

Calais Roads Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 29, 2013
Calais Town Hall 8:30 pm to 10:15 pm
Approved Sept. 12, 2013

Committee members present (clockwise around the table from the Chair): J.C. Myers (Chair), Craig Line, Doug Lilley, Barbara Weedon, Stephanie Kaplan, Conrad Smith, and Peter Harvey.

Absent: Trey Martin

Also attending: Bill Davis and Scott Bassage

[8:30 pm][9 minutes] Call to order, decide whether to accept minutes for 7/11/13 meeting

- A motion to approve the minutes as written (with one correction of a typo on page 1, line 17 quoting J.C. ~~with~~ width) was made by Conrad and seconded by Craig. They were approved 7-0.

[8:39 pm][1/2 a minute] Public input from any attending non-CRAC [Calais Roads Advisory Committee] members of the community.

- Bill Davis told J.C. he didn't have anything to say this early in the meeting and reserved his right to talk later.

[8:39 pm][7 minutes]- Discussion of budget needs of CRAC to determine amount to be requested from SB.

- Peter suggested that the Roads Committee ask the Selectboard for a budget to cover maps and future displays, presentations, photograph prints, publishing reports and publishing a pictorial guide illustrating the principles that we are developing so that we don't have to go to the Selectboard for every item.
- Peter (seconded by Stephanie) made a motion that we ask the Selectboard for a total budget of \$300. After discussion Peter (seconded by Stephanie) made a motion to amend the original motion to \$400 to include the \$90 already spent, approved, and paid for maps. The second motion passed 7-0.
- Barbara asked for clarification of the spending approval process. Conrad (seconded by Craig) made a motion that J. C., as the chair, can approve expenditures of the CRAC. The motion passed 7-0.

[8:46][89 minutes]- Reports from individual committees on 5 topics and presentation of any notes or materials produced by committees.

- Doug reported that he had recently been up on Stannard Mtn Rd. "It's the kind of way that I would do a road... He ditched the road so that you could drive in the ditch and come out. He didn't put a ditch so that you had to get a wrecker. And he graded around the trees...and he used an excavator buck with no teeth on it so you can tell what you are hitting. And he crowned the road and he had a chance to make it wider and he didn't...He made a crown that isn't so big that you feel like your hip is bothering you."

- J.C. began giving a report on the Management System Sub-committee that he had e-mailed out earlier today.
- Conrad began discussion of the Alternate Goals Sub-committee's re-write of the "Town Road & Bridge Standards" that the Selectboard had asked for ASAP for them to sign this summer, with the potential of replacing it when the Roads Committee and the Selectboard write a better Standards document. He had emailed it to the full committee on August 27 and handed out more copies of it at this meeting.
- Stephanie asked about the process of how we are going to review what each other's committees are coming up with. We all agreed to email sub-committee drafts to the whole Roads Committee for review and comments by email.
- It is the Culverts and Bridges section of the Road and Bridge Standards that the Selectboard wants a re-write on ASAP, more demanding than the current 2011 standards [that the Selectboard signed April 11, 2011]. The State has come out with a 2013 rewrite of the 2011 standard to be more in compliance with FEMA requirements.
- Scott Bassage explained the difference between FEMA reimbursement with the current 2011 Standards and the as yet unsigned 2013 and the urgency the Selectboard feels to move on this matter.
- Stephanie described what the Alternate Goals Sub-committee has been doing to come up with the DRAFT Town Road and Bridge Standards the subcommittee brought to this evening's meeting: researching road widths, ditches, under road drainage, traffic calming, protecting water quality, other ordinances, contacting a lot of people for help, an August Saturday morning tour of East Montpelier roads with E. Montp. Road Commissioner Mike Garand... Conrad added – "we want people to use the two paved roads as much as possible; and the way to do that is to encourage people to get to the paved roads. So we've talked about the idea of collector [roads]; things that might encourage them to go this way out to those paved roads, instead of on all the other roads." Stephanie added – "But we aren't sure yet what those collector roads are yet." Peter added that the Planning Commission has been talking about collector roads for 15 years or more.
- Current speed limit map
- Peter – "I see two different documents. I don't think we need to give FEMA all of the details. All they want is...they probably don't want to know the width of the road.
- Stephanie – "Are you suggesting that the technical specifications that form the existing standards that talk about the thickness of the gravel and things like that, should be in a separate document, from our kind of alternative standards on how to maintain a rural character of the roads?"
- J.C. Here is what we want FEMA to know and here's what we want our road commissioner to know?
- J.C. argued for specificity about trees, pull outs, and ditches. Conrad asked, don't different places require different levels of specificity?
- Barbara suggested sending an extract of our standards to FEMA.
- Stephanie said that – "We ought to have an inventory of each road in town, specifying where and what type of ditching is needed, where trees need to be planted, etc. It's a lot of work, but in the end that would be the most useful."
- Craig – "think everybody would be most satisfied with the eventual outcome...if it's really specific; so the road commissioner can say, OK, let's see, Bliss Pond Rd, oh yes..."

or, you are going to let the road commission use his own discretion, which is what we've got now."

- J.C. – "What I hope we give the Selectboard is something they can make a decision on. When they are looking at our recommendations, some of them will be very specific. Some of them will say this is what we want to use for materials. This is how we build a ditch. There will be actual dimensions, technical descriptions. Others will be more on an aesthetic level. More on this is the principle that we embrace."
- Peter – "Every road is a different situation. I think what Conrad was getting at is not to rebuild the whole road, but to follow Mike's idea of you fix what needs to be fixed, fix problems, wet area by wet area...first you don't end up with a road that looks like the one that goes over to Marshfield, and second people don't get all upset about it because they don't have this slam-bang, all of a sudden it's an air craft runway. They notice that their problem has gotten fixed and now they're happy with it...I think we are all in agreement with that."
- Craig asked how do you maintain a stone lined ditch? How do you dig the silt out of a stone lined ditch?
- Conrad said every road should have a fairly narrow well-traveled roadway and every road should have a verge, a vegetated shoulder where the grass holds against erosion and filters silt, keeps silt from filling in the ditch as quickly as it does with a bare shoulder.
- J.C. commented that "I see that you have a lot of specific information. I think it is more [about] clearly delineating between what is a specific instruction and a general principle."
- Bill asked to comment on page 2, roadway widths, "maybe a min/max instead of single width; where it says trees should be planted, it should be owners of the land should be encouraged to plant trees instead of discouraged as they now are because you can't plant trees in front of somebodies house unless they want them. But the town can't plant trees in the right-of-way." "Also the speed limit says 40 mph, I don't think there is any road in town other than the paved roads that is over 35 mph."
- Conrad – Ditches for snow storage is not on the table. And that ditches should have turnouts rather than run long distances.
- Stephanie – We learned that ditch turnout should be made [with a grader] by going in and pulling out rather than pushing [a pile of road gravel] out [into the right-of-way or beyond].
- Doug – "If you want to make the roads better, slow them down." I heard through the grape vine that Alfie wants to do some work on Tucker Rd. They don't know why or how or when. I talked to everybody on Tucker Rd. Bill says keep the hell out of here." "People don't travel on the edge of the road, they travel in the middle of the road. So why do you want to run your ... grader right over next to my lawn so the green grass is in the road? You don't have to. Cause they don't ...travel there."
- J.C. one of the 5 CRAC topics is an appeal process... Now we have a way to say to a road commissioner or a road foreman, this does not comply with what we've established as a town for what we want."
- Doug – "One way they widen the roads, and you don't know it, you don't see it, is in the winter time when they get that first snow storm or the second snow storm, they drop that wing out. They get dirt, they get snow, all mixed together, and leaves, they widen the road on you."
- Stephanie – make a note, "We didn't address plowing."

- Doug – “What the hell is the Town right-of-way?...We are not here for the Town. The Town is here for us.”
- Peter – “I don’t think Alfred want to ruin the road. I just think he has a different perception on what should be done.”
- Stephanie - “Mike’s not perfect, but we learn from him. One of the things I learned from Mike is that it’s perfectly reasonable to pull the gravel back into the traveled way, and then seed and mulch those shoulders that were covered with gravel. ...What he [Alfred] does is ugly, wastes gravel and creates this berm for storm water to go rushing down and it washes out the road.”
- Conrad – “One of the most controversial things in here I think is saying that if you can’t pull the berms back in and seed and mulch, [sometimes] you’ve got to raise the road [add gravel]...Because the road has washed away over the years...so you can have drainage...”
- Peter – “I think the general trend has been to just go through any section of road and add a lot of gravel to it, and dig ditches on both sides, no matter what.”
- J.C. – Citing the Maple Corner rebuild this summer - “All I want to see is some language in there saying that some consideration should be paid to the finished height of the roadway relative to the [unintelligible word] adjacent to it.
- Doug – “I would go around with a grader in the spring of the year when it’s really, really muddy, I would windrow that right off to one side, all that muck and mud and everything. I would windrow it and let it dry out off to one side. Out of your way. Out of the traffic way. And then I’d come in there with inch and a half stones, I’d put them right in there. Then I’d come back with a grader and I’d pull that good gravel right over that inch and a half stone so people aren’t having blowouts and stones flying all over...right on top is not the way to do it; underneath, water will run through it.”
- Conrad asked everyone to look at page 5 “Guardrails should be used sparingly.” “This whole theory that we are supposed to protect people who are going too fast on our roads, from natural things...If you followed the standards that are in the 2013 version, which it said we’d have to follow, we’d have guardrails on half of our roads. So I’m just wondering if other people sort of agree with this idea that you use them sparingly.”

J.C. –Its 10 o’clock, is there other committee work that anybody’s done that we’ve missed, that we need to talk about before we go home this evening?

Peter – asked everyone to go online and write in your comments on Conrad’s draft. Type in with capital letters or highlight it or write it in red or underline it, whatever works for you. Just write in your changes/suggestions and email it to us.

Conrad said that the Inventory Committee [recording the current status of the roads] has met some. “We didn’t get much done; my focus has been on the standards.” Measurements of the road widths, ditches, conditions, etc. “The well-traveled section – that’s the section of the road that the cars actually use, and that the cars have pushed the gravel off of, the hard smooth part of the road. And that I think is the key measurement. And you’ll see those numbers are a lot narrower than one might expect. Obviously you want a little more room than that, but we don’t need huge amounts of room and that’s the whole point. That’s the important number, not gravel to gravel [edge] or tree to tree, though those are important.”

J.C. wants a Field Guide for someone who is actually building a road and has their butt on a piece of equipment or the Selectboard or whoever is giving instructions to somebody.

Barbara reported that the Inventory Committee is working on how to inventory roads, section by section, arbitrary increments or types of road.

A short discussion about how people choose the routes they drive.

- Discussion of topics and committee material; how are we doing and what are the next steps.

- Keep working and interact by email
- List of sub-committee members:
 - Management System: Craig, J.C., Doug
 - Alternate Goals: Stephanie, Conrad, Peter, Trey
 - Inventory matrix of roads: Barbara, Craig, Conrad
 - Roads development review process, dispute resolution: Peter, J.C., Trey

Stephanie asked if we all agreed that it would be useful to have actual pictures and drawings of the good way of doing it, the bad way of doing it? Bill answered, Yes, a picture is worth a thousand words. It really is.

- Schedule next meeting, review whether 5 topics need expansion (or contraction), next steps related to 5 topics and adjourn.

- Set the next meeting for Thursday Sept 12, 7:00 pm @ the Town Office.

[10:15 pm] Adjourned

Submitted by Peter Harvey, Secretary