

**Town of Bristol, Vermont  
Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes of  
Monday August 16, 2021**

Selectboard members present: Chair Pecker Heffernan, Vice-Chair Ian Albinson, Joel Bouvier, Michelle Perlee, and Darla Senecal.

Staff present: Board Clerk Tasha Bouvier, Town Administrator Valerie Capels, Public Works Foreman Eric Cota, and Police Chief Bruce Nason.

Others present: Jenny Austin (DuBois & King), Chris Bray, Sally Burrell, Brenda Ellis, David Flaschenriem, Shawn Kimball (NEAT TV), Jim Quaglino, Sally Sweeney, and Mike Winslow (ACRPC).

**I. Call to Order.** Chair Pecker Heffernan called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items per 1 V.S.A. §312(d)(3)(A). There are no additions, removals, or adjustments.

2. Overview of Zoom meeting operation and procedures: rules for participation, mute microphone, recognition by Chair, etc.

**II. Planning Study for the Intersection of Vermont 116, Lincoln Road, and Briggs Hill Road – Alternatives Presentation: DuBois & King Engineering**

In her report, Valerie Capels noted that poor sight distances at the Lincoln Road/Route 116 intersection result in crashes every year. The Briggs Hill Road intersection with Lincoln Road can be dangerous and harrowing, particularly in winter conditions. And parking at Bartlett Falls along Lincoln Road, and sometimes in the road, creates hazardous conditions for motorists and visitors.

Jenny Austin, P.E., of DuBois & King, was hired through a grant from the Addison County Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee to study these areas and identify possible solutions for improvement.

Jenny Austin's presentation included a project overview, review of the kick-off meeting, review of existing conditions, review of project alternatives, and next steps. The project goal is to develop a scoping study report that identifies alternatives at the project area for the Town to consider for future improvements to reduce respective concerns at the 3 focus area locations. There are three focus areas: VT 116/Lincoln Road intersection, summer parking along Lincoln Road, and Briggs Hill Road/Lincoln Road intersection. Existing conditions include sight distance review, intersection approach, grade, crash data review, and environmental review. Project alternatives were broken out into the three focus areas, the goals for each focus area are different, therefore there are different alternatives for each focus area, short-term and long-term measures, and wide range of costs.

For the Lincoln Road/Route 116 intersection, four alternatives were proposed. Option #1: Intersection conflict warning sign. It's a yellow sign that has an intersection symbol that blinks and warns there is an intersection ahead and someone is at the intersection and about to turn off of Lincoln Road. They can be run by power or solar. Option #2: Review stop bar location.

Option #3: Install traffic mirror on VT 116. Option #4: realignment of Lincoln Road to improve sign lines at Lincoln Road/VT 116 intersection. Further review of grades would be needed to determine if the west end of Briggs Hill Road would need to be closed or if grades would lend to a realignment of Briggs Hill Road at Lincoln Road. Intersection sight distance for proposed realignment cannot be confirmed at this time, but the goal of this alternative is to meet AASHTO's recommended intersection sight distance guidelines.

Sally Burrell said exiting Lincoln Road is very difficult because cars going north on 116 are completely invisible behind the curve of the guard rail. The driver in the Lincoln Road car when sitting at the stop sign needs to know there's a car on the bridge. If the guard rail was less solid for the top half it would help with visibility. A mirror across from the Lincoln Road would be very helpful for the blind spot. She suggested two carefully placed mirrors be installed to help north travelers and those entering from Lincoln to help solve the visibility problem.

Ed Burke said that whole section of 116 once you are past Fuller Flats headed into Bristol needs to be slowed down and become safer. He would like to talk about slowing down traffic on 116; that we cannot talk about the problem of 116 and Lincoln Rd without talking about the excessive speed on 116.

Sally Burrell said that the plan seems too steep to be entering 116 safely in winter. It would be like Briggs Road into Lincoln Road, but with more traffic to deal with. She asked if strong but narrower "cables" for the top 3/4 of the guard rail could be used for better visibility. She also felt the 350 mark along the bridge where there is supposed to be safe distance for braking is not working. By the time a driver from Lincoln comes out, a car could be much closer to the intersection making it too close to stop safely before hitting the entering car. She felt the bridge needs to be changed, speed limits lowered, and mirrors be installed. She also asked that the Zoom meeting chat comments (attached) be included in the record.

Ed Burke said he has asked the State to put up signs with a tractor image warning vehicles of crossing traffic, but they would not do it. It is very dangerous for the Rocky Dale Gardens workers crossing the road in their electric carts and tractors. People step on it when they cross the first bridge and then head toward Lincoln Road up hill. He asked if a traffic light or a 3-way stop is out of the question?

I think we need to get VTRANS to do a traffic study and then meet with us, with this presentation and research in hand. What about a broader study including speed on 116? I would like to know who to contact about a speed study."

Jenny Austin (DuBois & King) presented alternatives for parking concerns along Lincoln Road: New "NO PARKING" signage, designated parking areas along Lincoln Road, and definition of parking area (24 spaces). The No Parking signs would be a low-cost option. Sally Burrell said it seems to be getting narrower annually due to dirt being washed away.

Jenny Austin presented alternates for Briggs Hill Road: Close west end of Briggs Hill in winter, and close west end of Briggs Hill Road permanently with a turnaround. She said there is not

much that can be done about the slope. She was not aware of a new driveway recently approved for a new house on Briggs Hill. Eric Cota described the difficulties of turning around because of the slope if the west end was closed. He does not recommend closing the road at all.

Jenny Austin gave the following cost estimates for each alternative:

1. Lincoln Road Alternatives:
  - 1A. Intersection Conflict Warning Signage - \$22,000.
  - 1B. Review Stop Bar Locations - \$400.
  - 1C. Traffic Mirror on VT 116 - \$500.
  - 1D. Realignment of Lincoln Road\* - \$835,000.
  
2. Parking concerns at Lincoln Road:
  - 2A. New "No Parking" signs - \$4,000.
  - 2B. Designated parking along Lincoln Road\* - \$27,000.
  - 2C. Definition of parking area\* - \$650,000.
  
3. Briggs Hill Road:
  - 3A. Close west end of Briggs Hill Rd in winter - \$3,000.
  - 3B. Close west end of Briggs Hill Rd\* - \$140,000.

\*Includes, where applicable, engineering design and construction inspection estimates.

The next steps would be:

- A. Alternative's evaluation: if needed, tweak alternative(s). Finalize alternative evaluations and prepare evaluation matrix.
- B. Public Informational Meeting: present final evaluations (Sept. 2021).
- C. Planning Study Report: Summarize project into a report.
- D. ACRPC Meeting: Present project to ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (Sept 2021).

There was agreement that a first next step is for traffic speed study to be done. Peeker Heffernan noted if it is documented that traffic is traveling 50 miles per hour, and sight distance is not adequate, the Town can argue that the speed limit needs to be lowered to shorten the sight distance. Then it becomes an enforcement issue. Bruce Nason confirmed the BPD is contracted to between 16 to 20 hours of enforcement for the entire town. The State Police is the primary enforcement in that area. The BPD could install the speed cart, but it would need to be on private property.

Mike Winslow offered to check to see if VTrans has speed data for this area. If not, the RPC can conduct the studies. They would need something in writing from the Town.

Peeker Heffernan noted that VTrans redid this intersection not long ago. They needed to extend the bridge but already had the curve set, but that should not be the Town's problem.

Jenny Austin said the final report will include this information, more environmental information, and an evaluation matrix that summarizes the impacts and costs. Another meeting will be held to present the final report to the Town. An online survey will also be considered to get additional input from the community.

**III. Regular Business.**

1. Authorize accounts payable warrant and any liquor licenses. \$28,295.51.

**IV. Adjourn.**

At 8:44 p.m. Michelle Perlee moved to adjourn the meeting. Joel Bouvier seconded. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Tasha Bouvier  
Board Clerk

Valerie Capels  
Town Administrator

DRAFT

19:15:50 From Sally Burrell : I can attest to the “almost” crashes. Exiting Lincoln rd is very difficult because cars going north on 116 are completely invisible behind the curve of the guard rail.

19:21:10 From Sally Burrell : The driver in the Lincoln Rd car when sitting at the stop sign needs to know there’s a car on the bridge.

19:24:52 From Ed Burke : Basically once you are past Fuller Flats headed into Bristol- that whole section of 116 needs to be slowed down and become safer.

19:27:24 From Sally Burrell : If the guard rail was less solid for the top half it would help with visibility.

19:29:45 From Sally Burrell : I think a mirror across from the Lincoln rd would be very helpful for the blind spot.

19:32:43 From Ed Burke : Can we talk about slowing down traffic on 116? It’s 40mph but 50-60mph is common.

19:38:21 From Sally Burrell : This plan seems too steep to be entering 116 safely in winter. It would be like Briggs Rd into Lincoln Rd, but with way more traffic to deal with. I think two carefully placed mirrors to help north travelers and those entering from Lincoln.

19:39:36 From Sally Burrell : ...would really help solve the visibility problem.

19:40:32 From Ed Burke : I have asked the state to put up signs warning vehicles of crossing traffic- they wouldn’t do it.

19:42:13 From Ed Burke : We cross the road on electric carts and tractors for our business- Rocky Dale Gardens. It is super dangerous. The state would not put up warning signs with tractor image. I don’t know how we can talk about the problem of 116 and Lincoln Rd without talking about the excessive speed on 116.

19:44:44 From Ed Burke : People step on it when they cross the first bridge and then head toward Lincoln Rd up hill.

19:47:13 From Ed Burke : is a traffic light out of the question?

19:47:50 From Ed Burke : 3 way stop?

19:50:17 From Sally Burrell : Could they use strong but narrower “cables” for the top 3/4 of the guard rail for better visibility?

19:52:48 From Sally Burrell : Who built the bridge?

19:54:24 From Sally Burrell : It seems that they didn’t meet the needs for this bridge. It’s not working because of visibility.

19:59:41 From Sally Burrell : I think the 350 mark along the bridge where there’s safe distance for braking is not working. By the time a driver from Lincoln comes out a car could be much closer to the intersection.... making it too close to stop safely before hitting the entering car.

20:00:00 From Ed Burke : I wish I had a culvert!

20:10:07 From Sally Burrell : It seems like the dirt along the rd by Bartlett’s is disappearing annually due to washing away. It’s getting narrower.

20:20:38 From Ed Burke : I think we need to get VTRANS to do a traffic study and then meet with us, with this presentation and research in hand.

20:21:39 From Ed Burke : What about a broader study including speed on 116?

20:24:25 From Ed Burke : I would like to know who to contact about a speed study.

20:24:47 From Sally Burrell : If the speed data is higher than 40 then the bridge is not meeting safety. And the bridge needs to be changed or the speed needs to be lowered... along with mirror and signs. I agree with Peeker.

20:26:44 From Sally Burrell : Will the chat comments be included in a record of this meeting?

20:27:25 From Ian Albinson : You can save the chat, and it generally is saved to the recording folder

20:27:32 From Ed Burke : I'm willing!!!

20:27:47 From Ed Burke : you can put it on my property!

20:28:32 From Ed Burke : 806 Rockydale Rd

20:40:04 From Ed Burke : Thank you! It was great to find out that the intersection was being studied!

20:40:35 From Sally Burrell : Thanks everyone for discussing and problem solving together!

20:41:05 From Ed Burke : I think everyone needs to slow the h...l down. Let's not accommodate speeding automobiles.