

Richmond Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes – March 12, 2024

Committee members present: Chris Cole (Chair), Cathleen Gent (Vice Chair), Jon Kart, Keith Jennings, Susan Wells

Others present: Keith Osborne (Town Planner), Gary Bressor, Rob Hintze, Lisa Miller (Selectboard)

All attended remotely.

A quorum was reached and the Chair convened the meeting at 5:32 PM.

1. Welcome and Public Comments: No public comments for items not on the agenda.

2. Revisions to Agenda: There were no revisions to the agenda.

3. Approve Minutes from February 27, 2024, meeting: There were no corrections or additions. **Kart motioned, Gent seconded, passed unanimously.**

4. Gateway Scoping Study: Cole pointed out that this is the final committee discussion, and anticipates the committee will vote on what we would like to recommend to the Selectboard. He said the pinch point at the cemetery remains a problem. The bi-directional lane at that location is not wide enough to be usable in both directions. Having a traffic light control device for the bi-directional lane would add safety. There was discussion about having the path go through the cemetery, however, the cemetery committee is against that. Bressor said that the state court ruled last year that Route 2 is a four-rod road, so there is perhaps a way to cutting back much deeper and getting more room, which may allow for a two-way lane there. Bressor added that that there could be some steepening of the bank on the river side (south side) using stones or some type of retaining material, allowing the road to move 6-8 feet. Gent said she liked the part of the path that deviates from the road behind the mobile station and around the interchange but has concerns about the pinch point near the cemetery, which does not seem safe for children to travel. Cole said the road is not safe currently even for bicyclists. Cole referenced the options for the committee: a no build option, the option of a path completely along Route 2 (North Side Straight), or the Gateway Trail path. Wells asked what it would take to explore either of the options presented by Bressor. Cole responded that it is unlikely that VTrans would consider moving the roadway for the next 20 years and pointed out the unsuccessful challenges of getting five-foot shoulders all along Route 2 for the current repaving project. Bressor said there are several examples of projects similar to this over the years in Richmond, where there were funding and logistical challenges, but those were successful. He encouraged the Transportation Committee to move forward with this, perhaps find a section to complete and build momentum. Kart added that the town's Conservation Reserve Fund may be one, albeit small, funding source.

Wells made a motion, seconded by Kart, to recommend the Gateway Trail option to the Selectboard.

Cole clarified that the motion accepts the scoping report, and recommends to the Select Board that we are recommending the Gateway Trail path. From that, additional information will be pursued by engineers to determine how to construct it and more refined costs. We are not constrained by the report alone, we recommending it to go to the next phase, which will include additional investigations and more design. **Voting: four in favor of the motion.**

5. General Updates

[Jennings and Miller joined meeting.] Wells asked about the Cochran Road speed tables discussion to be before the Selectboard. It was confirmed that Wells will represent the Transportation Committee. Osborne suggested that Wells reach out to Josh Arneson about getting on the April 1st agenda.

a. Cochran Road Scoping:

Osborne clarified that this topic involves the full Cochran Road scoping project being done with the Transportation Committee. He has been in touch with Jason Charest of CCRPC. Both CCRPC and WSP (consultants) would like to hold the local concerns meeting on March 26th, however, they would like an ad hoc working group to review the materials, and coordinate the public outreach, etc. There was discussion about whether an advisory group can get the materials together with enough time to do proper public outreach for that date for the local concerns meeting. Wells agreed to serve on that committee with Osborne, Charest, and WSP. Gent pointed out that the scope of work states the Transportation Committee will review the draft and final materials for the local concerns meeting. Cole said that, if we do not have the materials ready to share with people in the local community, how can they have concerns about anything. He expressed concern about the lack of engagement from the consultant group with our committee on this project. Discussion continued about whether there is time to get the public informed properly for a March 26 meeting. Cole pointed out this is an important study for the town and he wants the project to be done right. Cole then proposed that CCRPC and WSP bring the local concerns meeting materials to the March 26th Transportation Committee meeting for our review and that the local concerns meeting take place on April 9th during the Transportation Committee meeting. There was consensus agreement with the March 26 and April 9 schedule. With those dates in mind, Osborne will ask the consultant group to get local concerns meeting materials to him by March 21st for distribution to the Transportation Committee for the March 26 meeting. The consultants are requested to attend the March 26th meeting as well.

b. THBC Intersection – Status with the Selectboard: Osborne said he conferred with Josh Arneson who said there is time on the Selectboard’s April 1 agenda. Kart will prepare a draft presentation for review at the Transportation Committee’s next meeting. Cole suggested that the presentation follow the approach taken for other presentations, with a problem statement, what we looked at to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles, a presentation of the two options and pros/cons for each, etc.

c. Upper and Lower Bridge Street Bike/Ped project: Osborne described outreach to property owners for the upper bridge street project, and that VHB is preparing design alternatives for RCK. Gent briefly described the discussion at the consultant working group for the lower bridge street project.

6. Meetings and staff availability: Osborne is requesting that the Transportation Committee consider reducing our meetings to one per month, while keeping the schedule of two meetings a month. If the second meeting is needed, we will schedule it. This is due to a staff workload issue, and affects other committees as well. There was general support from the committee for this approach. This will be considered as soon as the committee’s current commitment (for next several meetings) is reduced.

7. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Kart, seconded by Wells. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM.

Minutes taken by Cathleen Gent

Abbreviations used in RTC minutes: ARPA = American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; CCRPC = Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; D&K = Dubois and King; GMT=Green Mountain Transit; PPL = Project Pipeline Document; RCC=Richmond Conservation Committee; RHC=Richmond Housing Committee; RTC = Richmond Transportation Committee; RVC=Riverview Commons; SB = Selectboard; TAP=Transportation Alternatives Program; THBC = intersection of Thompson Rd, Huntington Rd, Bridge St, and Cochran Rd; UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program; VDH = VT Dept. of Health; VPSP2=Vermont Project Selection and Project Prioritization; VTRANS=Vermont Agency of Transportation.