

**WEYMOUTH HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**McCulloch School - Conference Room**  
**May 11th, 2010 Meeting**

**PRESENT:** Ted Clarke/Chairman, Jodi Purdy-Quinlan, Mary Dorey, Ed Walker, Joan Rotundo, Don Matheson and Phil Smith.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jody Lehrer, Community Development Coordinator  
Mark Pelletier, Fore River Replacement Bridge Design Consultant/STV Inc.  
Michael O'Dowd, Mass. DOT/Fore River Bridge Project Mgr  
Jeffrey Shrimpton, Ma.Dept. of Transportation/Cultural Resources Specialist,  
Environmental Services  
Bob Gohl, WATD radio station

Chairman Ted Clarke called the May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010 meeting of the Weymouth Historical Commission to order at 7:00 PM. He took a moment to welcome all present and stated that the purpose of the meeting this evening was a Presentation by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation re. the Fore River Bridge Replacement Project.

At this time all presenters took a moment to introduce themselves.

Mr. Mark Pelletier, the first speaker, informed members that he was the Design Consultant from the firm of STV Inc - hired by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT). He began his presentation by displaying pictures of the Fore River Bridge through a PowerPoint presentation, with the pictures depicting various photos of the bridge. He went on to describe two options that were being considered as the new permanent bridge which were a Bascule Bridge and Vertical Lift Bridge. He noted that that this was DOT's 11<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding the proposal for the new bridge, with the first one originating in early 2009. He described the location of the Fore River Bridge as crossing over from Rt. 3A Washington Street in Quincy over the Fore River and onto Rt. 3A/Bridge Street in North Weymouth. He said they are presently at the 10% level of design, working toward the 25% level. Their task is to evaluate structure options and then to select the 'preferred alternative'.

Mr. Pelletier further explained that they are presently looking at two (2) options - one is a Vertical Lift Bridge and the other is a Bascule Bridge. Once one is selected/approved they will move onto the 25% design stage, commenting they began working on the design in the Fall of 2008 and they expect to finalize it this Fall. The next stage calls for them to submit their report to the Mass. Highway Department who will approve the final design. At this point they are now moving ahead with the 'preferred design' (25%) this Spring, which will take them through a time period that will conclude in the Spring of 2011. Again once this is accomplished the plan will be considered a 'go' and will move onto Mass. Highway for final review.

Mr. Pelletier referred to "Greenbush" as being an example of the Design Build, explaining that the team moves forward based on the 25% design-built procurement package. In this stage they take into account the community meetings that were held, comments made - including any historical and environmental concerns, as well as a variety of impacts including those to motor vehicles and pedestrians. He also informed those present that they would be looking at the construction, staging, aesthetics, etc. They have been making these presentations throughout the area showing the basic options and seeking feedback - and to date they have received quite a bit. He explained that presently they are at the 'options' stage, adding they also will need to look at the costs of capital maintenance.

Mr. Pelletier described the Fore River area as being a heavy industrialized area, visible by Quincy and Weymouth and a major commuting corridor with Weymouth's coastal area hosting park land and Quincy the USS Salem. He then referred to some pictures up on the screen of the Fore River/Bridge area that showed Germantown (across Quincy Bay), the original bridge and the present temporary bridge.

In describing the new bridge, they were seeking to design one that would be high enough so they could reduce the number of openings, pointing out that it would be higher than the one built in 1936. Additionally it would have four (4) lanes, 2 in each direction, as well as a bike path and sidewalk. It would also be a little wider than the last one. Further it would require less maintenance. Using these criteria they came up with two styles, again - a Bascule Bridge and a Vertical Lift Bridge. They have also gone with a 225 ft. channel opening. In comparing the two bridges using these criteria it made the Bascule difficult to work with - and the Vertical Lift much more suitable as it offers unlimited vertical clearance. Overall a priority for them would include maximum clearance under the bridge along with the need for minimal openings re. boat traffic. In moving forward with the necessary state/federal approvals they will need to meet with a variety of regulatory agencies including the Army Corps of Engineers, Coast Guard, Mariners, etc.

Mr. Pelletier further explained that if they went with the Bascule Bridge the 225 ft. channel width would make it one of the largest Bascule bridges in the country and it would be difficult to get parts when needed - this was another reason they were in support of going with the Vertical Lift option. Additionally they were looking at how to minimize the time the bridge would need to remain open - and going with the Vertical Lift would allow ships to pass through more quickly, pointing out that 250 ft. is the lower edge of the spectrum for 'lift' bridges. Additionally they were easier to maintain and operate - and the VL bridge allows for the ability to have a wider channel. He restated that the structure/span of Lift Bridge is above the roadway surface, which allows for deeper clearance under the bridge. He pointed out that the clearance for the Vertical Lift is 58 ft. much higher than the 43 ft. for the Bascule. Further it has a smaller tower footprint.

Mr. Pelletier then took a moment to recap the attributes/advantages of the Vertical Lift as follows:

- less affected by high winds
- they can use accelerated construction techniques (advantage time wise)
- can use accelerated construction techniques (a lot off the work will be done off-site)
- it's the most effective for this specific location
- will have a smaller tower footprints
- will have higher clearance, fewer openings
- it's more resistant to seismic events
- fewer sets of machinery to maintain
- it is lighter
- won't restrict development in this historic port area

Mr. Pelletier then told the members about the names/locations of similar Vertical Lift bridges:

- Railroad bridge over the Cape Cod canal
- Robert Kennedy Bridge in Harlem, New York
- Tower Bridge in Sacramento, California
- One in Bordeaux, France

Mr. Pelletier next referred to the Chelsea Street Bridge that will have a 224' Tower and has a completion date of 2012, encouraging the members to take a look at it. He wanted the Commission to know that the present temporary Fore River Bridge is different from the new one, showing the pictures of the bridges from different perspectives, adding that the new one would be a little more robust. He described the new proposed Vertical Lift as having a machine room at the top of the tower and a control room in the middle and showed them a picture of the cross section.

At this point he encouraged members to go on the following website for complete information on the project: [mass.gov/massdot/foreriverbridge](http://mass.gov/massdot/foreriverbridge)

Chairman Clarke thanked Mr. Pelletier for his thorough presentation, noting that members were primarily interested in the historical aspect. He then gave a brief history of the area and pointed out the nearby Weymouth historic sites. He said he would like to see the inclusion of a sign that would include this important history.

Mr. Jeff Shrimpton, Ma. DOT/Cultural Resource Specialist spoke next. He wanted to clarify to the members that D.O.T. is also required to meet with the Weymouth and Quincy Historical Commissions. He said that their presentations will also include Memorandums of Agreement, which commits them to consult with the Historical Commissions of both communities. He said that they provide historic photographs of the original bridge, including historic narratives as well as an informational brochure - which is currently under design. He further stated that they were notified four years ago by the Weymouth Historical Commission that the plaque that was located at the base of the previous bridge (on the Weymouth side) had been lost during demolition and cannot be located. Because of that they decided to create a new plaque based on the design of the last plaque - and in doing so they will be seeking this Commission's input/approval.

It was noted that prior to demolition of the old bridge there were historical plaques on each end of the Fore River bridge. He told members that they have already decided to commemorate the Edgar Power Plant and the Weymouth Shipyard.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan commented that the Chairman noted that Lovell's Grove was located where the power plant is now - and wanted to add we have photographs documenting that. She went on to say that in the past Lovell's Grove was an amusement park that included rides as well as paddle boats. Additionally where King Cove is located is where part of the first settlement was located; emphasizing it was the oldest settlement in the Bay Colony. She said she would like to see some type of recognition of Lovell's Grove and the King Cove Shipyard (prior to the Fore River shipyard). She noted that there were also creeks that ran under there.

Mr. Shrimpton was impressed with this information and responded that they are enthusiastically seeking their input.

Again Ms. Purdy-Quinlan stated that Weymouth is the oldest town in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the Commission would like people that use the Bridge to know that. Further the Commission has also worked with the Edgar Station officials in helping to develop the Park adjacent to this facility.

Mr. Shrimpton said he would make sure they received a copy of the sketch plans and promised to stay in touch. He asked that the members put the historical information that they spoke about this evening in writing to him, putting it to his attention with the notation 'special request'.

Ms. Dorey asked if they thought the Guard House would be a good location to display this information, with Ms. Purdy-Quinlan interjecting it was part of the Commission's agreement with Edgar officials to display something of this nature.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan referred to the design of the present temporary bridge, stating it looked like an 'erector set'. With reference to the towers - she commented that they looked huge and intimidating, and she felt they had a negative impact on those viewing the beautiful sunsets over the water in that area.

When Mr. Pelletier was asked by Ms. Purdy-Quinlan about building a bridge that would look like the Zakim Bridge, he explained that they did look at that option but it was dismissed when they found out it would involve about 57 property takings - and further that the bridge would have to be about 3X higher than what's there now.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan then asked about a tunnel as opposed to a bridge and Mr. O'Dowd replied that a tunnel was also considered, but was also discounted based on the huge cost and the number of home/business displacements that would be required.

Keith Spain, Weymouth resident, referred to the aesthetics of the new bridge, stating that based on the picture in the Boston Globe it would be all steel, which he commented was not historical. He asked if historical aspects could be incorporated.

Mr. O'Dowd responded that was where the suggestion of liking it to the Cape Cod Railroad Bridge came from (which was built in the 1930's). They asked their architect to come up with something similar for consideration that would fit in with the community. He said there would be more architectural renderings prepared for future consideration.

Ms. Rotundo suggested using granite, in place of concrete, which is indigenous to this area.

Making an effort to take into consideration historical aspects in the design along with keeping the cost in line. In reference to using granite he commented that it would be well beyond their budget, but at the lower levels they could look at it.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan commented that presently the erector set look along with the cement is an eyesore. She also noted that she viewed the Cape Cod Railroad Bridge just as it was - a 'railroad' bridge and she didn't think that that would fit. She realized that creating a new more historic/aesthetic look would be a challenge under their budget constraints, but added that the old bridge had a great look. She told Mr. Shrimpton that a lot of people will fight to make sure the new bridge looks nice.

In referring to the favorable comments members voiced regarding the Green Street Bridge, Mr. Pelletier wanted to point out that his firm was the company that designed the Green Street Bridge.

Mr. Walker asked if the proposed towers would be shorter because the road would be higher and Mr. Pelletier told him it would be 175 ft. from the high water mark - and the distance would be 60 ft. from the machine room.

Mr. Walker noted that the Cape Cod Railroad Bridge comes right down on the water.

Mr. Pelletier commented that the new one (Vertical Lift) would be 60 ft. higher than the temporary bridge.

Mr. Walker said he liked the 'art deco' look of the railroad bridge and asked if they could do something similar with the new bridge with Mr. Pelletier responding 'yes', adding 'if they can shave some height they will'.

Mr. Walker then asked if it would have its own power back-up and Mr. Pelletier replied 'yes'.

Mr. O'Dowd pointed out that the present bridge has a 15 year life span, so that gives them until 2016 to complete its replacement.

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan noted that the only reason the height is required for the new bridge is for large oil tankers that deliver to the Citgo oil tank(s) farm - not like before when the shipyard was active. She wanted to note that there have been bad oil spills in this area in the past due to the tanks/tankers, which she commented was a high risk to the environment.

In reference to this subject, Mr. Shrimpton said that the US Coast Guard is adamant about keeping the fort there for the future.

Mr. Walker asked if the shipyard still held 'duty-free port status' - as in the past and Mr. O'Dowd responded that he didn't know, adding that it could be a stipulation.

Ms. Dorey asked if they planned to beautify the sides along Rt. 3A.

Mr. O'Dowd stated that the DOT planned to continue meetings with Braintree, Quincy and Weymouth to address community concerns, including the addition of any amenities and improvements. He said that their goal, in part, is to try to have a minimal impact.

In further discussion it was confirmed that the rotary on the Quincy side will remain as is, with Quincy in favor of retaining it.

Ms. Dorey asked if writing letters would help.

Mr. Shrimpton encouraged this, adding that they should be sent to the Chief, but to his attention and gave his telephone number for those with any questions/or would like to speak with him: 617-973-7497.

In closing Mr. Shrimpton restated that he encouraged any interested parties to feel free to communicate with him and the Ma. Dept. of Transportation for the purpose of:

- voicing their concerns
- offer any historical data
- to ask any questions they might have

Ms. Purdy-Quinlan asked if they would also be meeting with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and Mr. Shrimpton replied that they have already done this, adding that tonight's consultation is part of his mitigation requirements.

Mr. Walker stated that he has a picture of what the bridge looked like in the past and offered it for their reference, which Mr. Shrimpton viewed favorably.

Mr. Shrimpton said they he would be sending updates to the Commission as they are completed - including photos and narrative text.

**NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Commission will take place on Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in the Canoe Room of the Tufts Library.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Walker moved to adjourn at 7:55 PM.

Mr. Smith seconded.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

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Ted Clarke, Chair

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Date

Respectfully submitted,

Susan DeChristoforo  
Recording Secretary