

## **Milan Bridge Task Force Minutes**

November 19, 2015

10:30 am – 12:30 pm

### **Facilitator's (Phil) Notes – A Good Finish!**

The taskforce worked on more specific recommendations at this meeting around the top concerns identified within the replacement option. The taskforce also had a clear discussion about potential problems with the replacement option. In previous meetings, the taskforce was able to weigh the concerns and risks associated with the replacement and rehabilitation options. Gleaned from this process, the replacement option appears to be the best recommendation for MnDOT, however it does have drawbacks.

This stakeholder engagement process has now concluded, and we will continue to focus on the final report for the bridge replacement recommendation. This does not mean that public engagement will stop for this project. Thanks again for the patience of taskforce members that have been analyzing this project for quite some time.

I will be receiving feedback from a few taskforce members on the final report before officially sending results to MnDOT. I expect the final report will be submitted to MnDOT the week after Thanksgiving (Nov. 30 – December 4). It was nice working with everyone, and I am excited to see our recommendations make a difference.

With Respect,

Phil

763-270-3461

### **Meeting Minutes**

Phil Barnes re-introduced himself as a professional facilitator and his role as an independent “neutral” in the process. Phil then reviewed that the taskforce process and that it will adjourn today after 4 workshops on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The taskforce was able to talk to MnDOT experts, learn information through dialogue with stakeholders and government, and discuss concerns in length. The identified concerns were assessed for both replacement and rehabilitation options. Concerns were often interrelated and complex and they can be synthesized into 6-major areas.

Major areas of concern discussed included:

1. Pedestrian Safety for Recreational Activities – Fishing, Biking, and Snowmobile
2. Losing Public Support
3. Local Economy Impacts caused by Vehicle and Bridge Size
4. Loss of Historical Significance
5. Safety of Vehicles

6. Project Delivery Process Risks
  - a. Load Capacity and Potential Closures
  - b. Losing Funding for the Project
  - c. Project Delivery Standard Process “Delays”

Based on this stakeholder engagement process, Phil suggested the best recommendation is to move forward with a bridge replacement project. MnDOT is estimating it will cost \$3.4 million to rehabilitate the steel truss bridge, as compared to an estimated \$6 million to replace it with an open concrete span. Cost is only one factor that was discussed during the process, and Phil suggested that the taskforce recommends that local historical interests, pedestrian safety, area recreational activities, and transporting agricultural equipment are highlighted. Phil suggested that MnDOT will likely need to complete an assessment of what scope is considered cost prohibitive with the replacement bridge option.

Phil then led a discussion about the risks associated with moving the replacement option forward. The replacement project would require a new timeline due to required project delivery processes. This fact could make losing bonding funding more likely because it expires in 2018. Losing funding is risk acceptable to most taskforce participants with one large exception. MnDOT does see losing funding as a high level concern for the program. MnDOT staff has made it clear that bonding dollars (2.8 million) available will expire in 2018.

With the rehabilitation option there is less risk for losing funds, but this option will not meet the taskforce’s vision of success. Residents in the taskforce continually talked about having a “long-term vision” for the project and community. If the replacement option is brought forward, the section 106 (historical) and other standard project delivery processes starts over. Assuming MnDOT funding expires, this can have a compounding effect on project delivery timetables. In the next 2-5 years, the bridge may not need to close, however after 5 years it becomes much more likely due to structural deterioration. There is uncertainty around the exact timeline for load postings and closures, and MnDOT expressed this as a high risk. Residents have stated clearly that they are willing to accept this risk, rather than moving forward with a rehabilitation option that does not satisfy their interests.

Phil then led a discussion about safety strategies. Bridge replacement better allows for a context sensitive solution to account for recreational and pedestrian use in the area. The taskforce would like to recommend:

- A Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) process used for replacement bridge design
- Consider a multimodal approach and recreational trail extension to the replacement bridge
- Standard pedestrian design for southern sidewalk facility (at least 6 foot)
- Evaluate an enhanced pedestrian and snowmobile access design for the northern sidewalk facility. The taskforce is aware that designing for snowmobile usage may require a design exemption
- Evaluate a “Flashing Sign” or “Radar” system to slow vehicle traffic. New replacement design may create vehicles to speed up because there are no visual quos like the existing truss.
- Address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design considerations to allow those with disabilities to use the recreational area.
- Evaluate moving the frontage road further away from the new replacement bridge.

Phil then led a discussion about history interest strategy. The taskforce would like to recommend:

- Expedite a new streamlined Section 106, Historical process assuming a replacement option is moving forward. The taskforce is aware of potential risks to project delivery created through historical and other standard project delivery process requirements.
- The community would like to incorporate some historical aspects in a replacement bridge option, *as long as historical elements do not create a replacement project scope that is cost prohibitive*. MnDOT should consider the below options to evaluate whether they are cost prohibitive.
  - Partner with residents to create a restaurant or patio out of the steel truss in the historic district. A local resort owner expressed interest to locate the truss bridge in the recreational resort area. It was also suggested to move existing stone “rip-rap” to new historical bridge location and use to surround the structure.
  - Save parts of the truss for the local historical society
  - Transform bridge into a historic fishing pier in a new location
  - Move the bridge to Chippewa and use for a pedestrian bridge
  - Move the bridge to any other location in or outside the historic district
  - Restore Works Progress Administration (WPA) stonework only
  - Extend WPA stonework to the North for recreational use
  - Create plaque memorializing the Historical Flood District

**Meeting Adjourned – 12:30 pm**