year flood.

70  
71 The HDC felt that although the bridge is not listed on its registry, it certainly contributes to the District;  
72 and the bridge should look nice.

73  
74 The wingwalls will be pre-cast concrete made to look like stones. The beams need to be thick enough.  
75 The wingwalls support the ends of the bridge.

76  
77 A bill has been passed in the House of Representatives that would allow the Town to move forward  
78 with bonding this project now in anticipation of receiving the \$2.1 Million dollars in 2018 from the  
79 State for the three bridges. The bill now goes before the Senate Committee. The bill becomes law 60  
80 days after it is signed by the Governor. Then the Town can move forward with the bond that was voted  
81 for in 2011. HTA would like to present plans to the NHDOT for a bridge approval. Then we can get  
82 the work done. We need that final approval from them. As a Town, we would be responsible for the  
83 bond payment and interest. In making this decision, the Town needs to balance what it will cost should  
84 we decide to wait until the funds become available in 2018. In 2010, the estimated cost was \$600,000,  
85 and in 2018, it is estimated to cost \$1.1 million. HTA has a \$1 million estimate. This is a good  
86 program and has been around since 1993. The State will pay for aesthetics improvement as well,  
87 depending on how much we ask to do. If the Town asked for a covered bridge, which would cost more  
88 money; the State would only pay so much. The other two bridges are the Horace Greeley Bridge and  
89 the bridge on New Boston Road.

90  
91 Normally bridges get inspected every other year, but red-listed bridges get inspected every year.

92  
93 It was finally determined that the height of the railings of the sidewalk need to be 42" high. The  
94 railings need to pass a crash test. Wood does not meet that requirement.

95  
96 It was asked if stone could be made into a shelf on the curbing on both sides of the bridge. Granite is  
97 resilient. That seemed logical. The planks could be pre-cast stone-like, and the color of the concrete  
98 could be made darker. In 1980 there were not enough engineering standards in place. Now hydraulic

99 data is available. There is a dam in the area. Metal culvers do not last.

100  
101 This bridge goes into a “T” intersection. It was suggested that Mack Hill Road could be made to  
102 appear narrower in an effort to slow traffic down.

103  
104 The railings can be painted, which will become a maintenance issue down the road. It was felt the  
105 railings should be the same height on both sides of the bridge

106  
107 The bridge cannot be a single arch bridge. With a one-arch bridge, the crown will be 14” deep, and the  
108 corners will block the water flow, such that a 50’ flood would be right up to the rise and over the  
109 capacity of the bridge. We need to meet the requirements. As part of the process, NHDOT looks at the  
110 50 year flood plan and sets the standard for how much clearance is appropriate. We will need a  
111 wetlands permit from NHDES as they determine the width of the bridge. FEMA looks at the  
112 floodplain map.

113  
114 Regarding railings, the HDC would like something that will pass the crash test but will also blend in  
115 nicely, and not jump out at you.

116  
117 The HDC came in agreement with the following:

- 118  
119 1. Granite curbing on both sides of the bridge.  
120 2. Granite fascia on the downstream side of the bridge.  
121 3. Wood on the beams.  
122 4. The railings will be 42” and painted, but in a matte finish, and not white. The color will be  
123 determined later.  
124 5. The concrete wingwalls will look like stone blocks formed with granite caps.

125  
126 The Engineers are looking to get the bids ready for bid as soon as possible. The project will take about  
127 five months. They will need to take the old bridge out and deal with the water.

128  
129 The HDC thanked Sean James for his presentation and told him that whenever he is ready to come back  
130 to them, the HDC will accommodate his schedule.

131  
132 **2. Discussion –2014 Road Construction Plan for Foundry Street, Cross Street, Church Street,**  
133 **and Boston Post Road; and tree removal in the Historic District – Bruce Berry, Director of**  
134 **Public Works.**

135  
136 The RFP is out for this project. Director Bruce Berry will hold a pre-construction meeting on Friday.  
137 Bids are due in on March 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be some trees which will need to be significantly trimmed,  
138 but they will make every effort to not damage the trees.

139  
140 The numbers in the middle of the road mark some of the calculations for the project. They calculated  
141 for culvert pipes, catch basins, manholes, and new water mains. If the roads get re-painted, they will re-  
142 paint crosswalks. They are currently in discussions regarding moving sidewalks around Moulton’s  
143 Store and changing the route of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade.

144  
145 They will continue using the bumpy brick in appropriate places.

146  
147 There will be road closures and detours. There will be temporary traffic lights set up at the intersection

148 of Middle Street and Amherst Street.

149  
150 Director Berry showed his PowerPoint presentation and offered to come back to the HDC. The HDC  
151 felt that their comfort level was high that the project would be done as well as it can be.

152  
153 **Adjourn**

154  
155 There being no further business to come before the HDC, the meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

156  
157 Respectfully submitted,

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159 Pam Crook  
160 Community Development Secretary

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162 Minutes approved as amended on March 30, 2014.