

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

PELHAM, X-A000(415), 14491
NH ROUTE 111A

Commission

PUBLIC HEARING

June 4, 2009 -- PELHAM TOWN HALL -- 7:00 PM

The following decisions are the Department's resolution of issues as a result of the testimony presented at the June 4, 2009 Public Hearing and written testimony subsequently submitted for the Pelham, X-A000(415), 14491, project described as:

Beginning at a point in the existing traveled way of NH Route 111A (Windham Road) approximately three hundred feet (300') north of the Main Street and Nashua Road intersection in Pelham and continuing to a point approximately two hundred feet (200') south of the intersection of NH 111A (Marsh Road) with Acorn Lane (formerly Gibson Drive). The intersections of NH Route 111A (Windham Road)/Nashua Road/Main Street and NH Route 111A (Marsh Road)/Acorn Lane (formerly Gibson Drive)/Village Green entrance will be reconstructed as two modern roundabouts.

Nashua Road will be reconstructed beginning at a point approximately seven hundred feet (700') westerly of the intersection with NH Route 111A continuing easterly to the intersection.

Main Street will be reconstructed beginning at a point approximately three hundred feet (300') easterly of the intersection with NH Route 111A continuing westerly to the intersection.

Acorn Lane (formerly Gibson Drive) from NH Route 111A (Marsh Road) to Old Bridge Street will be reconstructed on new alignment and reconfigured for two-way traffic.

Common Street from NH Route 111A to Main Street will be reconfigured and remain one-way. Minor approach work will also be included at the intersection of Old Bridge Street with Woodbury Avenue and Old Bridge Street with Common Street.

The proposed work will also involve sidewalk construction throughout the project area.

1. The Select Board of Pelham, Town Administrator Tom Gaydos, Nashua Regional Planning Commission Assistant Director Tim Roache, Pelham Planning Director Jeff Gower, Bill Scanzani and Peter McNamara, expressed support for Option B which curves around the fire station building allowing it to remain in place and functioning, although with some significant constraints to the serviceability of the building. However, the Select Board and Nashua Regional Planning Commission would prefer Option A, which involves a straighter roadway alignment and the removal of the fire station building, if they can gain support for moving the fire station to a new location. They would like to keep open the opportunity to construct Option A if a new fire station is approved prior to the project going to construction.

Response: The Department appreciates the support for the project. As there is uncertainty with respect to the Town's plans for the fire station, the Department recommends proceeding with the design of Option B, which does not require the removal of the fire station building. However, the design will provide flexibility to revert to Option A in the event the Town approves a new fire station. Such a determination would be needed enough in advance of the project construction to allow time for the contract plans to be developed and/or modified. Coordination with the Town will continue to ascertain which option to proceed to the contract plans and advertising stage.

2. Mr. Larry Major, Dutton Road, Pelham, suggested moving the Butler monument to a new location so the proposed roundabout and roadway can be shifted into the town center, away from the fire station, a sufficient distance to allow the entire station to function in its current location.

Response: The Department does not believe this option is feasible. The monument alone is not the significant item in the town center, it is the overall town center and setting that creates the significance. As a result of architectural and archeological investigations completed for the project it was determined that there is an historic district in the project area. The district is called the "Pelham Town Center Historic District". The approximately 45 acre historic district, with municipal, religious, cultural and residential structures centered around the common is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significance in the area of Community Planning and Development. Impacting the town common or center would have a significant adverse effect on the historic district by removing the center from which it is formed.

3. Mr. Larry Major, Dutton Road, Pelham, suggested the grade of the proposed roadway in the vicinity of the existing fire station be raised to allow the continued use of the fire station without substantial alterations to the building as currently proposed with Option B.

Response: The Department has reviewed this suggestion and does not believe it is practical to pursue. With Option B the proximity of Marsh Road to the fire station necessitates permanent closure of the bay doors at the front, or street side, of the building. Emergency vehicle access to the bays would only be available from the doors at the rear of the building. To allow the street side doors of the fire station to continue to be used, a raise in grade along with a shift in the alignment of the roadway away from the fire station would be necessary. Also, moving the proposed Marsh Road pedestrian crossing a safe distance away from the exiting emergency vehicles and to provide more recognition of the exiting vehicles by drivers using the proposed Main Street/Nashua Road/Windham Road/Marsh Road roundabout it would be necessary to shift this roundabout northerly, impacting more of the First Congregational Society property. There would also be a need for substantial warning signs and flashing lights at this roundabout to alert drivers that emergency vehicles are exiting the station. This option would have a substantial impact on traffic flow at both proposed roundabouts when the emergency vehicles are exiting the street side doors, as traffic would be stopped to allow the emergency vehicles to enter Marsh Road.

4. Mr. Larry Major, Dutton Road, Pelham, expressed concern that Option B proposes a temporary building to house the ambulances away from the dormitory where the firemen sleep, which could impact response times to emergencies.

Response: In order to allow the continued operation of the fire station with Option B it is necessary to alter the access presently used by the ambulances and fire trucks. Currently there are bay doors on both sides of the fire station, which allow fire trucks to exit from one side and the ambulances to exit from the other side. With Option B, the bay doors on the Marsh Road side of the building need to be closed. If fire trucks and ambulances continued to be housed in one building the access on just one side would require the vehicles to be parked one behind the other causing continual juggling of fire trucks and ambulances depending on which vehicles are required for emergency calls. As a result the Fire Department felt the ambulances could be housed in a separate building in proximity to the fire station. The concept of having a separate building to house the ambulances was developed, reviewed and supported by the Town. Response times to emergencies should not be substantially impacted by the new location for housing ambulances.

5. Mr. Richard Tarvey, 26 Jonathan Road, Pelham, suggested building the roundabout around the Butler monument so the fire station could continue to function as it does today.

Response: The Department does not believe this option is feasible. The monument alone is not the significant item in the town center, it is the overall town center and setting that creates the significance. As a result of architectural and archeological investigations completed for the project it was determined that there is an historic district in the project area. The district is called the "Pelham Town Center Historic District". The approximately 45 acre historic district, with municipal, religious, cultural and residential structures centered around the common is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significance in the area of Community Planning and Development. Impacting the town common or center would have a significant adverse effect on the historic district by removing the center from which it is formed.

6. Representative Lynne Ober, 3 Heritage Circle, Hudson, noted that depending on the bid prices the Town may need more time to look at alternative revenue sources since their Town meeting is in March, likely before the targeted 2011 bid opening. If the bid prices come in higher than estimated it is possible the Town would need a special Town meeting and/or additional time to secure the necessary matching funds.

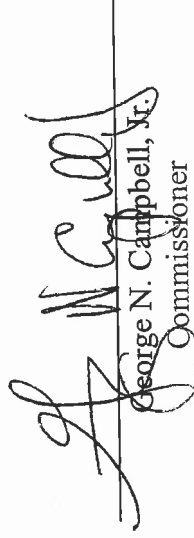
Response: The Department will keep the Town apprised of the anticipated cost of the project as the plans progress so that the Town can properly consider their funding responsibilities and options. The Department will work with the Town to certify that funds are in place before the project is let.

7. Ms. Mary Ann Sarris, 18 Acorn Lane (formerly Gibson Drive), Pelham (parcel 7 & 8), expressed opposition to the roundabouts. She noted that the people of Pelham have not had an opportunity to vote on the project and she expressed concern for the safety of the children accessing the Public Library and the Skateboard Park/playground.

Response: The Department appreciates the participation of individuals in the development of this project and understands that there is some opposition to the roundabouts design. While there has not been an official vote of the entire Town regarding this project there has been an extensive public participation process, over a period of nearly three years, which has provided input into the development of the alternatives presented at this hearing. Testimony from this Public Hearing is an additional avenue for public input that will be considered by the Hearing Commission when rendering the formal decision of necessity for the project.

Roundabouts are a proven traffic control option that can appropriately accommodate the pedestrian and vehicular traffic operations that exist in the Pelham Common area. Pedestrian crossings at roundabouts are comparatively safe as vehicle entering and exiting speeds are very slow which allows drivers to see pedestrians and stop to allow them to cross at the marked crosswalks. Also the splitter islands at each leg of the roundabout provide a safe refuge for pedestrians to cross just one lane of traffic at a time. At the same time the roundabouts will meter vehicular traffic to provide safe and efficient travel through these relatively high volume intersections.

1/29/10
Date


George N. Campbell, Jr.
Commissioner

N.H. Department of Transportation