

**Plainfield Special Select Board Meeting
August 11, 2022
Minutes – Approved**

Agenda

Commencement of select board meeting

Changes to Agenda

Public comment

Consideration of proposed traffic plan for work on Main Street bridge to complete Pedestrian Bridge project and Main Street Bridge repairs

Adjourn

Present were Jim Volz, Select Board Member and Sasha Thayer, Select Board Member. Also present were project manager Tammy Farnham, community members George Cushing, Alice Merrill, Cecile Sherburne, and Lucy Blue; VHB engineer Jason Keener; and Eric Blaisdell of the Times Argus.

Jim Volz started the meeting at 6:01 PM. Jim stated the purpose was to consider the traffic plan on Main Street relating to the bridge construction project.

Consideration of proposed traffic plan for work on Main Street bridge to complete Pedestrian Bridge project and Main Street Bridge repairs

Jim Volz stated that there were three options presented for the traffic plan, and that we have to pick one. Volz said that one of them sends all traffic to the “East Montpelier roundabout,” but there is no East Montpelier roundabout and he asked Tammy Farnham whether they were talking about the Montpelier roundabout. Farnham wasn’t sure, but stated that she thought that this was the East Montpelier turnaround, and asked Jason Keener if he could help. Sasha Thayer that she could help with that and said she had sent an email to Matt Beldin from Daniels Construction and he is thinking about the Montpelier-Berlin roundabout because he gave the distance as 16 miles round trip. In the meantime, Michael Bingham (Plainfield Road Foreman) also came up with a proposal which Matt said would be possible which is to route people up Rte 214, then down Rte 14, then down Rte 2 and that this is less distance. Thayer noted that because VTrans has a hub on Rte 214, Rte 214

can take heavy vehicle trucks as can Rte 14 and Rte 2. Thayer stated that Beldin said there wouldn't be a change in cost, even though it would be more difficult and challenging for Daniels Construction.

Thayer had sent an email to Matt Belden asking for more information, and sent another email to him when the plan he emailed wasn't sufficient. Beldin then called Thayer and she received the information that using the Rte 214-14-2 detour is an 8 mile round trip versus the 16 mile round trip to the Montpelier roundabout. Thayer stated she also broached to Beldin whether anybody had discussed whether it makes sense to do this work this Fall considering where we are with time and Beldin said it would be a squeeze. Thayer expressed to Beldin that it rains in September, and can snow in October, and her concern that going forward this Fall may be basing a lot on prayer. Volz asked what Beldin thought about putting it off, and Thayer said he talked about it being a squeeze. Volz asked Farnham and Keener whether its possible to out it off or if it's a good idea to put it off. Farnham said that she doesn't know that VTrans is in support of putting it off that she doesn't believe they are. Thayer reminded the Board that at the last meeting the Board was told that there hadn't been any discussion of that option and whether that should be considered and that she had been concerned about the integrity of the work because of the weather and the continued delay in getting started. Keener said generally pavement plants shut down around Thanksgiving and that's what would be restricting the work. He said that construction typically goes on to that time. Keener confirmed that they are looking at the 3-month window for construction, that once the traffic control plan gets done the 3-month window starts and depending when that it is, that could put us up against the paving plant shutdown time.

Keener stated that the rain and the cold and the snow are legitimate concerns and confirmed that you want a dry surface to put the membrane down and to put the pavement down. He also noted that Daniels has done a good job and took care to keep the concrete heated while it was curing even though this was being done in cold weather in the Fall. Volz asked if they don't get the job done, whether we might have a bare concrete deck for the winter. Keener said that was a possibility and would be alright. He reminded the Board that his role in the project is to assure that the work gets done properly.

Thayer noted that there is a difference between keeping concrete warm in the cold and rain and snow preventing the dry surface needed to put down the membrane and pavement. Thayer restated her concern that if the work doesn't get done this fall, there will be additional costs from the work on the bridge being shut down. She noted that the Select Board made the decision to keep one lane of the bridge open at the end of June, that it wasn't until the end of July that the change order was brought to the Board, and the traffic plan remains to be completed, VTrans must approve that traffic plan and we don't know how long that will take. Volz asked if we made a decision tonight for diverting traffic from the East, what would be the time frame of getting the traffic plan done and work started. Neither Farnham nor Keener had a firm answer, but Farnham said that expected completion had been August 22, but additional time will be needed.

Keener noted that the change order is for the work to be completed by November 30th and Daniels wasn't jumping up and down saying that wasn't enough time. Thayer asked whether the change order provides that if the project is shut down due to weather that the Town won't be facing another change order with additional costs for construction and for resident engineering. Volz asked whether that would cost the Town more money. Keener stated that would be discussed at the time, but could not confirm there wouldn't be additional costs. Thayer confirmed her understanding that Keener could not confirm that there would not be additional costs for resident engineering if the work wasn't able to be completed this Fall. Farnham reminded the Board that the change order had been made and that this is adding on to the work to complete the Pedestrial Bridge project, that if we want to not go forward with the additional work now, that can be done, but will cost more to do so.

Keener's thoughts about delay in the work getting started are that he's not too concerned about getting it done between now and when the paving plants shut down around Thanksgiving and again confirmed that the membrane must be installed over a dry surface and the pavement must go down over a dry surface. Thayer repeated her concerns that it rains in September and can snow in October. She again asked Keener if it's really wise, now that we are in the middle of August and with there being little likelihood of getting construction started until late August, to go ahead with the work now. Volz

asked Keener when the construction would likely begin and Keener could not provide a date or estimate, but said that Daniels is working on the traffic plan.

Re what the traffic control would be if the paving were delayed until the Spring, Keener confirmed Farnham's understanding that traffic control would be cones and flagging and not involve restaging equipment or barriers.

During the meeting, Volz raised that one of the alternatives proposes the option of detouring traffic from the East onto Towne Avenue. Thayer advised that Michael Bingham had informed Matt Beldin that isn't an option because large tractor trailer trucks would get hung up because of the road dimensions. Whether the small road in front of the hydroponics store will be an option for traffic, including trucks, coming from the East to come into Plainfield village, was also discussed. Jason Keener confirmed that there will not be enough width for trucks to make a left-hand turn from that road onto Main Street. There was also discussion of whether the small road in front of the hydroponics store would be open for any traffic or whether it will be closed. Keener stated that it would not be open for any traffic turning left off of Rte 2 and Farnham confirmed her understanding that it will be shut down entirely during construction, but that Daniels was going to evaluate whether it may be possible for some traffic to go out onto Rte 2 eastward on that small road. There was additional discussion of detouring traffic from the East onto Rte 214, Rte 14, and Rte 2 in order for that traffic to go into Plainfield village and Keener agreed that this traffic pattern sounds feasible.

Volz noted that Jason [Keener] says that he will be there to assure the quality control of the project is as it should be. Volz also noted that this is a separate project added on to the Pedestrian Bridge project which saves us money and Volz stated he is going to rely on Jason [Keener] to make sure the work is done right.

Thayer stated that she has confidence in Jason Keener and VHB Engineering, and acknowledged that the Board signed a change order in July. She restated her concern is the work has not yet been done on the traffic plan to have it approved right away, that the traffic planning is nowhere near complete and there is still work to be done to prepare the traffic plan and have it approved by VTrans.

Volz ultimately made the motion that the traffic from the East go through the yellow light, go to 214, make a right, go to 14, make a left, then go to Rte 2 and make a left and agreed to an addition to his motion that the Town is letting the parties know that if it makes sense to them, that the Town would not object if they think it's wiser to postpone the work until the Spring.

Public Comment: Public comment was offered by Alice Merrill, George Cushing, and Lucy Blue. Alice Merrill stated that she feels comfortable trusting professionals involved with this project and is pretty sure that they will do their best to get this done. She also suggested that Volz's motion be separated broken into two parts, one relating to the approving what detour you're going to do and then make a motion that if there is a problem with the weather or whatever they can be flexible, and that the detour be just for trucks.

George Cushing stated that this is a lot to put on two people's shoulders to make these decisions. He noted that last year the project was supposed to start the first of July, but didn't start until late August, they worked through November, still not done. They had a 90 day contract and he doesn't understand why it wasn't pushed. This year they came back this Spring for two and a half months, still not done. He sent Volz and Thayer an email with what he feels had good points and hasn't heard back from either of them. He feels that Daniels is not that reliable, the work they did and the time they are taking and then to repeat history. George noted that Daniels was to start the first of July, and all of a sudden we're dealing with traffic conditions. George thinks that, as he suggested in his email, this project should be put out for bid, and he's sure that there would have been someone reliable and it would be completed. He asked if anyone checked to see whether the grant would be good next Spring. That would be the first thing that George feels should have been done. What George sees is that it's going to be half done and then we're going to put up with a tough job all winter, its going to be tough for the road commissioner and everyone else if they don't get that done and he doesn't see that happening. Volz apologized for having overlooked the email and said he would review it. Thayer said that they had received it after having approved the change order and that she should have responded to George.

Lucy Blue offered an alternative detour for traffic from the East wanting to go down Main Street into the village that could be shorter, which wasn't viable because the diverted traffic will involve tractor trailer trucks.

Motion: Volz clarified his motion and moved the traffic plan for traffic from the East go through the blinking light to Rte 214, to make a right onto Rte 214, and go to Rte 14, then make a left onto Rte 14, then proceed to Rte 2 and make a left on Rte 2 to go back to be able to come into the village AND that the Town is letting the parties know that would be OK to defer the start of construction to the Spring if that's what they prefer to do. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn Thayer moved to adjourn the meeting and the motion passed unanimously at 6:56 pm.