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Martin's Point Bridge Advisory Committee : Meeting Minutes, August 9, 2011

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Martin's Point Bridge Replacement Project
Minutes from Public Information Meeting
Martin's Point Health Care Center
August 9, 2011
6:30 to 8 pm

Attendees:

Members of Public

Sue Kufra	Kari Holdtman
Peg Balano	Sandra Sincero
Bruce Pitt	Bonny Rodden
Julie Pitt	Larry Nichols
Dolores Makels	Celine Frueh
David Murray	Mark Rajotte
Nancy Goddard	Betty Pojak
Sydney McDowell	Larry Winger
Jennifer Curran	Diane York
Brad Lombard	Bill York
Susan Lombard	

Martin's Point Advisory Committee Members

Kerry Tietjen	Ann Tucker
Donald Hamilton	Richard Weare
Nathan Poore	Holly Winger
Cheri Juniewicz	

Other attendees

Leanne Timberlake, MaineDOT
Wayne Frankhauser, MaineDOT
Ben Condon, MaineDOT
Sally Oldham, Consultant to MaineDOT
Anthony Puntin, The Louis Berger Group
Paul DeStefano, The Louis Berger Group

Leanne Timberlake opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and explaining that this meeting was scheduled as a result of a request for MaineDOT to provide an additional opportunity for individuals who own property close to Martin's Point Bridge on either the Portland or Falmouth sides to learn more about the proposed bridge replacement project. She explained that the content and coverage of this meeting would be similar to that of the Public Information Meeting held on July 13, 2011 (see transcript:

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/martinspointbridgedb/documents/pdf/MARTIN'S%20POINT%20BRIDGE%20PUBLIC%20MEETING%20TRANSCRIPT.pdf>).

Leanne introduced members of MaineDOT's staff and consultants present who are working on the project. She used a short PowerPoint presentation to describe the process being used to develop a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and Request for Proposals (RFP), the Martin's Point

Advisory Committee's role in the overall project process and the evaluation process that will be used to choose a Design-Build team to undertake the bridge replacement. She asked Sally Oldham, the consultant to MaineDOT who has been facilitating the Advisory Committee meetings to provide information about this public involvement effort. Sally said she appreciated that so many Advisory Committee members were in attendance and asked them to raise their hands so others could see who is serving on the Committee. Sally indicated that the Advisory Committee's efforts have been extremely helpful to Leanne and other project team members at MaineDOT.

Sally described briefly how Advisory Committee members were chosen and explained that the group has generally met monthly for about a year. She explained that the group has been working by consensus whenever possible and in their first few meetings developed consensus Problem, Needs, and Vision statements. She read the vision statement so all could hear it. She asked if any Advisory Committee members wanted to say anything to add to her explanation. As no one wished to speak, Sally opened the floor to questions.

Sally acknowledged that Leanne's presentation had covered a lot of information and used many terms that might be unfamiliar to those in attendance. She encouraged people to ask questions first about the material Leanne covered and then welcomed all questions or comments that people wanted to make.

Larry Winger asked whether the Advisory Committee will have further input on the RFP before its issuance in early September. Sally explained the Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet August 16 and will be reviewing sections of the RFP relevant to their recommendations at that time.

Peg Balano asked how many Design-Build (D-B) projects MaineDOT has been involved with. Leanne responded that she has been involved with 5 herself and that MaineDOT has undertaken 8 or 10 D-B projects. The first was the Sagadahoc Bridge between Bath and Woolwich, then the I- 295 Fore River Parkway Connector, then several at once including Veteran's Memorial Bridge, bridges in Howland and Canaan-Pittsfield, highway projects in Farmingdale and Caribou, etc. Sally commented that she thought this Martin's Point Bridge Advisory Committee effort was more complete than that used in other bridge projects and asked if this perception is accurate. Wayne responded that yes, this Advisory Committee has been more involved with the bridge RFQ and RFP development process than in previous efforts.

Bill York asked how many times a contract award has been challenged after MaineDOT has made a team selection. Leanne responded that there hasn't really been a challenge. Generally the lowest bid wins and often this is the team with the highest score as well.

Sydney McDowell asked when the alignment will be decided. Leanne responded that this will happen when a proposal is selected by MaineDOT in the proposal evaluation process. The D-B teams will need to work within the restrictions set forth in the RFP, such as avoiding historic properties and minimizing wetlands impacts. Sally explained that in addition to the upstream or downstream alignments, a D-B team could propose to build on the existing alignment. This would entail staging construction in a manner that would allow 2 lanes of traffic to be maintained

and it could be a more expensive way to go about construction than to build upstream or downstream of the current bridge. Sally indicated also that based on Louis Berger's calculations, she understood the farthest a new bridge either upstream or downstream would be from the existing one would be about 64', based on the approximate 54' width of the new bridge and allowing about 10 between the existing and a new bridge. Tony confirmed that these were the calculations Louis Berger had made based on MaineDOT's instructions about the alignment considerations.

Sandra Sincero asked if cost is the main criteria for choosing the winning D-B team. Leanne explained that the lowest best value score will win the contract. Sandra asked further if the Advisory Committee has had input to the criteria that will be used to select the D-B team. Leanne referenced the scoring categories included on one of the PowerPoint slides and said each category will have a certain number of points associated with it. Each category will have a team assigned to score proposals in it based on considerations outlined in the RFP. The Advisory Committee will talk about the scoring categories and criteria at next week's meeting.

Sally suggested that those interested in this topic should take advantage of looking at materials on the MaineDOT website for the bridge project. The RFQ is posted on the website now. Once the draft RFP is out in early September it will be posted as well. Those interested can then review the categories and criteria included in the RFP. Sally indicated that MaineDOT expects to ask for volunteers from Portland and Falmouth to serve on the scoring teams.

Susan Lombard who lives on Just-a-Mere Road spoke to voice her concerns that if the bridge is built on the downstream side that she will lose her view of the water and will only have a view of the bridge. She wondered also about having seen a woman walking around the neighborhood taking photos a few months ago. Ben Condon indicated the photography was done as part of MaineDOT's responsibilities to identify potential historic properties close to the project area. Ms. Lombard wondered also how MaineDOT might deal with any potential damage to property from blasting or other harmful construction methods. She was concerned about possible reduction in her property value due to the bridge construction. Looking at the map, Tony Puntin of Louis Berger showed that the bridge location would not be in the line of sight from homes on Just-a-Mere Road. Tony indicated that although we don't anticipate any blasting, if there were any there would be a requirement for a pre-blast survey prior to any blasting being done.

Holly Winger, an Advisory Committee member, indicated how much discussion had occurred about the alignment envelope and the extent to which she felt MaineDOT staff have listened to Advisory Committee members on this issue. She said the alignment envelope is "dramatically tighter" now than originally proposed. She said as well that the Advisory Committee voiced early on the opinion that the existing width of the bridge would be important to maintain in order to accommodate all the transportation modes needed by users. MaineDOT had listened closely to this recommendation and was supporting building a replacement bridge with a width similar to that of the existing bridge. Holly indicated that the Advisory Committee has also asked for traffic managers to address how construction work can be done to provide the least disruption to users. She pointed out that having the Advisory Committee documents and minutes on the website provides to all qualified teams, information about citizens' concerns for consideration as they prepare their proposals.

Sandra Sincero asked about whether consideration is being given to the budget in a comprehensive way, including how this project might decrease property values, and if so, if there would be consideration for constructing the bridge in a manner that would not decrease property values even if the construction price was higher which would then share this cost burden more evenly among a broader range of taxpayers. Leanne responded that the MaineDOT would not consider property values per se, but would consider right of way/property impacts and this would be a consideration in the scoring. Sally added that she has an historic preservation background, and from this experience, she perceived that to have a bridge built of the type proposed would likely be a plus in terms of property values because it will support recreational interests well and better than the current bridge. Therefore, she suggested that the new bridge would not necessarily diminish property values and might well enhance them. Holly mentioned as well that the new bridge will be quieter. Leanne added that there will definitely be fewer joints in the bridge leading to a quieter ride.

Celine Frueh asked if there is a possibility that eminent domain might be applied to take over land for the bridge construction. Tony responded that based on the alignment envelope available, there will likely be impact to only one or two parcels. He explained further that in Falmouth there are a number of homes along Route 1, but the actual right of way goes fairly far back and is quite wide. Eminent domain would only apply if the state and the property owner couldn't reach an agreement about value and then the issue would go through a court process as needed to resolve it. It appears the only direct property impacts will be on the first house on the right and left as you come off the causeway.

Bill York asked whether it is mandated to have certain lighting on the bridge or if it can be dark as now. Sally responded that there would be no lighting of the vehicular lanes, but that the Advisory Committee has recommended that there be lighting for the multi-use path adequate to ensure safety but as minimal as possible so as not to be intrusive from a distance. She indicated this might be lighting at the rail height or may be above that. Sally indicated an additional factor is that the MaineDOT is negotiating with the towns for them to maintain the lighting. She asked Nathan Poore to comment on this topic. Nathan indicated that Falmouth wants low level lighting that is as minimal as possible. They aren't looking for aesthetic lighting but for something as simple as possible to serve the needed function. They'd like this lighting to be highly efficient, perhaps LED, to be as vandal proof as possible and easy to maintain. It will be metered for Portland and Falmouth to deal with the costs. Falmouth and Portland are having discussions about how to share costs here and also share the responsibility to plow the paths and roadway.

Peg Balano mentioned that she believes the current construction work on Rt 295 has gone well and has made it easy for commuters to negotiate. She wondered if night construction would be undertaken in this project. Leanne responded that night construction may be used for projects if there is a very compressed construction schedule. She doesn't think it will be needed in this project.

Another participant asked if any provisions are being made for parking near the bridge, given the use by anglers. She reported that a few nights ago there were 5 cars parked near Bay Shore Road. Leanne indicated that she cannot require the use of bridge funds to construct parking, but

a D-B team could choose to provide parking as part of their proposal. Bonny Rodden asked if it would be possible to mention the desire for provision of parking specifically in the RFP as an element for a superior score. Leanne responded that while it might not be included in the RFP, teams will have the Advisory Committee minutes as a source to understand what would be considered desirable by the public. Wayne added that there could be right of way impacts caused if parking were called for which could detract from MaineDOT's effort to minimize right of way impacts. The participant indicated a further concern that if the new bridge moves to the downstream side eliminating some of the area on the Portland side currently used for parking by anglers, that this might result in more cars parking on the Falmouth side, where cars are often parked without permission on private property. Another participant voiced concern regarding parking that if it is built more drivers may choose to park.

Mark Rajotte asked an additional question about possible property acquisition. Tony responded that it won't be known if there is any property acquisition needed until a proposal is selected early next year. He said parcels wouldn't be acquired in full but portions may be needed for slopes, for example. Front yard impacts along Route 1 should be minimal to none because the right of way is so wide. Mark mentioned he has seen ospreys nesting on the Portland upstream side in the green space noted on the maps.

Larry Nichols spoke about his concerns regarding the fragility of the environmental particularly on the Portland's upstream side as contrasted to the downstream side of the bridge that already has had a road built in the past. Ben Condon explained the requirement as part of the mandated environmental review process to identify environmental impacts for all proposed alternatives and then to identify the least damaging alternative.

Kerry Tietjen asked what will happen to the existing causeway if a proposal calls for a new causeway to be built. Peg Balano wondered if a proposal would then call for the old causeway to be left in place. Ben Condon explained that since teams will be limited as to the square footage impact they can have on environmentally sensitive areas, if a new causeway is built, the contractor will likely need to remove some of the existing causeway to meet these requirements.

Betty Pojack asked if the Design-Build process is popular in other states. Wayne responded that many states are using D-B as it provides more assurance to MaineDOT about constructability, timeliness, and speed of delivery for projects than the more traditional design-bid-build process. Sally pointed out, however, that many states have struggled with how to incorporate a good public involvement process with D-B and their experience has shown it takes the type of Advisory Committee process with a good lead time used for this bridge to successfully bring the public's concerns to bear in a D-B process.

Julie Pitt mentioned that she really appreciated the information provided at this meeting, but noted that the meeting invitation letter was the first direct contact she had had about the project. She hoped that there would be more regular information provided as the project proceeds. Nathan Poore asked whether for future public meetings it would be possible to add a requirement to do mailings to the public as was done for this meeting rather than just to place the required legal notices. Wayne indicated this should be ok.

Bill York asked about how long MaineDOT would expect the new bridge to last and whether D-B teams provide warranties for their work. Wayne responded that the current bridge is about 70 years old. MaineDOT is looking for new bridges to last from 75 to 100 years and is shooting for the upper end of that range. There are some warranties but these are generally 5-10 years and are limited to areas such as pavement and bridge bearings.

Peg Balano asked a question about work that was done to the Martin's Point Bridge about 1980. Sally suggested she look on MaineDOT's Martin's Point Bridge website at Leanne's PowerPoint presentation from August 17, 2010 where she provided interesting information about the bridge's history including historic photos.

Kari Holdtman asked a question about how the proposed new alignments might bow out from the existing alignment. Tony explained how this happens using diagrams on the screen.

Holly Winger mentioned that she finds it helpful in turning left onto the bridge from Bay Shore Road to have a middle lane. She hopes when the bridge is striped for two lanes that it will not make this turn more difficult. Ideally she'd like to see additional space to make this turn easier to execute.

Betty Pojack pointed out with more residences on the north than the south side of Route 1 in Falmouth, it might make more sense to build more toward the north side. Tony Puntin pointed out that for the most part, the roadway will become narrower not wider due to the width of the right of way having originally been sized to a four lane road. Tony responded to a concern about whether headlights might shine in the windows of residences to say that headlights typically shine about 300 to 400 feet ahead. The causeway is 700 feet long. The roadway will be going downhill toward Falmouth at about a 1% grade. Any light from headlights should be diffused and not cause problems for people in nearby residences.

Sydney McDowell voiced confusion about where the right of way actually falls. Tony explained and showed on drawings where the 5' sidewalk will extend and end on the upstream side and where the wider multi-use path will extend to Bay Shore and Route 1, and showed how the drawings then show a typical sidewalk to be built in the next few years by the town of Falmouth that will extend eastward from this point.

Bonny Rodden asked how the scoring criteria will reflect the various concerns voiced at the meeting about alignment issues. Leanne explained that there is a fairly significant percentage of the score that will address engineering aspects of the proposed design, including minimizing right of way effects and environmental impacts. She also indicated she is writing into the RFP the requirement that teams avoid disturbing existing landscaping to the extent possible.

Tony invited participants at the conclusion of the meeting to come up to look over detailed drawings that show the plans for sidewalk connections and current right of way lines.

Sally asked as the time was nearly up if there were any questions that participants had not had the opportunity to ask. There were no additional questions. She then thanked everyone for

coming to the meeting and for their active participation in discussing questions and issues related to the project process.

Note: Following the meeting in a discussion with a small group of attendees' while examining Louis Berger's drawings, a question was raised about possible damage from pile driving and how this might be measured and dealt with. Wayne suggested this question should be addressed at the public meeting that will be held to introduce the chosen D-B team.

Minutes prepared by Sally Oldham
August 11, 2011