

**Lagoon Pond Drawbridge Committee**  
**Notes of the Meeting held on November 21, 2005**  
**At the Offices of the MassHighway, District 5, Taunton**

Present: Melinda Loberg (Chair), Tristan Israel, Fred LaPiana, Mark London, Dave Grunden

Observers: Harriet Barrow, Chris Fried, Dan Greenbaum

MassHighway: Mike Delaney, Mark Carmichael

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the measures that could be taken to keep the existing Drawbridge in operation, in light of the Lichtenstein report. Mike Delaney apologized for Bernard McCourt's absence, due to a death in the family. The following are his preliminary comments, which must be vetted and could be modified based on involvement of the MassHighway Bridge Section.

- MassHighway is committed to do whatever it takes to keep the bridge open until the temporary bridge is operational.
- MassHighway has made a concerted effort in the past including trimming the bascule on several occasions, cutting off a total of 6-8".
- The Lagoon Pond Drawbridge might be the most critical bridge in District 5, in that there is no viable alternative for rerouting traffic.
- The Lichtenstein report have been sent to the Bridge Section in Boston for review.
- The Island MassHighway maintenance crew has been supplied with steel plates and detour signage to help deal with contingency repairs.
- The Coast Guard is generally very reasonable about accommodating vehicular traffic provided they recognize that a serious effort is being made to deal with problems. However, they can decide at any time that the bridge must remain up.

Members of the Committee and MassHighway representatives reviewed the Lichtenstein report.

- Deck: MassHighway's approach would probably be to wait to see if there are problems, and then do spot repairs. If there is a failure, they believe that they would be able to attach a repair to sound material and are not concerned that repairing an area would lead to a spreading of the failure. They are not aware of any deteriorated area in immediate need of repair. The cost of replacing the entire deck is probably not warranted, given the length of time it would take to design and implement, the great disruption it would cause, and the high cost and more limited benefit relative to the temporary bridge.
- Pile Caps: Although repairing or replacing the pile caps would be technically feasible, it would probably be a complex, costly, and lengthy project that MassHighway does not expect to undertake. It would take quite a while to design and implement such a project, and this would not be warranted given that the temporary drawbridge will be in place relatively soon.
- Operating Mechanism: MassHighway will look into putting the manual operating mechanism back in order. This would be a better method than using a crane.
- Other Repairs: MassHighway will review the other suggestions for short-term repairs and, if warranted, would probably be able to carry them out within an existing emergency repair contract. This could be done relatively quickly.

- Deflection Monitoring: District 5 will probably put in place a system of regular deflection monitoring as suggested in the report.
- Weight and Speed Limits: It was agreed that reducing the weight and speed would go a long way to reducing the impact.
  - Enforcement of existing limits is a police matter.
  - The Bridge Section will determine whether the bridge rating should be changed and this could lead to an emergency modification of the weight and speed limits. An emergency exclusion can only be done on the basis of weight, not by vehicle type. If there were a weight reduction that affected a large number of trucks, an alternative truck route should be created. Committee members suggested that, if there were a weight reduction, it would be desirable that the limit continue to allow buses.
  - Another procedure is to have MassHighway and the towns create a truck exclusion zone; however, it appears that this is not possible on a State road. This is normally used to limit trucks in residential areas.
- Number of Openings: Currently, the bridge is opened on call during normal working hours, at any time with advance notice, and with no limit on the maximum number of daily openings. If warranted, MassHighway will contact the Coast Guard to find out about reducing the maximum number of openings on the basis of a specific schedule.
- Temporary Drawbridge: Several issues related to the construction of the temporary bridge were discussed.
  - The Committee expressed concerns about bicycle and pedestrian safety on the new bridge, particularly the narrowness of the walkway and how bicyclists on the other side of the road would get across to use this walkway. District 5 will look at the issue and discuss it with the Bridge Section.
  - MassHighway will contact John Bugbee, Tisbury Town Administrator, about the requested easement and concerns about staging areas.
  - It is important to ensure that the construction of the drawbridge does not take place at the same time as the reconstruction of the town landing (Public Access Board).
  - Tisbury would like MassHighway to look at the possibility of repairing the seawall as part of the Drawbridge project.
  - The Committee is concerned about the impact of construction of the temporary bridge, notably the pile driving, on the existing bridge. The pile driving would be next winter and the temporary bridge might not open until the following fall. Who would be responsible for quickly repairing the existing bridge?
  - Can construction be accelerated by working two shifts, seven days a week?
  - MassHighway clarified that the existing piles will be cut off 3' below the mudline.

MassHighway will review the Lichtenstein report and give their item-by-item response in early January. We expect that there will be a meeting between MassHighway and the Committee, maybe in Boston.

*Minutes prepared by Mark London.*

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