Middlesex Road Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 18, 2024

Present:
Zara Vincent
Steve Martin
Stephen Dennis
Susan Warren
David and Janet Clemens (residents of Lower Sunnybrook Rd)

By zoom:
Ken Davis
Marianne Mullen
Steve Juifre
Hilton Dier III
Nora Miller (CReW, Waterbury)

Steve M moved to accept 6/27/24 minutes, Ken seconded, all were in favor.

Zara began with an update on the July 10 flood damage to the roads. So far the Road Crew's main focus has been to get all residents access to an at least one-lane road for emergency access, which has just been accomplished. The next priority is to get roads open to two lane traffic. DirtTech was given a short term contract to assist with this effort, and has paused their flood mitigation work resulting from the July 2023 flood event. They will return to this work following the emergency work. Appreciation of the road crew's long hours they have been working since the flood event was expressed by the committee.

Route 12 is closed to thru-traffic between Culver Hill and Shady Rill. Shady Rill will reopen soon. Work will then begin on East Hill Road. There will be a new cross culvert installed on Center Road during which time the road will be closed to thru-traffic. This work is considered "emergency" work by FEMA, and the town is working closely with them. Zara reports Middlesex is a "priority" for FEMA, due to the extent of damage.

Steve said that most of the just-completed "mitigation" work on Wood Road by DirtTech held up well in the recent flood (the work included upsizing some culverts), but additional sections of the road were damaged.

Sunny Brook Road has uncompleted work from the 2023 floods, and the designs are still being completed.

Zara reported that the Select Board is planning to hold a town-wide meeting on road issues, possibly August 6. She said there is the possibility of additional federal money through a "build

Back Better" program under the Biden administration. One issue the Select Board is considering is buying larger driveway culverts that would be more likely to handle the larger flows of storms events. The issue of buyouts was raised by Scott Gurley as a means of moving homes out of harm's way when there is no likely way to prevent damage in a particular area. Areas at the bottom ends of Lower Sunnybrook and Macey roads were mentioned as examples.
There is some possibility of the federal qualifications changing; currently a buyout can't be applied until after a home is damaged. Proposed requests for buyouts from the 2023 storm need to be submitted by August 16, 2024.

Brief updates were given by the Road Committees four work groups.

Team Friends:
The group has identified possible mechanisms to provide road information to Middlesex residents.

- Front Porch Forum
- A Middlesex facebook page
- Next Door
- WAZE (a map of the town roads that could be annotated)
- VT Alerts (was discussed but probably not useful for detailed information dissemination)

Steve Martin will discuss possibilities with Eric Metevier to see what would work best for him, and how the committee could help.

Disseminating the results from the survey done by Hilton Dier was discussed. Much useful information was collected in the survey about traffic volume and issues people are concerned about. Hilton will prepare a draft summary.

An additional survey might be useful as the work of the Road Committee progresses. For instance we might want to identify people that might need help (e.g. evacuation) during a storm event, identify volunteers to help people with temporarily limited access to their homes, or develop procedures for notifying the crew about problems e.g. where a tree has fallen across the road.

Team Fix:
The group is considering such questions as are residents willing to consider additional taxes to maintain and storm-proof the roads (proactive projects). Could the road crew be expanded in number to fix certain issues? Currently the town road crew is employed mainly on maintenance work, and reconstruction or repairs is contracted out. Is there a different model that would work better?

Team Funding:
Zara is working on the Hazards Mitigation Grant, which has a focus on safety, to continue the mud season mitigation work. The state's Backroads Grant program can be used to fix problem areas with grants up to $20,000.

Team Futures:
Susan reported that Dexter is developing a GIS-based road database. It will mesh with the VTrans maps, making grant applications more clear, and can be used for town planning purposes. Roads are divided into segments based on intersections with other roads or other features. Information such as chronic mud spots, road width, culverts locations and size, traffic volume, safety concerns etc can all be included and customized. Dexter has been coordinating with Eric M on this project.

Ken developed an extensive list of road issues and questions, and Susan outlined a potential road plan. The group has not yet had a chance to discuss these as a group.

Meeting notes prepared by Susan Warren