

**HISTORIC DISTRICT &  
HISTORIC PROPERTY  
COMMISSION**

Allison Sanders, Chair  
Lisa Pojano, Vice-Chair  
Gilbert Weatherly, Clerk  
Jeffrey Bendremer  
Lori Fusco

*Alternates*

Pam Brown  
Peter Gaboriault  
Alice Schroeder



**TOWN HALL  
238 Danbury Road  
Wilton, Connecticut 06897**

**Historic District Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, November 4, 2020  
Electronic Meeting: 7:30 pm**

**I. Call to order 7:35 pm**

- a. Attendance: Commissioners Sanders, Pojano, Weatherly, Bendremer, and Fusco present. Alternate Schroeder attending.
- b. Minutes October 6, 2020 meeting: After discussion Sanders moves to approve, Bendremer seconds and vote to approve is unanimous.

II. Lover's Lane Bridge – Allison Sanders: Chair briefed the commissioners on her site meetings with town engineer Frank Smeriglio and Stacey Vairo/Preservation Connecticut, and communications with Town and State officials regarding the design of the proposed replacement bridge. After discussion it is agreed that the Chair will draft a statement of the Commission's concerns for review at the next regular meeting.

III. GIS Overlay of Historic Districts: Update - Lisa Pojano: Commissioner Pojano briefed the Commission on the current status of the GIS Overlay project. More information is needed. She plans to meet with the Town Clerk.

IV. P&Z Subcommittee on RT 7 Zoning: Review/discuss draft presentation- Gil Weatherly: Weatherly reviewed current changes to the draft and after discussion further changes were determined to be made.

V. Certified Local Government: Discussion - Allison Sanders: Chair stated the need and benefits of Wilton becoming a Certified Local Government Commission and after discussion it is determined that Commission will begin gathering application materials January 2021.

VI. Public Comment: Michael Craig offered the following comments about the Lover's Lane bridge:

From: **Michael Craig** <[1michaelcraig@gmail.com](mailto:1michaelcraig@gmail.com)>  
Date: Wed, Nov 4, 2020 at 8:00 PM  
Subject: Public Comment  
To: Pojano, Lisa <[lisa.pojano@wiltonct.org](mailto:lisa.pojano@wiltonct.org)>

Hi All,

Thank you for your efforts to maintain the integrity of the Historical District of Wilton, and helping to recognize that, while the bridge isn't specifically acknowledged on the national historical register, it is important nonetheless!

Thank you for your efforts to reduce impact/footprint, and to enhance the aesthetics of the bridge.

As a member of the community that uses the bridge everyday, I would just like to submit:

- 1) The community's letter to Frank Smeriglio to reinforce the importance of limiting the footprint and enhancing aesthetics (so you all have a copy)
- 2) To underscore there are more properties relevant with more historical significance within a "stone's throw" of the bridge. More Nationally Registered Properties (see letter). There is also an old 1992 article I have. The garage doors (mentioned) have been replaced and I believe it is on the register. I have some other historical information from Jodi Homes (longtime resident) that I can share.
- 3) I believe there is more historical significance to the mill and waterfall than is known or recognized, and is something that should be considered upon construction of the bridge. Note: I believe there is more significance to the waterway, falls and mill ruins than is recognized (even by me, who has lived here for 5 years). I believe it would be of future historic significance to consider this in design and construction.

Many thanks,

Michael

October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Mr. Frank Smeriglio  
Assistant Director of Public Works/Town Engineer  
Wilton, CT 06897

**RE: PROJECT 0161 – 0142; PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL DISCOURSE/HEARINGS TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY CONCERNS REGARDING PLANNED CONSTRUCTION OF LOVERS LANE BRIDGE.**

Dear Mr. Smeriglio,

We are writing in the wake of the October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 virtual public hearing regarding the Lovers Lane Bridge construction:

- 1) To underscore concerns of the community (e.g., Adrienne Schoetz' letter to the editor, Good Morning Wilton 10.26.20).
- 2) To petition for additional hearings to address and resolve feedback and concerns.
- 3) To determine/clarify a process to ensure community involvement in bridge decision-making.

In our collective view, while the virtual public hearing was effective to share first designs of the proposed bridge, it did not represent a conclusive nor complete discussion.

We look forward to your response.

Regards,

Michael & Juliet Craig  
Schoetz Family  
Dennis & Tere Anastos

Jody Holmes  
Joanna Dluzniewska  
Jacqueline Mori

Leslie Holmes  
Piotr Grzywacz<sup>1</sup>

CC: Lynne Vanderslice – First Selectwoman; Michael Wrinn – Director of Planning & Zoning; Susan DiLoreto – Conservation Commission/Merwin Meadows Committee; Allison Sanders – Historic District and Property Commission; Robert Sanders – Wilton District Design Advisory Committee & Architectural Review Board; Priti Bhardwaj – Project Manager

<sup>1</sup>Supporting clauses 2-4 below.

**CONCERNS RE: PROPOSED DESIGNS FOR LOVERS LANE BRIDGE**

*“Lovers Lane was once called Mill Road. Many towns have roads called “Lovers Lane,” the name usually stemming from the fact that the road would be rather private so that sweethearts could sneak off and “spoon” after dark. At one time there was a signpost here that held official town government announcements and other messages for the townspeople – the legal notices of their day.”*

- 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Wilton Bulletin, Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1997

## **CONCERNS**

We do not agree with the current plans for the Lovers Lane bridge construction:

### **1) We do not agree with plans to build a two-lane bridge with a 24' width.**

- a. We request an over-time traffic study be conducted and do not subscribe to the calculated estimate of average daily traffic (ADT) exceeding 400+ vehicles per day. When considering a \$2.7MM project intended to last 100+ years, we believe it is essential that careful due diligence be conducted. We believe there is plenty of cause and time for a traffic study, and that we should not rely on mathematical estimates.*
- b. We do not want a two-lane bridge. We request development of plans for a wider, one-lane bridge. We believe a one lane bridge would be more conducive to the surrounding historical district, that it would be more than adequate to accommodate the type and volume of ADT, and that it will provide an additional and important speed calming benefit.*
- c. We don't understand why we have plans for a bridge to accommodate 1001+ ADT. In response to our question regarding the decision to design with a 24' width, Anand Seshadri, Project Manager CHA referenced the below chart. He said ADT Deck Geometry Rating Code to be used is 4. If this is the case, table 2A indicates the planned 24' width is designed to accommodate not 401-1000 ADT as suggested, but 1001 – 2000 average daily vehicles.*

### **2) We request consideration be given to a pedestrian walkway and/or bike path.**

- a. Our children and many in the community use the bridge as a pedestrian walkway: To meet the school bus, attend shows at the Playshop when we park at the Church or on Belden Hill. To attend church when we park at the Playshop when church parking is full. Otherwise, to visit Merwin or access the NRV.*
- b. We disagree with Mr. Smeriglio that a bike or pedestrian path would only cause the bridge to need to be widened. If we built a 24' wide bridge (which we do not want), we could accommodate two fire trucks (restricted to a maximum width of 102") passing simultaneously with 7' to spare for pedestrians.*
- c. We were disappointed with the response that a pedestrian walkway or bike path had not been considered. (Reason Given: "because the current bridge didn't have one."). In correspondence with Michael on January 24<sup>th</sup> 2020, Mr. Smeriglio intimated he would address Michael's feedback regarding a bike/pedestrian lane with the design firm. *"I will work with the design firm for the consideration of a bike lane and/or pedestrian walkway."**

### **3) We request traffic calming measures be evaluated.**

- a. Reducing the curve of the current approach and widening the bridge to two lanes is only going to exacerbate what is already a dangerous issue. In addition to keeping the one lane design, we request evaluation of speed humps, curbs or other calming devices.*

- 4) **While we appreciate the town and team have provided options for stonework/timber guardrails, we request further evaluation of aesthetics, and to debate the inclusion of additional features to go beyond simple utility.**

We believe this bridge represents an incredible **design and creative opportunity** for the town to elegantly knit together past, present and future – to **enhance our community** rather than simply connect it.

Past: The Bridge's location could hardly be more historically significant. It is central to The Wilton Historical District, and an essential feature of this district's position on the National Register of Historic Places.

- a. Effective August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1992 State of Connecticut Historical Commission announced, *"Wilton Center Historical District, roughly area around junction of Lovers Lane and Belden Hill and Ridgefield Roads, in Wilton, CT has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places."*
- b. Wilton Academy Schoolhouse #2 – 33 Lovers Lane (1850)
- c. Wilton Congregational Church – 70 Ridgefield Road (1790/1844)
- d. Congregational Church Parish Hall – 15 Lovers Lane (1871)
- e. Wilton Old Towne Hall – 69 Ridgefield Road (1832)
- f. Hickox Gregory Olmstead House – 19 Lovers Lane; "is a multi-section house, and it's rear wing may be one of the earliest documented structures in Wilton. Few houses here are as architecturally significant and representative of the historical development of the town.
- g. Wilton Playshop – 15 Lovers Lane (1871); originally Congregational Church Parish House. Building moved to current site in 1952.
- h. Merwin Falls/Merwin Grist Mill Dam – Comstock Brook
- i. Grist Mill Tenant House – 10 Lovers Lane (1850)
- j. Smith Merwin House – 26 Lovers Lane (1875)
- k. Daniel Gregory House – 11 Belden Hill (1775)
- l. The Winton House – 80 Ridgefield Rd (1925)
- m. Merwin House – 10 Lovers Lane (1820)
- n. Merwin Barn – Foot of Lovers Lane
- o. Present: It sits above Merwin's Falls, a dramatic feature with historical significance (Powered the old grist mill). It would be ideal if the designs for the bridge could better acknowledge and feature the falls and mill ruins which, for all but the trained eye, go unnoticed.
- p. Future: We understand there are pedestrian plans in consideration for Merwin Meadows and the town as a whole (to connect to train station, etc), as well, plans in consideration to further leverage 183 Ridgefield (including potential sidewalks). We should design pedestrian and bike access on the bridge to anticipate this, and use this as a shining, modern example of how we want to welcome and support pedestrian and bike use in our community.

VI. Adjournment: 8:55 pm