Middlesex Town Road Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 15, 2024

Present:
Zara Vincent, Chair
Eric Metivier, Road Foreman
Dexter Lefavour
Marianne Mullen
Ken Davis
Steve Martin
John Rahill
Stephen Dennis
Mike Kline
Susan Warren

By Zoom:
Hilton Dier
Scott Gurley
Zach Smith

The meeting began with a discussion of the August 6th community forum on the town roads. It was thought to be a good meeting, with valuable information provided by the panel and a good Q and A format. Zara has a list of the questions asked that didn't specifically get answered at the meeting; the questions will be divided up and sent to the appropriate team for answers, which will be posted on Front Porch Forum.

The group welcomed new member Mike Kline, river scientist and former head of the VTDEC's River Management Program. Mike has already begun an assessment of fluvial conditions on Great Brook to understand what stream processes are in play and how/if they can be addressed by stream stabilization projects. He reports that the stream has now been cut down to the point where most of the bed is glacial till and clay deposits, which are highly erodible. There are also several side hill sloughing slopes that pose an ongoing threat to public safety. The stream will continue to cut down and thus continue to destabilize the side hills, eventually undercutting roadside stabilization measures and further endangering the road and properties along the road. The studies he will undertake will try to establish if the streambed could be stabilized and thus make the implementation of road and property protection measures possible.

Zara continues to work on the '23 Hazard Mitigation Grant application, now due August 30. FEMA is asking for additional information on the '23 road project sites, including how the finished projects were impacted by the '24 flood event. Town officials, including Zara, met recently with the town's current FEMA contact, and have learned that FEMA is essentially out of funds, even for prior year completed projects. Middlesex has paid for the work that was done, anticipating reimbursement form FEMA for the work completed. The town will be applying for

assistance with the ‘24 road projects as well. Sarah Merriman sent in an application for funding under an REI Better Roads Program, and it was suggested the town also apply for funds from the Safe Roads for All program.

Zara will divide the list of questions remaining from the Aug 6 forum and distribute them to the appropriate Team for answering. Zara asks the teams to remember not to exceed 8 people in emails and meetings (including Zara, who asks to be cc’d on all) so that we are respecting open meeting laws.

The town’s Hazard Mitigation Plan is now out of date, and the state requires a new one. In addition to flood hazard and preparedness, it includes other threats such as pandemics, fire, and earthquakes.

Additional updates:

Future “mud season mitigation” projects are for now delayed while recovery from the ‘23 and ‘24 rain events continue.

Vic Dwire raised a question about the surface material used recently by DirtTech during emergency road repairs. Eric M said he plans to cover it over with the typical road surface material in the future.

A question of road crew staffing was raised, should we look at adding additional crew members so that the town has increased in-house capability to recover from flood events and carry out fixes such as mud season mitigation?

We need to look at the town’s road and bridge standards to see if they still meet state standards, a requirement for FEMA funding.

Team Friends is looking at ways to communicate to town residents about road issues. This includes both the potential need for quick emergency messages, as well as updates about where roads will be closed during reconstruction or maintenance. Plans for a second community road survey could include a question about how people can best get information.

It was decided that the next meeting will include a discussion led by Team Futures about planning for the future.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15.

Meeting notes by Susan Warren