



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES December 22, 2008

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Chair, Board of Selectman
Larry Ballin, Selectman
Tina Helm, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Alan Hanscom, District 2 Engineer, NHDOT
Mark Hemmerlein, Water Quality Program Manager, NHDOT
Richard Lee, Public Works Director
David Seastrand, Police Chief
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief
Mark Wendling, New London resident
Debbie Cross, Intertown Record

Chair Kaplan opened the meeting at 8:00 and opened the public hearing on reduced winter maintenance on Route 103A. He turned the floor over to Alan Hanscom and Mark Hemmerlein of the NH Department of Transportation. Mark Hemmerlein described that this all came about as the result of the Park & Ride expansion and DES's request for salt reduction due to the increase in size of the Park & Ride. NHDOT had proposed a separate action for a low salt maintenance policy on Route 103A, requesting to treat it at one point during the storm for de-icing, which has the effect of reducing the salt load by half.

Alan Hanscom said that in some storms, DOT may salt more than once (at the start of the storm, periodically as-needed during the storm to keep the ice from freezing onto the pavement, and again at the end of the storm), so there may be three or more applications in a typical storm. With the reduced winter maintenance, the intent is to do one salt application at some point during the storm, beginning at Route 11 and ending at Columbus Avenue, although he is open for discussion about the terminus. Larry Ballin said that if the intent is to get less salt into Herrick Cove, it would make sense to go further, such as to Poor Road, although he recognizes that there are hills in the area as well.

Alan Hanscom said it's difficult to pick a good starting point; this is not an ideal road to be monkeying around with salt application, but it is a good first step to working with DES on what is going into Herrick Cove. He said that Route 11 and the Interstate have more impact on Herrick Cove than Route 103A, but this is something that can be tried to see if it can make a difference. It does not have to just be low salt; sand will come into play as well, although there is not a lot to be gained by sanding the road. NHDOT could go to Poor Road or somewhere else, but they have to err on the side of the safety of vehicles. The Selectmen agreed that safety is foremost.

Mark Hemmerlein said this is tied directly to the water quality data from NHDES. Herrick Cove Brook is the impaired brook, and the watershed ends before getting to Columbus Ave. NHDOT is trying to tie the maintenance policy to the water quality data so that it is not an arbitrary association.

Mark Kaplan asked if there were any comments from the public, and there were none. Jessie Levine read aloud a letter from Robert Wood, Associate Executive Director of the Lake Sunapee Protective Association, as follows:

The Lake Sunapee Protective Association appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed reduced road salt application and we would like to state clearly that we support the reduced application of salt and other road treatments.

LSPA data has shown the long-term rising trends in specific conductance or conductivity in streams, lakes and ponds. NHDES and LSPA data has also shown the very high correlation of specific conductivity to chloride concentrations – the chloride coming almost entirely from road salt. NHDES data from the I-93 expansion points to a 96+% correlation while LSPA's local data resulted in a 98+% correlation. The streams in this area (Rte. 103A from Rte 11 to Columbus Avenue at Herrick Cove) adjacent to and/or passing under NH Rte.103A and/or I-89 are among the highest conductivity streams in the Sunapee watershed. At low water flow periods, conductivity levels have reached acute levels. These levels impact aquatic life, and if concentrations remained at these levels for extended periods, these streams would not support aquatic life as they should.

We understand that reduced salt application is a condition for approval of the NHDOT Park & Ride expansion plans. We recall that these expansion plans included best management practices (BMPs) to reduce impacts of runoff on the nearby/adjacent wetlands and small stream. If the P & R plans are approved, we would like to request that there not be an increased salt application on the parking area. BMPs are helpful in reducing the impacts of certain contaminants on water quality but do little to reduce the levels of chlorides entering ground and surface waters. Any additional salting of the P & R lot would likely “cancel out” any reduced salt application on 103A.

Because chlorides are highly water soluble and very mobile, they are not substantially remediated by BMPs like swales, or retention or infiltration structures. LSPA would like to suggest a no-salt application or substantially reduced application to the P & R lot if it has not already been considered. This may mean that more sand application is needed for safety purposes but the BMP installations would be more capable of minimizing the impacts of sand/sediment deposition than minimizing chloride impacts. Accumulated sand deposition can also be removed from BMP structures during routine maintenance. Chlorides are not readily removable from soil or water.

Though reduced salt application on 103A may help to reduce in-stream concentrations in the nearby stream, the conclusion drawn from LSPA data was that the major contributing factor in the elevated chloride levels in streams in this area was the application of road salt to I-89. LSPA is aware that NHDOT had planned a reduced application or alternative application approach to portions of I-89 but has not heard the results of these efforts.

LSPA supports any reduction in the application of road salt and sand application in this area including Rte.103A, Interstate 89 and the Park & Ride parking lot with due consideration to road safety concerns.

Mark Hemmerlein commented on the letter. The parking lot as proposed would have about a 300-pound per year increase in salt. The watershed as a whole uses 226 tons per year estimated, and the low-salt reduction on Route 103A estimates about a 20-ton reduction. Mark Hemmerlein said that NHDOT does

not want to build a parking lot that it cannot maintain, but the impact of the parking lot is a fraction of the overall salt use.

Mark Kaplan asked for clarification about the Park & Ride expansion. Larry Ballin explained that the Park & Ride expansion had been approved by the Planning Board and was necessary for the car loading. Larry Ballin said that the trade off between 300 pounds for the Park & Ride and 20 ton reduction for Route 103A is a good tradeoff. Mark Hemmerlein said that the Park & Ride has fantastic air quality benefits as well, to the tune of tons of carbon dioxide and thousands of pounds of nitrates per day. On the I93 Corridor, the main thrust has been to build Park & Rides and have built thousands of parking spaces at Park & Ride on I93.

Tina Helm asked if Dartmouth Coach could stop in Grantham as well as New London, and Alan Hanscom said that there is not enough space there. He knows that there have been chats between the bus company and NHDOT, but there is nowhere to go at that location.

Mark Hemmerlein asked if there were any concerns specific to the proposal for the reduced salt application on Route 103A. Mark Kaplan asked the public safety officials present for their comments. Police Chief Seastrand said he does not see any problem with it, and his department has no statistics for accidents in inclement weather in that area. He said that the low salt area on Route 114, approved in December 2005, has not been an issue. Fire Chief Jay Lyon agreed that the accidents around Herrick Cove were not weather-related, although he cautioned that the prevailing winds on Lake Sunapee do go blowing across. Public Works Director Richard Lee said he did not have any comments.

In response to a question from Larry Ballin, Alan Hanscom said that there turned out to be no documentation on the "Indian graveyard" adjacent to the Park & Ride, so approval to expand has been granted. Jessie Levine asked for a copy of the latest plan, which has changed to expand into the area of the alleged graveyard.

Mark Kaplan asked Police Chief Seastrand about illegal activity on the Park & Ride, and asked if he expected there to be more crime as a result of the Park & Ride expansion. Chief Seastrand said that he does not expect there to be less crime, but every shift passes through the parking lot and checks the vehicles, so while he does not think that we will reduce what we have, he does not expect a great increase. He does think the additional parking will be beneficial, because there are problems with vehicles that can't get in and out, so it needs to be expanded.

Alan Hanscom said that there is a law now that says NHDOT has the ability to regulate what happens at the Park & Ride, including a 14-day limit for parking. In the past, NHDOT discouraged winter parking, but now has the authority to move them along. It is helpful that the Police Department is monitoring the cars. Mark Kaplan asked who removes cars that have been there for more than 14 days. Alan Hanscom said they would contact local police for assistance, and Chief Seastrand said that he understands that Woody Blunt and the bus company now oversees maintenance of the Park & Ride and has the authority to remove vehicles (with a courtesy call to the Police Department).

Mark Wendling asked what the possibility of a video monitor would be with the expansion. Alan Hanscom said they intend to "plumb" the lot with conduit for video monitoring, but the cost is not included in the project. Mark Hemmerlein said there are some laws that do not allow videoing of public right-of-ways. Jessie Levine said that one issue is who pays for the video – the private bus company, the state, or the Town.

Mark Hemmerlein asked for the final letter of request, which Jessie Levine said is awaiting two more signatures. Tina Helm asked for clarification as to the limits of the reduced salt maintenance; Jessie

Levine said the Selectmen's letter had asked for Herrick Cove Lane. Alan Hanscom said that if the DOT vehicle needs to turnaround, Columbus Ave may be easier, and if the idea is to reduce the impact on Herrick Cove Brook, Columbus Ave makes sense. Jessie Levine said she had suggested Herrick Cove Lane so that traffic did not experience different road conditions in the middle of a curve or in the middle of the hill. Alan Hanscom said that for record-keeping it would be one intersection or another, but the effect should not be that startling, as the transition may take place over several hundred feet. Tina Helm said that the Selectmen could defer to NHDOT, and Alan Hanscom said that regardless, they will try to keep it as safe as possible no matter where they end up. The Snow & Ice Policy remains the guideline and the foreman has control over what happens in the field, so if he finds it necessary to do something more, the idea is to make a decrease in general along the full length and what happens a few hundred feet one way or the other is not as critical as trying to make an overall reduction.

Mark Wending asked if there will be signage to indicate the reduced salt area, and Alan Hanscom replied in the affirmative, and pointed to the reduced salt area signs along Route 114 beyond Homan's Corner.

Emergency Management Committee: Mark Kaplan welcomed Peter Berthiaume, Emergency Management Director, and said that the crew did an amazing job during this emergency, setting up not one but two shelters. The fact that it was open and people had a place to go to keep warm and be taken care of was important to the town and the region. Tina Helm seconded Mark Kaplan's comments. Larry Ballin said that we owe Peter Berthiaume especially a great deal of thanks, as well as the folks on the Police & Fire Departments knocking on doors and making some critical decisions for people's welfare and well-being. This storm took a lot of people by surprise, and we responded admirably and should be proud of it. He thinks a lot of towns will be looking at what New London did and say "that's what we should be doing."

Peter Berthiaume thanked the Selectmen for their comments and said that this really was a team effort. It was a pleasure and New London is blessed with a great team and great residents and volunteers who were amazing. He knew some people would step forward but had no idea about the outpouring of support, including from area towns such as Sunapee CERT, Proctor Academy, the Boy Scouts, and others (he apologized for knowing that he would leave someone out).

Tina Helm said that it was a very amazing and warm experience, and suggested that there were so many people without power that the daily briefings over the internet were not appropriate for everyone. She suggested identifying specific places in town where hard copies of announcements could be posted so people know ahead of time to look for updates. Peter Berthiaume agreed and said that he and Jessie Levine had also talked about working with the College to have a continual message on the College's radio station 90.9 for an ongoing update that complements WNTK.

Tina Helm said that a second suggestion was to think in terms of putting together a small handbook of things that people should have in their homes, such as a transistor radio, etc. Jessie Levine said an informational "emergency wheel" had once been distributed to homeowners, but she agrees that a newsletter of information might be more useful, but people have to remember to follow that guidance. Mark Wending asked about the reverse notification by phone, and Jessie Levine said that function was taken over by the state Department of Safety, so the question does need to be asked about that function.

Mark Kaplan asked Chief Lyon whether there were fires during the emergency and Chief Lyon said that there was one fire but also water damage, carbon monoxide alarms, etc. Because some residents were not prepared, they were using outdoor propane lanterns inside for lighting and running generators inside garages or near open garage doors, which generated carbon monoxide. During the sweeps, the Fire Department worked to evacuate Bittersweet and Hilltop and did a canvassing of the town with the Police Department, and those went well and residents were pleased to receive the flyers and touch base. The

biggest questions were the same questions we had as to when power would be restored. Unlike the 1998 storm, where New London was the focal point, the widespread nature of this storm was difficult for a lot of people. The Fire Department staffed the station for six nights, and there was one building fire that they responded to quickly on Little Sunapee Road. Chief Lyon said it went well working with Peter, Jessie, Dave and Richard, and others.

The Selectmen thanked everyone again for their hard work.

Minutes of December 8, 2008: Tina Helm moved to approve the minutes of December 8, seconded by Larry Ballin, and approved.

Sunapee Sewer Project: Jessie Levine said she wanted to make sure we were all on the same page and that we would bring forward only the engineering and design costs (through bidding) but not seek funding for the actual construction in 2009. Mark Kaplan said that we have to recognize that the Sunapee Sewer Plant is 35 years old and needs work to the tune of \$7.6 million. Tina Helm said that she was disappointed by the engineer's presentation and inability to answer some of the questions. Jessie Levine said that in the engineer's defense, we need to let them finish their presentation so that we are better informed about the project.

Whipple Basement Project: Jessie reported that she and Bruss Construction had cancelled two meetings regarding the basement project as a result of the storm. She said that the Department Heads had suggested using the FEMA reimbursements to augment the budget for the Whipple basement project, since the space would have been highly useful in the recent emergency. The Selectmen discussed this idea and were positive about the concept.

Comcast Negotiations: Jessie Levine said that another extension had to be filed and that Lisa Birmingham was receiving pushback from her colleagues on our franchise agreement.

Planning Board: Larry Ballin reported that the Planning Board met with a public hearing on the proposed zoning boundary changes, which were engineered by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning commission. There is still some confusion, and in a perfect world no lots would be intersected by a zoning boundary, but it not being a perfect world, there was some give and take. He did not think that anyone lost in this battle and that some people actually gained. There will be another hearing in January. Larry Ballin did not make the December 15th meeting on the zoning amendments due to the storm.

Larry Ballin also noted with sadness the passing of Judy Condict, the Planning Board's long-time secretary, with memorial services planned for the spring.

Applications for Building Permits:

- Charles P. Adams, Adams Living Trust, 65 Castle Lane (Map & Lot 130-015-003) Install outdoor wood boiler w/chimney – Permit # 08-150 – Approved.
- Dennis Genter, 95 Old Route 11, (Map & Lot 056-020-000) remove & relocate 2 car garage, new deck on house, finish basement, new siding, - Permit #08-151 – Approved.
- Jonathan Pucker, 221 Lamson Lane, (Map & Lot 062-002-000) remove & install deck & walkway – Permit #08-152 – Approved.
- Robert & Kathryn Ruggles, 823 Bunker Road (Map & Lot 077-004-000) renovate existing house – Permit #08-153 – Approved.

Application for Sydney Crook Room:

Application for use of Bandstand:

- Bandstand Committee – Friday evenings @ 6:30, June 19, 26, July 10, 17, 31, August 14, & 21, 2009 – Approved.

Application for use of Whipple Hall:

- Bandstand Committee use of hall in case of rain - Friday evenings @ 6:30, June 19, 26, July 10, 17, 31, August 14, & 21, 2009 – Approved.

Application for Permanent Sign:

- (William J. Faccone, owner of building) Mathew Mitnitski/Nonni's of New London, LLC, 256 Newport Road (Map & Lot 059-008-000) sign to be anchored to building – Approved.

Other:

- Disbursement & payroll voucher week of 12-15-08 - Approved.
- Tax Abatement for Peter & Harriet Messer, 997 King Hill Road (Map & Lot 118-003-000) abatement in the amount of \$95.63 for property on Tracy Road, property was transferred to town in 2001 and therefore an abatement should be granted – Approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessie Levine
Town Administrator