Middlesex Town Road Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 13, 2024

Present:
Zara Vincent
Eric Metivier
Vic Dwyer
Ken Davis
Richard Cowles
Scott Gurley
Dexter Lefavour
Marianne Mullen
John Rahill
Steven Dennis
Susan Warren

On Speaker Phone:
Sandy Levine
Zach Smith

Guests:
Michelle Johnson

We were unable to get the Zoom call functional, so Sandy Levine and Zach Smith joined by phone for at least part of the meeting.

Vic Dwire motioned to accept the minutes from the May 23 meeting, Maureen Mullen seconded, and all were in favor.

Zara gave an update from the town on the road crew. Charles Pelcher has resigned from the road crew, and a position is now open. Also, Vic Dwire is no longer Road Commissioner, and Eric Metivier will hold this position until a new commissioner is appointed.

Zara also provided information on the DirtTech projects' staging area that was recently set up on a field owned by Steve Martin. It was recently determined that Act 250 and town permits would be needed for this activity, even though it was to be temporary. The town and DirtTech are in the process of removing the materials.

Richard said he had checked out the sites of the Mud list (sites needed to be rebuilt from ground up that qualify for the 100% funded Hazard Mitigation Grants), and that he and Paul Cerminara had looked at sites to identify mud season mitigation projects to add estimates and latitude and longitude so pre-applications can be filled out online by Zara.

The new town truck is due to be picked up (May 14) and a third truck is coming in late June. Then the town will have three functioning trucks.

It was reported that the Hazard Mitigation grants are now fully funded (are these the DirtTech projects?). DirtTech has begun their work on Macey and Wood roads, and plan to start East Hill work next. John Rahill discussed the work happening on Wood Road. He reported that ditch shaping, a new road gravel layer, and culvert replacements are taking place. He also emphasized the importance of establishing a good crown on the road as it's important to get the runoff into the ditch as soon as possible during a storm event. Ken Davis brought up Macey Road work as well, also emphasizing the need to crown the road.Ken also mentioned he had spoken with several other area towns about their post-storm work and felt that Middlesex was in a similar situation with other towns in terms of damage needing fixing and getting federal grant money.

An issue that came up when Ken talked to the other area towns, and that came up a lot in the recent town road survey, was speeding. People generally think many drive too fast on the gravel roads. Eric said that in addition to safety concerns, speeding adds to the deterioration of the roads. The town funded two flashing radar signs in Putnamville a couple years ago that cost $16,000, but the group didn't think this was a good town-wide solution. A town can hire the County Sheriffs to conduct speed stops, but the Select Board recently decided not to do so due to the cost of $2500 and only being able to do it in the winter time when no one is speeding. The group felt this issue should be looked at further by this committee.

The group discussed road width as there is a general impression that some of the roads are getting wider over time. This adds to the expense of maintaining the roads (e.g. more gravel is needed) as well potentially making it harder for runoff to get into the ditches quickly. Also, a wider road might result in drivers increasing their speed. Currently, the maximum width of most town gravel roads should be 22 ft (11ft for each lane of travel).The group plans to gather more information about this issue.

Susan brought up the issue of the spread of invasive species such as knotweed along roads and streambanks. She mentioned in particular the permitted work for removing rock and stone that settled just above the small bridge at the bottom of McCullough Hill Road. Eric said he is aware of this issue and has procedures to address the location of the removed material. Susan suggested some coordination or information exchange between the road crew and the town conservation commission. She will speak with Dave Shepard of the CC.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 and Team Meetings started at 6pm, ending by 6:40

Meeting notes prepared by Susan Warren and edited / added to by Zara Vincent

Team Future - Dexter has purchased a program and is working on putting together a spreadsheet for asset management for the Road Crew. Inventory and keeping track of assets

will help us stay stocked up for a crisis and know what we have and what we need. John is researching solutions to speed issues.

Team Funding - Zara has filled out over $200k in Hazard Mitigation pre-applications for Grants. Paul and Richard have split up that original preliminary mud list and each will be sending me 14-15 more spots (28-30 total) where we need to rebuild the road from the bottom up. The Hazard grants are now 100% FUNDED - no match needed - so why not??
Zach has put together a cheat sheet listing grants, when they are due, where they come from and a live link to apply to them. This is extremely helpful and we will continue to add to it.
Steve is working on a list of grants we can't get because we don't comply, and what we can do to comply in the future.

Team Friends - Hilton did an AMAZING job putting together the survey results. Due to zoom issues we will have the reporting on that from him at our next meeting. We are planning our next survey/ opinion poll as well as FPF postings mentioned earlier (Speeding FAQ's etc.)

Team Fix - Marianne is helping by writing a job description for the road crew person we need to hire. She is also putting together a spreadsheet to cross reference the Mud List locations put together by Richard and Paul with the survey results. Eric is hiring crew and managing Dirt Tech communications. Vic is making list of road areas that are too wide (over 22')