Middlesex Road Committee Meeting Notes
5/9//2024

Present:
Steve Dennis, Co-Chair
Vic Dwire, Road Commissioner
Ken Davis
Scott Gurley
Marianne Mullen
John Rahill
Richard Cowles
Sandy Levine, Middlesex Planning Commission
Jessica Millard
Zach Smith
Steve Martin
Susan Warren, Mtg Notes

On Zoom:
Zara Vincent, Co-Chair, Selectboard
Eric Metivier, Road Foreman
Paul Cerminara
Reuben MacMartin, CV RPC
Paula Kaiman Joined 5:39pm

Sandy Levine motioned to approve the 4/25/24 meeting notes distributed by Zara Vincent, Vic Dwire seconded it, and all were in favor. Meeting notes will be accessible to town residents through the website whatsnextmiddlesexvt.org.

Reuben MacMartin, CV Regional Planning Commission Senior Transportation Planner was recognized among the people participating by zoom and was asked to introduce himself. Reuben said he was mostly attending to learn what the group was working on and to see how it would interface with the RPC's work.

In order to get group work going as expeditiously as possible, Zara is suggesting four work groups be formed:

1. Team Immediate Fixes, what can be done soon with existing funding and road crew? Identification, Prioritization, Action plan.
2. Team Future Fixes, what are the larger projects needed in the next 5 years that require funding for design and/or implementation? What are 2 or 3 spots per year we can improve? Rating scale, List of Ongoing Priorities and maintenance.
3. Team Funding, what are possible sources of funding for the larger road projects identified in #2 above? Create Spreadsheet of when which ones are due? Grant learning - two to focus on now are 1) Better Roads Program 2) Road Grants and Aid program (due May 10,2024)

4. Team Friends, Community outreach and input, how do we best get input from and provide information to community members?

Committee members volunteered for these committees, the resulting committee membership lists are attached. At the next Road Committee meeting (5/23) Groups 1 and 3 will discuss and present draft work plans, and groups 2 and 4 will do the same at the 6/6 meeting.

Someone asked about the role of the Friends committee, Zara explained it is to make sure the committee fully understands the town residents' concern and specific experience or knowledge about the problem areas. This information will be used in conjunction with the Road Crews knowledge as well as the information gathered by the Teams. It was noted that certain grant sources will have specific requirements related to the design and implementation of any project. Additionally, the team will keep the town informed about the work of the committee.

Paul asked for a report from the Road Crew about current plans. As reported recently, Dirt Tech has been contracted for work on nine locations this summer. They will first be working on Wood Road (is this surface or ditch work?), then Macey Road (some prep work by the town was recently completed). Richard asked about the conditions of the town trucks. Eric reported that all three trucks currently have ongoing repair needs, but it is difficult to schedule the work as repairs shops are generally understaffed.

Scott Gurley, who is a VTrans employee, went through a list of available state grants available to towns. He called particular attention to the Backroads Grants (formerly Better Backroads). He said grants with state funding are preferable to Federal ones because federal funds come with substantial standards and requirements which are cumbersome for small projects. The Backroads grants are for a maximum of $20,000.
Additionally the town receives Grants In Aid annually from the state to assist with routine maintenance. It was mentioned that the town recently received a Stream Alteration Permit from VTDEC to remove the pile-up of rocks just before the bridge at the bottom of McCullough Hill Road. (200ft) Question regarding how long that permit was available?
ZV Note = Eric checked date. Expiration of permit is 10/1/24 making a RFQ request to have the work done this summer. * Added to Select Board agenda 5/21/24

Ken suggested, and a discussion followed, about creating a prioritizing system for choosing what projects to work on so that residents can understand how decisions are made and the process is transparent. The first two teams, short and long term fixes, should draft prioritization processes. In addition to identifying locations where damage has already occurred, we also need to be sure the RC takes into account the long term changes, e.g. climate change is making the weather worse w.r.t road conditions in several ways. Therefore the town should be thinking ahead about structural changes that are needed (an example might be larger culverts are needed in many locations).

Zara reported that 63 responses to the road survey posted on FPF so far, and encouraged the RC members to promote more participation through our contacts, etc.

Zara also reminded committee members to NOT “reply-all” to her group emails; it violates open meeting standards.

Zara asked Reuben MacMartin for his thoughts now that he had heard our discussion. He replied that it was a good discussion. He suggested avoiding federal funding as much as possible because it brings with it the requirement to use federal standards which substantially raise costs.

Several online maps were mentioned that would probably be of use to the RC:

- DEC map the shows hydraulic interconnectivity of the roads and streams (Vtculverts.com)
- Traffic density (Ken will send link)

ZV Note - Sandy sent interactive maps Please see “Resources 5-9-24 Middlesex Road Committee” Saved in one drive.
Ken is having a large physical map printed for meeting purposes.
Ken also forwarded the following links and information supplied by Reuben:
The link below connects to the State of Vermont Traffic Count database. Which you can use to supplement your survey-based prioritization efforts.
The town can request CVRPC take additional counts. Counts are conducted by RPC staff – counting equipment is not lent out.

https://vtrans.public.ms2soft.com/tcds/tsearch.asp?loc=Vtrans&mod

The links below will connect you to listings for State and Federal funding opportunities respectively.

https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/highway/documents/ltf/Show%20Me%20the%20Money%20Guide%20-%20Jan%202023.pdf

https://www.transportation.gov/rural/funding-opportunities

Next meeting May 23, 5:00 pm