

Minutes for June 14th Schell Bridge Advisory Committee Meeting at the Dickinson Memorial Library Community Room. Present were: Jon McGowan; Jerry Wagener; Barbara Richardson; Sue Ross; Craig Johnson; Judy Wagner; and Steve Stoia.

Judy passed out copies of the comments on the DOT designs sent in by community members, and other Friends of Schell Bridge (all but the last day of comments).

Judy then called the meeting to order, and offered this agenda:

- 1) Look over and vote on May 10<sup>th</sup> and May 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting minutes;
- 2) Look over June 1<sup>st</sup> comments from public on bridge designs, and comments after June 1
- 3) Discuss the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting
- 4) Discuss whether there are any steps as a committee we want to take as we await DOT's decisions

Barbara asked whether the film of the community meeting was available through BNCTV

Barbara made a motion to accept the May 10<sup>th</sup> minutes. Motion seconded and approved unanimously by the group. Barbara made a motion to accept the May 22<sup>nd</sup> minutes. Motion seconded and approved unanimously.

Judy pointed out that as many as 43 comments had come in by that morning, and that many commented on how much they appreciated the opportunity to comment, and how much they appreciated the images of the designs. Judy reported that the comments had been sent to Paula, our contact at DOT, and Pat from DOT had told Judy that they build bridges and never hear anything from the community till after the fact, and these comments are often negative. Judy says that Pat reports that this is new for them, and that they are extremely impressed at how sophisticated the questions are.

June 1st

Sue suggested that Stan Rosenberg's hand could be seen in the success of the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, as he has helped DOT become more open for community input through an improved format. Judy reported that there were 75 people in the room, and that the general impression was very strong. Judy suggested that DOT spread out and display the designs on several tables. This resulted in over 100 written comments at the tables. Paula (DOT) Simmons captured most of the questions, and Judy and Paula shared notes.

Jerry worked on the tallies for preferences based on the community responses, and came up with the following ranking: Concept # 3 received 23 votes; Concept #1 received 17; Concept #6 received 15; Concept # 2 received 10.

Judy pointed out that arched designs won the day.

Jerry wondered how firm the designs were. Could designs be merged ? Could arches be made higher ? Jerry has increased the arch of Concept #1 on his computer, and asked how we can follow up on ideas like that. Judy wondered about price, as we may be able to enhance the designs, but would that still allow for pre-fab construction (lower cost).



6/14/17

2) Barbara pointed out that Stan had deliberately asked DOT reps whether any design presented would be out of the ballpark in pricing, and he seemed to receive a "no" as a response. So we still may have room to move here.

Sue said that they (DOT) does not want to put up a bridge that the community would not appreciate.

Barbara asked whether the group thought that Jerry's tally should be shared with DOT. The consensus was yes, and Jerry will forward his spread sheet of returns to Judy for communications with DOT.

Barbara pointed out that Barry Bordner wrote a paragraph about his concerns over the new Schell Bridge, underscoring the need to be conscientious about spending money on a recreation bridge, and that we need to be conscious about where the money comes from. Jerry indicated that he understood the moneys to take down the bridge and replace it come from federal funds, and are earmarked specifically for recreation. Tony Jewell also wrote comments that warned of being narrow in the purpose of the bridge, and that emergency vehicle access should be considered. Judy pointed out here that structural changes may be required that will increase the cost of construction if emergency vehicles are included.

It was decided that Jerry would talk to Mark Fortier of Northfield EMT's, and I would speak with Rob Leighton and Skip Dunnell, about their interests in bridge access.

Judy will send a note to Barry Bordner, thanking him for his comments, and explaining the federally earmarked funds being used for the Schell. Judy will send Jerry's enhanced arch picture to Patrick of DOT, plus the vote "tally"

Barbara asked about continued publicity, suggesting that the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting tape when broadcast on BNCTV, be announced by the Select Board, advertised on Next Door. Barbara will check with Sandy at Town Hall. Judy would like a follow-up story on the bridge, that would clear up misconceptions about funding, and would underscore potential economic development.

For abutters, who are concerned about the operations (hours, policies, etc,) of the bridge, it was suggested that we invite Paul Janicky of DCR to an upcoming meeting. Jerry referenced the big bridge over the Hudson that closes at dusk and has gates at both ends.

Barbara suggested we invite Beth Gianini from FRCOG as they are increasingly involved in tourism through bicycling, and maybe counterparts in Vermont and New Hampshire. Sue agreed that folks in Brattleboro are interested in incorporating their bridge into a bicycle circuit.

Judy thought that all the above were wonderful ideas that could be part of our Fall agenda. It was proposed that the Committee take the month of July 2017 off, and tentatively look at August 9<sup>th</sup> to reconvene.

All agreed. Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted Scribe Steve