

## Hampton Heritage Commission

### Draft Meeting Minutes 6/17/2021

This emergency, time-sensitive Zoom meeting was held to discuss the NHDOT correspondence on MOA comments on the Underwood Bridge Replacement; meeting ID # 89857724968, pass code 868889.

Call to order 7: 00 P.M.

Virtual salute to flag was conducted by Chair Jim Metcalf.

Members Present:

Ann Carnaby (at home alone)

Christine Bushway (at home alone)

Jim Metcalf (at home alone)

John Wrobel (at home alone)

Members Absent:

Regina Barnes responded with email, unable to attend, and will support decisions reached by Commission members.

Mrs. Metcalf, President of Hampton Historical Society, was the only public citizen present at the electronic meeting.

Jim Metcalf began the meeting with a general discussion on the correspondence proposed to NHDOT concerning comments on the MOA for the Underwood Bridge Replacement. Jim Metcalf moves to discuss approval of the draft correspondence. Ann Carnaby seconds the motion for discussion.

Ann Carnaby expressed her concerns:

- She is in disagreement with retaining the Underwood Bridge and the Rye-New Castle Bridge as it is economically infeasible.
- She is in disagreement with paragraph 2 of the correspondence in that the bridge is not town property and should not have town historic-type markers.
- She is in disagreement with the Tuck Museum and/or Hampton Town Library as possible locations for a working model of the Underwood Bridge. Her opinion is that a working model is state property and should be on state property. Additional concerns were that a working model would be too expensive for the state to construct.
- She additionally suggests that her concerns be provided in the Commissions correspondence to NHDOT as a "minority opinion."

John Wrobel led a discussion on the opportunity that participation with NHDOT on developing memorialization of the Underwood Bridge is in line with the purpose of the Heritage Commission in preserving and documenting Hampton history. The Underwood Bridge and the bridge it replaced are part of the history of the town.

Christine Bushway agreed that the Heritage Commission has the opportunity to move in a directed action by working with NHDOT on memorializing the Underwood Bridge and the Commission's working with NHDOT would be a positive and appropriate activity for the Heritage Commission.

Ann Carnaby expressed that the Commission should be focused on municipal topics. John Wrobel indicated that inclusion of a "minority opinion" in the NHDOT correspondence would result in possible confusion to NHDOT on the Commission's intent. Jim Metcalf indicated that the NHDOT correspondence should be clear and not represent conflict.

Roll call vote on sending the correspondence to NHDOT:

Jim Metcalf: yay

John Wrobel: yay

Christine Bushway: yay

Ann Carnaby: nay

Approved by majority vote of 3-1.

A copy of the NHDOT correspondence is provided as an attachment to these minutes. A copy of Ann Carnaby's comments on the NHDOT correspondence, submitted to the Commission members in writing, is provided as an attachment to these minutes.

### **Adjourning**

Jim Metcalf motioned for adjournment at 7:40 PM. Christine Bushway seconds the motion. 4-0 to adjourn. Accepted.

Respectfully submitted,

John G. Wrobel



Hampton Heritage Commission  
Town of Hampton, NH  
100 Winnacunnet Road  
Hampton, NH 03842

June 16, 2021

John O. Morton Building  
PO Box 483 | 7 Hazen Drive  
Concord, New Hampshire 03302

Attn: Ms. Jennifer E. Reczek, NHDOT Project Manager

Dear Ms. Reczek:

As you are aware, the Hampton Heritage Commission was given Consulting Party status for NHDOT's Hampton Projects 15904 and 40797 on April 8, 2021. Obtaining that status with only 15 days left in the comment period for the Project 15904 Environmental Assessment (EA) limited our ability to frame and approve comments on that document in a timely fashion. Joining this process late is problematic, but here we are. Given that we missed the deadline for Project 15904 EA comments, please consider our comments below as anticipatory with regard to the draft Memorandum of Agreement being developed for the Seabrook-Hampton bridge (aka Neil R. Underwood Bridge) as described in the EA.

Our overarching concern at this juncture is the loss of the last two historic bascule bridges in New Hampshire (i.e., the Seabrook-Hampton bridge being replaced under Project 15904 and the Rye-New Castle bridge being replaced under the related Project 16127). It is regrettable that not one of these bascule bridges is being saved, especially in light of the strong wording of the 1994 Memorandum of Agreement pertaining to the removal of the third-to-last bascule bridge, the Scammell Memorial Bridge in Dover:

*"The [NHDOT] is committed to work towards the long-term maintenance and preservation of these remaining bascule bridges. ... The Department agrees that only under extraordinary circumstances will either of these two remaining bridges be removed, such as natural disaster creating a serious safety hazard, prohibitive cost for their rehabilitation to maintain continued in-place highway use or severe environmental impacts..."*

Although the Hampton Heritage Commission is not a Consulting Party for Project 16127, the preservation of at least one bascule bridge is a State-wide consideration in our view and an interest we share given that the other, perhaps less defensible remaining bascule bridge is located here in Hampton.

Given the choice of preserving either that Seabrook-Hampton bridge or the Rye-New Castle bridge as the last of the “thematic grouping” of bascule bridges, the Commission believes (although we have no standing in the Project 16127 matter) that the Rye-New Castle bridge would have been the logical choice for the following reasons:

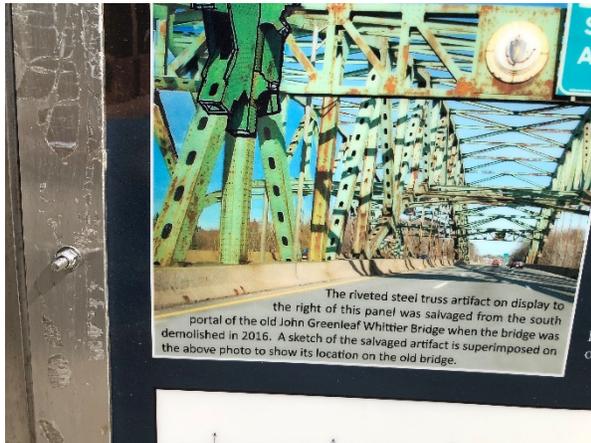
- The projected cost savings of replacing the current bascule with a fixed bridge is much smaller for the Rye-New Castle bridge than for the Seabrook-Hampton bridge because of its much smaller size.
- The number of annual bridge openings and associated impact on traffic for the Rye-New Castle bridge is very much smaller than that for the Seabrook-Hampton bridge.
- The longer construction time for bascule bridge refurbishment (as opposed to the building of a new, fixed bridge) is mitigated in the case of the Rye-New Castle bridge by the availability of a detour through Portsmouth via South Street. This detour, for example, would increase the distance from the Route 1A/1B intersection to the New Castle Town Hall by only a mile (3.4 vs. 2.4 miles).
- The ability for “tall vessels” requiring anything more than minimal vertical clearance to retain access to the “Back Channel” in Portsmouth if a bascule bridge were kept in place.

Regarding the Project 15904 Memorandum of Agreement, the following community questions, comments, and concerns are offered:

1. The EA effects evaluation for this project was well-written. The analysis was complete and thorough, and the evaluation’s clarity allowed Commissioners to develop a very comprehensive understanding of the project.
2. Commission members would appreciate copies of the completed Phase 1A and Phase 1B archeological surveys for information purposes and possible archiving at the Hampton Public Library and at the Hampton Historical Society. The narrative called out the finding of an “unidentified iron pin” during the surveys. Can a more complete description be provided? The “unidentified iron pin” could be an interesting artifact for display.
3. The Commission requests to be consulted in the design and content of the information kiosks which are a proposed mitigation measure. The Hampton Heritage Commission, along with the Hampton Historical Society, is in the process of developing historical kiosks throughout Hampton; and our mutual interest is to have uniformity throughout the town on the design and content of these kiosks.
4. Historic American Building Survey (HABS)/ Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation, following National Park Service’s most recent guidance, serves as documentation to provide future architects, engineers, scholars, preservationists, etc., comprehensive information on a structure which is placed at the Library of Congress. Are there plans to provide local communities a copy of the documentation? Has the NH State Historic Preservation Office weighed in on archived requirements in a state library or archive?
5. The Commission has an expressed interest to include as part of the proposed mitigation that a to-scale working model of at least the center sections of the Underwood Bridge be developed for exhibition to the public and to other interested parties. The model could be placed in a protected location (e.g., the Tuck Museum of Hampton History maintained by the Hampton Historical Society or

Lane Library) and would be useful to demonstrate the unique engineering of the bridge to future generations.

6. Photographs are included showing an interesting outdoor display for the Whittier Bridge (Interstate 95 over the Merrimack River in Newburyport, MA) replaced in 2016. A complex riveted joint was removed and is displayed intact with its specific structural location identified on a companion information kiosk. Would it be possible to do something similar for the Underwood Bridge with reference to some component in the model (refer to Item 6) to give an idea of scale and function?



7. Has there been a timeline developed for the implementation of the mitigative measures and will a timeline be included in the MOA?

The Hampton Heritage Commission looks forward to continued communication with you as the project progresses.

Best regards,

James Metcalf, Chair, Hampton Heritage Commission



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**I strongly disagree, and believe that detailed documentation available to the public is not only more than adequate, the cost of saving an entire outdated bridge is, in my opinion, not responsible.**

Hampshire (i.e., the Seabrook-Hampton bridge being replaced under Project 15904 and the Rye-New Castle bridge being replaced under the related Project 16127). It is regrettable that not one of these bascule bridges is being saved, especially in light of the strong wording of the 1994 Memorandum of Agreement pertaining to the removal of the third-to-last bascule bridge, the Scammell Memorial Bridge in Dover:

*"The [NHDOT] is committed to work towards the long-term maintenance and preservation of these remaining bascule bridges. ... The Department agrees that only under extraordinary circumstances will either of these two remaining bridges be removed, such as natural disaster creating a serious safety hazard, \*prohibitive cost for their rehabilitation to maintain continued in-place highway use or severe environmental impacts..."*

\*see my previous comment, as it applies here as well. In my opinion, the cost of preserving the bridge is much better spent on maintaining and improving the roads and bridges we have - in particular, the entire New Hampshire portion of Route 1A, which requires much needed work on storm drains, ADA approved pedestrian crossings for the safety of our visitors to Hampton Beach and other areas of our beautiful coastline.

I disagree with this entire paragraph Although the Hampton Heritage Commission is not a Consulting Party for Project 16127, the preservation of at least one bascule bridge is a State-wide consideration in our view and an interest we share given that the other, perhaps less defensible remaining bascule bridge is located here in Hampton. Given the choice of preserving either that Seabrook-Hampton bridge or the Rye-New Castle bridge as the last of the “thematic grouping” of bascule bridges, the Commission believes (although we have no standing in the Project 16127 matter) that the Rye-New Castle bridge would have been the logical choice for the following reasons:

- The projected cost savings of replacing the current bascule with a fixed bridge is much smaller for the Rye-New Castle bridge than for the Seabrook-Hampton bridge because of its much smaller size.
- The number of annual bridge openings and associated impact on traffic for the Rye-New Castle bridge is very much smaller than that for the Seabrook-Hampton bridge.
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not all of us have read or agree 1. The EA effects evaluation for this project was well-written. The analysis was complete and thorough, and the evaluation’s clarity allowed Commissioners to develop a very comprehensive understanding of the project.

ok 2. Commission members would appreciate copies of the completed Phase 1A and Phase 1B archeological surveys for information purposes and possible archiving at the Hampton Public Library and at the Hampton Historical Society. The narrative called out the finding of an “unidentified iron pin” during the surveys. Can a more complete description be provided? The “unidentified iron pin” could be an interesting artifact for display.

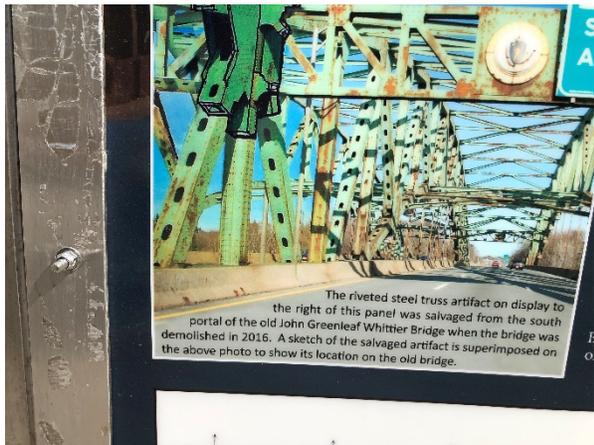
Strongly disagree - the bridge belongs to the state; it is disrespectful & inappropriate to try to subsume a state design to a town design. The bridge is on state land and therefore any monumentation should follow the state designs 3. The Commission requests to be consulted in the design and content of the information kiosks which are a proposed mitigation measure. The Hampton Heritage Commission, along with the Hampton Historical Society, is in the process of developing historical kiosks throughout

Hampton; and our mutual interest is to have uniformity throughout the town on the design and content of these kiosks.

OK 4. Historic American Building Survey (HABS)/ Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation, following National Park Service's most recent guidance, serves as documentation to provide future architects, engineers, scholars, preservationists, etc., comprehensive information on a structure which is placed at the Library of Congress. Are there plans to provide local communities a copy of the documentation? Has the NH State Historic Preservation Office weighed in on archived requirements in a state library or archive?

5. The Commission has an expressed interest to include as part of the proposed mitigation that a to-scale working model of at least the center sections of the Underwood Bridge be developed for exhibition to the public and to other interested parties as indicated in the DOT report, however, it has no place on the Tuck Museum property - in my opinion, it belongs on state land as close to the actual location as possible to enhance the learning of the viewers. the suggestion of using a part of the State park land adjacent to the northern end of the current bridge location is most appropriate.. The model could be placed in a protected location (e.g., the Tuck Museum of Hampton History maintained by the Hampton Historical Society or Lane Library) and would be useful to demonstrate the unique engineering of the bridge to future generations.

I am ok with the rest of the letter 6. Photographs are included showing an interesting outdoor display for the Whittier Bridge (Interstate 95 over the Merrimack River in Newburyport, MA) replaced in 2016. A complex riveted joint was removed and is displayed intact with its specific structural location identified on a companion information kiosk. Would it be possible to do something similar for the Underwood Bridge with reference to some component in the model (refer to Item 6) to give an idea of scale and function?



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