

*Cuba Village Board
Special Meeting to Discuss Prospect Street Foot Bridge
Monday, February 12, 2007 at 6:30 p.m.*

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance

Rick Hall read a letter to clear up any misconceptions (copy attached)

Mayor Wetherby opened up the floor to the public for comments.

Jim Maxim – indicated that he feels that the Prospect St. bridge is walked more than the Mill St. bridge. He had asked Judy earlier if there was ever an engineering study done prior to the replacement of the Mill Street bridge. Judy indicated that she was not on the Board when that would have been done. Mayor Wetherby indicated that the survey was not done on the Mill St. bridge, but they had Clark Patterson determine what it would take for a replacement bridge. Clerk Wilson stated that the County made the decision to close that bridge. The mayor also stated that about half the cost of that bridge was paid for by grants.

Dave Crowley - He did not intend to say that the bridge closing was the cause of his broken arm. He also talked with a couple of people who said that the bridge was open the night before and that is why he thought that the bridge was closed in the night. He stated that he is cognizant that the bridge is in very bad shape. He feels that some remedial work on the bridge would have prolonged it's useful life and that it may not be too late for that type of work to be done. He thanked the Board for allowing the public to comment on this and he was glad so many people interested in restoring the bridge.

“Cuba has always been a progressive community giving consideration of issues facing the general public”. He referenced the response to the fire hall being built with public dollars. “ Cuba has always rallied around things that are really good for Cuba and I think they will rally around the activities that this board decides regarding the infrastructure. The board has always shown an interest in promoting the beauty of the village. I think the footbridge is as vital a part of our community's infrastructure as the streets, sidewalks, and water systems, etc. We are an energetic community, a walking community, and a lot of people get out to walk at night and in the morning.”

He would like to have the village board adopt a course of action that would include a study of the bridge. It is in dire need of work and he suggested that area college engineering students might make a project of this. Judy Zayac noted that she has pursued that option only to find out that liability was an issue with the engineering professor at Alfred.

Mayor Wetherby noted that the bridge is not the problem, but the supports under the bridge, and he would never ask the village crew to go in to install something like this. The Mill Street bridge was put in by the county. That won't happen there.

Dave asked if there has been any contact with the railroad about the bridge. Mayor Wetherby noted that he is going to contact John Cappellini about that, but he doesn't think that the railroad is responsible. Diane Wilson noted that former Mayor Swift checked into that and the railroad took no responsibility at that time.

Lee James – She asked if the village has checked into the cost of replacing, the financial impact, or if there are grants or monies available for the bridge. Mayor Wetherby responded that this meeting was held to determine what the public thought about the bridge. He got an estimate of \$68,000 to build an aluminum structure like the Mill Street Bridge. Judy responded that that is not the only type of bridge that could be built. The estimate he received does not include the cost of installation.

Jim Maxim – Asked what was the cost of the Mill St. Bridge. Diane Wilson responded that it cost about \$15,000 and we received \$20,000 from Senator Young. The county helped with the removal of the old bridge and setting the new one (in-kind services).

Judy Page – She asked about the safety issues involved with children from Erin Isle apartments crossing the railroad tracks as a shortcut since the bridge was closed or the safety of walking down Bristol Street where there is heavy traffic and no sidewalks.

Patti Petroni – She noted that when the village plans to flush hydrants or close streets for work, there is usually prior notice in the Patriot. There was no notice when they closed the bridge. Her husband uses the bridge daily to get to work and her family uses the bridge 365 days a year and a little notice would have been appreciated. She feels that the attendance at this meeting indicates that most residents want the bridge to exist. If the bridge is unsafe, that is understandable, but if the bridge is safe, she would like to see it opened a.s.a.p.

Jim Mxim - He offered to write a check to help with repairs to the bridge if the village can't afford or can't get grants. Diane noted that the village cannot do fundraising for projects. If someone wanted to take that initiative, it could be done.

Connie Doyle – She asked if the railroad had any obligation or responsibility. As she sees it, there are Three options; 1) take it out, 2) put another foot bridge in or 3) make a car bridge again. The liability issue should be investigated.

The safety of the bridge as it is was discussed. Rick Hall noted that someone with a day care facility reported a near accident on the bridge when a child almost fell over the side of the bridge. Patti Petroni asked if the sides of the bridge couldn't be made more secure. Rick noted that the barricades have been tampered with since the bridge was closed and feels that liability is an issue still.

Judy noted that the NYCOM Recreational Liability Exposure for Municipalities says that we are not liable for accidents associated with the sledding at Willowbank Park. It mentions hiking which is walking and might fall under this statute as well. This would have to be investigated with NYCOM.

Patti Petroni again noted that the citizens of Bristol St have no sidewalks on their street or Summit or Patriot. The children are at risk walking in the streets.

Lee James - asked if the village has contacted their insurance company to get a loss control on the bridge to get the implications of liability on the bridge. She suggested that the village request this.

Derwood Say – He does not live in the village but walks over that bridge every day and joins Dave in complimenting Cuba on the pride it takes in the village and the recreational opportunities such; as the parks, snowmobile trails and greenway trails. He feels that “our community would be diminished without that bridge”.

Connie Doyle – She noted “it seems that when we lose something, it’s gone forever. We never get it back”. She would like to see a road bridge back on Prospect St.

Judy Page – she has been “walking that bridge all my life” and feels that it is a hazard to have her grandchildren walking down Bristol St. without sidewalks.

Louis Petroni – He didn’t remember the road bridge but would be happy to have the pedestrian bridge restored. He suggested contacting the individual who built the many bridges on the Waterways Golf Course. Mayor Wetherby noted that a single span bridge would not be feasible for Prospect St.

Derwood Say – He noted that Bill Burt who owns/leases the railroad is a Cuba native and may have an interest in restoring the bridge. He suggested contacting him to get his thoughts about it.

Dave Crowley – suggested that all who are present at the meeting are interested in keeping the foot bridge over Prospect St. and that a citizen’s committee should be formed to pursue options, whether it be researching, letter writing, etc. He would like to be a part of that.

Dick Klein – When the railroad was restored recently, the property came off the tax base and that was a donation from the Village and Town. He feels they should have some type of obligation. They were recently granted \$5 million for the railroad.

Patti Petroni – asked if there was a temporary fix for the bridge so that it could be opened up. The Village cannot re-open.

Judy Zayac - There was no motion at the last Board meeting to close the bridge. Is the Village liable if they open up the bridge without a survey? Diane said that “we (the village) put ourselves on notice by having this special meeting and not we cannot open the bridge until we know for sure that it is safe”.

Patti Petroni – “will you be putting signs up to warn people ie. “watch for pedestrians or children” or are you (the village) not obligated to do that? Mayor Wetherby said “there are a lot of streets in the village that do not have sidewalks”.

Mayor Wetherby asked that if there are any other questions or comments, he would appreciate people writing them down as the board needs to resume it's regular meeting.

Dave Crowley – Asked if the ownership of the bridge was ever determined. Mayor Wetherby said “We never could find out if the village owns the bridge”. He believes it does.

Mike Doyle – He feels that the railroad must have built the bridge originally based solely on the fact that the construction is typical of railroad structures. He feels that they do not lose liability on sale just as they would not lost responsibility for any soil contamination while they owned the property, regardless of sale.

Judy Zayac – I think what seems apparent that someone needs to step up and form a committee to sit down and discuss some of the issues and research. There is not much the village can do in the immediate future except pay for the survey. The engineering crew is on hiatus until March.

Dave Crowley – The railroad does not really want the bridge there as it restricts the size and height of the loads they can carry. Bill Burt told him that he doesn't want the bridge there. Diane mentioned that the cable lines may have to be moved.

Judy took down the names of those individuals who said they were interested in being part of a committee to research the issues. Those are: Jim Maxim

Patti Petroni

Dave Crowley

Rick Hall

Mike & Connie Doyle

The meeting convened at 7:15 p.m.

Sign In:

Jim Maxim
Jeanette Maxim
David Sweeten
Don Donovan
David Crowley
Robert Sprague
Carol Donovan
Faye Gibson
Judy Page
Lee James
Jacob James
John Ricci
Robert Lester
Pearl Stark
Sue Scott
Derwood Say
Patti Petroni
Louis Petroni
Connie Doyle
Lora Frank
Ellen Scott
Jerry Scott
Tori Larabee
Kathy Chamberlain
Jan Clement
Cindy Dutton
Briar Auman
Linda Poelma
Brenda Austin
Philip Austin
Mike Doyle

Present:

Richard Klein
Jim Wetherby
Jim Bradley
Judy Zayac
John Shelley
Rick Hall