

Town of Plainfield Special Select Board Meeting
September 15, 2022
149 Main St., Plainfield, VT, 2nd Floor and Via Zoom
Minutes - Approved

Agenda:

- Changes to the Agenda
- Announcements
- Pedestrian Bridge project-Main Street Bridge repair
 - Update inc. regarding issues that affect one-way traffic and/or bridge closure
 - Review report from Jason Keener, VHB engineer regarding factors affecting one-way traffic vs. bridge closure
 - Consider impact on local businesses including Plainfield Coop, Positive Pie, Plainfield bookstore, Cushing's Clutter, farms and possible mitigation approaches
 - Consider impact on Fire and Rescue services, Highway Department, Municipal Office, mail delivery
- Public Comment will be taken before proceeding on to decision-making
 - Decision re next steps
 - Decision re how to proceed
- Adjourn

Present: Select Board members Jim Volz (Chair) and Sasha Thayer. Also present were George Cushing, Main St. Bridge Project Manager Tammy Farnham and Project Engineer Jason Keener, Fire Chief Greg Light, Fire and Rescue squad member Joe Perreault, Town Clerk/Treasurer Linda Wells, Jamie Spector, Betsy Zeigler, Joe Klein, Jeremy Matt, Andy Robinson, Kagen Dewey, Margie Yoder, Kristie Farnham, and Alice Merrill.

Chair Volz called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm.

Changes to the Agenda:

There were no changes to the agenda.

Announcements:

Thayer addressed recent concerns expressed by residents that the Main St. Bridge has failed; she offered assurance that this is not the case.

Pedestrian Bridge project-Main Street Bridge repair:

Tammy Farnham presented a PowerPoint presentation, available on the Town website, outlining the history of the Main St. Bridge Repair/Pedestrian Bridge project.

Update inc. regarding issues that affect one-way traffic and/or bridge closure/Review report from Jason Keener, VHB engineer regarding factors affecting one-way traffic vs. bridge closure – Thayer provided a recap of information discussed at this past Monday’s Select Board meeting in which Project Engineer Jason Keener of VHB and a representative from Daniels Construction were in attendance. Keener offered clarification of factors impacting whether the bridge repair will be possible given what condition is uncovered once pavement is removed. Thayer asked Keener about the proposed depth of replacement pavement, he explained the reasoning behind the proposed depth.

Consider impact on local businesses including Plainfield Coop, Positive Pie, Plainfield Bookstore, Cushing’s Clutter, farms and possible mitigation approaches – Thayer stated that the Co-op has shared that they won’t be able to get deliveries if the bridge is closed. She asked about option of using ARPA funds to help compensate downtown businesses that may be impacted by bridge closure. Tammy Farnham encouraged residents and the Select Board to also consider alternate means for supporting local businesses.

Consider impact on Fire and Rescue services, Highway Department, Municipal Office, mail delivery – Joe Perreault expressed concern about accessibility for emergency responders to the village should the bridge be closed. Greg Light reiterated Perreault’s concern and voiced his opinion that the bridge work be put off until the Rt.2 intersection project. Thayer expressed support for the need to consider Fire and Rescue’s concerns.

Public Comment will be taken before proceeding on to decision-making:

Linda Wells shared that there is \$66, 000 available in the Town budget for the project. Tammy Farnham shared that if the Town decides to close the bridge for repair, rather than leave one lane open, there would be an approximate savings of \$140,000 on the total project cost. Jamie Spector voiced support for full closure of the bridge to complete repairs. Betsy Zeigler voiced support for

going forward with the Main St. Bridge repairs. Joe Klein also voiced support for the bridge project going forward in October. Jeremy Matt expressed his support for going forward with the Main St. Bridge repair. Andy Robinson stated his support for closing the bridge for repairs. Kagen Dewey voiced support for going forward with the bridge repair. Margie Yoder asked for clarification about the estimate that the bridge could last five to ten years. Keener addressed this question. George Cushing asked for clarification about the proposed timing of the bridge repair. Keener addressed this question. Cushing raised objection to Tammy Farnham's role as project manager. Kristie Farnham spoke in defense of Tammy Farnham and in support of moving forward on the bridge repair. Alice Merrill spoke in support of going forward with the bridge project and shared that Devon, manager of Positive Pie, had shared with her that the restaurant would likely survive the impact of possible decreased business during bridge closure.

Decision re next steps – Thayer moved to approve closing the bridge for 28 days and, between now and the beginning of the project, the Town will work to put in place providing monetary support for local businesses that need it and also working with, and on behalf of, Fire and Rescue to arrange for emergency services for parts of the Town they won't be able to reach, in addition, the Town will ask that the contractor make every effort to accomplish the work that needs to be done in less than 28 days. The motion carried unanimously.

Decision re how to proceed – The Select Board will provide the language of the approval to Tammy Farnham and Jason Keener and will discuss support of local businesses at an upcoming Select Board meeting.

Adjourn: Thayer moved to adjourn at 9:20 pm, the motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kristin Brosky, Town Administrative Assistant.