

Richmond Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes – March 28, 2023

Committee members present: Chris Cole (Chair), Cathleen Gent (Vice Chair), Jon Kart, Allen Knowles, Cameron Wong

Others present: Andrew Bessette (Richmond resident), Francis Churchill (Richmond resident), Keith Osborne (Town Planner), Susan Wells (Richmond resident)

All attended remotely.

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

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; RTC = Richmond Transportation Committee; RVC=Riverview Commons; SB = Selectboard; TAP=Transportation Alternatives Program; UPWP = Unified Planning Work Program; VDH = VT Dept. of Health; VTRANS=Vermont Agency of Transportation;

1. Welcome and Public Comment: Gent welcomed Keith Osborne, who has accepted the position of Town Planner and staffs this committee.

2. Revisions to the agenda: Susan Wells requested item nine be moved earlier in the agenda as she wished to be present for that and has time constraints. Without objection, the Chair moved item nine to after item four.

3. Approval of Minutes from March 14, 2023: There were no corrections or additions to the minutes. **Motion by Kart, seconded by Gent, to approve minutes. Approved unanimously.** Gent noted an update in that the Cochran Road Mid-Year Adjustment Program will not have a steering committee, and thus Susan Wells name is not being forwarded as was reported in the 3/14/23 RTC minutes.

4. Update from Selectboard Meeting RE: Cochran Road during Rt 2 Construction:

a. On limiting recreational road closures: Referring back to the Public Comment section of the 3/14/23 RTC minutes, Gent reports the SB did not take specific action at their 3/20/23 meeting to limit road closures to Sundays only, but has taken that under advisement. The Richard Tom Foundation event is already scheduled for Saturday, May 20 and cannot be changed; the SB approved the event going forward but Richmond cannot provide police for traffic control this year.

b. On reducing the speed limit: Francis Churchill stated that he is a resident of Cochran Road and attended the SB meeting and wishes to further address safety issues. He stated that safety needs to be permanently engineered into the roadway, but given the short time available before the convergence of the Rt2 construction season and the seasonal increase in recreational use of Cochran Road, temporary measures and educational efforts should be undertaken. He provided information to support his recommended reduction in the speed limit in the current 45mph zone to 35mph and asked the RTC to support this. Cole pointed out that a speed study is necessary to make an enforceable change in speed limits. Knowles recalled that Eleni Churchill in the Transportation section of the CCRCP previously told us that the SB could change the speed limit, but it would not be enforceable.

Motion by Knowles, seconded by Gent: The Transportation Committee recommends to the Selectboard that the posted speed limit in the current 45mph zone on Cochran Road be changed to a posted speed limit of 35mph for the duration of the 2023 Rt2 construction season, with the understanding that this is not enforceable by the police, but that engineered changes in the form of temporary 35mph speed tables as well as signage be employed to effect the change. Motion passed unanimously.

c. On public education to share the road: Francis Churchill discussed the need for a culture of “share the road”, but noted that different road users have different ideas of what that means. He advocates for educational efforts to promote a common understanding of sharing the road. He provided examples. Kart noted that groups such as Local Motion would be interested in this; also, although the emphasis should start with Cochran Road in 2023, the entire town would benefit from this and it can be extended where residents are interested.

Motion by Kart, seconded by Knowles: The Transportation Committee recommends to the Selectboard that a “Share the Road” educational campaign be undertaken, and that the Town engage partners such as Local Motion and CCRPC in this endeavor. Passed unanimously.

9. Cochran Road/Bridge Street/Thompson Road/Huntington Road intersection – Next Steps per 2021 Scoping Report: Cole and Gent reported meeting with CCRPC on how to move forward. CCRPC will ask VHB (the consultant for the 2021 Bridge Street Complete Street Corridor Study) for a cost estimate for the fourth option presented. CCRPC also recommended reopening public engagement and another public comment meeting. Andrew Bessette expressed concerns that the center island in the fourth alternative would be an obstacle for large trucks and farm machinery, and supported the first alternative of a four way stop intersection. Cole noted the island would be constructed with mountable curbs, and this made the island compatible with large vehicles and also snow plowing. Cole plans to have RTC think about a timeline for the above process at our next meeting.

5. Updates for FY23 UPWP Projects:

a. Green Mountain Public Transit Study: The report of 3/7/23 from Stephen Falbel at Steadman Hill Consulting was reviewed. In brief, bus service in Richmond is not feasible. **Motion by Gent, seconded by Wong, that RTC accept the report and forward it to the SB. Approved unanimously.** Keith Osborne will bring the report to the attention of Town Manager Arneson. If the SB wishes, they can arrange for the consultant to present findings at a SB meeting.

b. Richmond Western Gateway Scoping Study: Knowles reviewed the third focus group meeting with Rt2 residents. In brief, the focus group favored a route that was not adjacent to Rt2, and that would be scenic, pleasant, and fairly flat. They did see that RVC residents would benefit from a means of accessing the Park and Ride and a safe way to bicycle to the Village. Focus group input will be reviewed by the steering committee at their next meeting. Gent reported that the online survey is live, and paper surveys are available at Town Center and the library. A public comment meeting is scheduled for April 10, both in person at Town Center, and online.

b. Cochran Road - Mid-year Adjustment Program: The timeline for this has been truncated and there will not be a steering committee. The consulting engineer will determine the location of temporary speed tables, the radar speed signs, and speed and traffic counting studies. Other aspects may be

shifted from this short term study to the FY24 long term corridor study. The FY24 study has not yet received UPWP funding, but it is felt likely that it will be funded.

c. Route 2 pinch point study: The consultant, Stantec, delayed the kickoff meeting, and that is now anticipated in mid to late April. A site visit is planned, and RTC members can participate in that provided they have hi-viz vest or clothing for safety.

7. Bridge Street sidewalk/ Prepare for April 3 Selectboard Meeting: Cole will give a presentation to the SB on April 3. A PowerPoint presentation is being prepared for that. Susan Wells had questions about the west side sidewalk, particularly at Richmond Market and crossing Railroad St. Issues there were reviewed.

8. Review Walkability Audit Report/Next Steps: Editing continues. Kart may arrange for more pictures if practical. Cole will provide a completed matrix of problems and solutions. Gent has requested time at a SB meeting in May to present the report.

9. See above, between 4 and 5.

10. Jericho Road Scoping Study Update: Cole has requested CCRC query the consultant on what their recommendations are for the sloped roadsides between Southview Road and Valley View Road. If putting sidewalk in that section is not realistic, then we need a cost estimate for the segment from School Street to Southview Road.

11. General Updates: The railroad has not yet responded to Cole's email. Gent noted that our failure to engage the railroad was part of the reason VTRANS turned down our grant application last year.

12: Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:07PM.

Minutes by Allen Knowles