

**LYME CLASS V ROADS STUDY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING-LYME SCHOOL CAFETERIA**

November 1, 2016

Approved

Present: Roads Committee members Susan MacKenzie, Steve Williams, Frank Bowles, Mike Smith, Dan Brand, Kevin Sahr; and Bill Malcolm. Bill Waste served as moderator, Patty Jenks was recorder Members of the Public: Dick Jones, Mardi Bowles, Jay Smith, John Stadler, Bob Barnum, Hoyt Alverson, Steve Rich, Carola Lea, Jean Smith, David & Barbara Roby, Jennifer Cooke, Michael Whitman, Rusty Estes, Karen Keane, Scot Bailey, Denis Stern, Kate Hilton, Sue Hanlon, Lin & Rich Brown, Geri Burgess, Cathy Johnson, Harold Swartz & Ann Flood, Ben Kilham, State Representative Patricia Higgins and 5 individuals unknown to the recorder.

1. Bill Waste opened the meeting at 7:00 pm with brief comments as to how he would run the meeting, with an explanation of what the Roads Committee is charged with doing and the RSA under which they must operate.

2. Sue MacKenzie, acting chair of the Roads Committee introduced the current members and reviewed where things stand at this point, emphasizing everything is a work in progress. Priorities are established; however, those can change very quickly if there is a road failure or a critical situation is discovered. She commended the Highway Department for doing the best they can with the budget constraints under which they are working.

3. Steve Williams, Road Agent described projects that have been completed this year. Extra effort toward grading, applications of magnesium chloride and aggressive tree limbing have all contributed to the roads increased stability and needing less remedial measures during and following mud season. Members of the public in attendance applauded the efforts of the road crew.

4. MacKenzie spoke about and provided pictures of one of the more recent and critical repairs done by Lyme Highway on a large culvert on Acorn Hill Road. Using this as an example of priorities getting rearranged, it was noted this repair was an emergency as it was discovered the actual road had been undermined for a variety of reasons and therefore presented a hazard to the numerous cars that use the road. Current priorities are:

#1, 1, & 1-The alternate route on River Road, the stabilization needed near Berway Farm and a new problem identified at the Grant Brook near Fisher Bridge. These compete for priority # 1 as each presents its own critical consequence if they fail.

#4-River Road near Hidden Valley, #5- River Road near the North Thetford Rd intersection, #6, North River Road retaining wall failure and #7- phase 2 of the Goose Pond Road project.

MacKenzie went on to talk about the proposed Paved Road Plan which is the ongoing effort toward preservation and maintenance of all paved roads. The plan would be to address one road a year on a continuous basis. Williams is hoping to address the section on Goose Pond Road between Baker Hill Road and Pico Road next.

Gravel Roads Plan addresses consistent maintenance of all bus routes and routine maintenance of others. Grading, compacting and applications of magnesium chloride have made a marked difference in the overall quality of the gravel roads.

Culvert inspections, repair and replacement is an ongoing, expensive project-Lyme has 435 culverts. In the last couple of years about 50 have received attention.

5. Frank Bowles described a walking survey that he and Kevin Sahr did of the length of River Road. This effort gleaned important information as to the river bank and road conditions. He also noted that it is clear that over a period of some years the river and its banks have been used as dumping sites for trash of one form or another. To remove some of these items which are now imbedded in the riverbanks, could create further problems. Also this trash is not a good road base.

He indicated the Roads Committee is developing a cost benefit analysis for returning River Road back to gravel until such time as funds are available to upgrade and rehabilitate the road. This report was made available for distribution at the meeting.

The town operating budget presents a significant challenge. He commended the Highway Department for getting so much done using the funding available to them. He reminded attendees that these roads, most of which are original to the town, were not built for the volume of traffic they now see. The bases are continually compromised by heavy weight vehicles. Many engineers have done assessments on River Road and consistently have the same findings.

6. MacKenzie presented charts which identified where the operating budget is spent. The Roads Committee has analyzed these figures and done a costs analysis of comparisons for a 20 year, per mile cost of maintaining a road. Bowles commented that we simply do not have, nor can we raise the amount of money needed to address all issues with all roads. An estimate was provided that to completely rebuild the ½ mile section of the south end of River Road could cost as much as \$880,000 if contracted out. Bowles felt that our road crew has the competence and resources to do many of these projects “in-house” without the need of outside major contractor expense. He encourages that the town allow the Highway Department to continue doing what they have done very well.

7. The moderator opened the meeting up to allow questions from attendees. Questions included subjects such as reopening River Road, the concerns of what would happen if the Hewes Brook Bridge failed, the communication and invoice to TransCanada done in an effort recoup some of the funds spent on needed River Road repairs clearly a result of dam activity, the involvement of the Army Corp of Engineers and their interest in working of a couple of River Road projects, funding, how the road priorities will be presented at Town Meeting, the impact of the costs of road issues on property taxes, excessive speeding and traffic on the secondary roads, the extreme importance of getting the by-pass done expeditiously because of concerns that failure at other locations of River Road could endanger 3 homes which would be left with no access if the bypass route is not built.

8. State Representative Patricia Higgins spoke with concern and sympathy to the ongoing River Road saga. Although she has no knowledge of immediate funding sources she will look into it further. There is currently a \$5 fee that could be assessed to registration transactions if voted on by the town at town meeting. In Lyme’s case that could afford approximately \$10,000 per year which would be help specifically for the work done on roads and bridges. There is a proposal to allow an increase in that amount to \$10 per vehicle but it hasn’t passed as a House Bill yet. MacKenzie indicated that the Tax Study & Advisory Committee has considered the motor vehicle fee and other possible measure to help alleviate the tremendous pressure of increased property taxes for some of Lyme citizens.

9. When the question was asked how people could help facilitate a fast and acceptable solution, Bill Waste indicated that communication is key. Discuss the problem, discuss thoughts for solutions. Let people know your concerns and that you want to help. Little Town Meeting and Town Meeting will be critical to the process.

10. A citizen commented that he wants more information on the conclusion that River Road is too dangerous.

This meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty Jenks, recorder