

TOWN OF CLARENDON

SELECT BOARD SITE VISIT- EMERGENCY
LOCATION: MIDDLE ROAD @ BRIDGE #14 (OVER COLD RIVER)
MINUTES
August 7, 2023

ATTENDEES:

Mike Klopchin, Chair
George Ambrose, Clerk
Art Menard
Cash Ruane, Road Commissioner
Katie Nop, Secretary
Josh Carvajal, VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation, River Management Engineer
Kurt Hathaway, KT Hathaway
BJ Hathaway, KT Hathaway

Road Commissioner, Cash Ruane, alerted the Board Monday morning (8/7) that Josh Carvajal (DEC River Engineer) would be stopping by to take a look at Bridge #14. With the continuous amounts of rain received, the Cold River had been rising. On Friday night, August 4, the river was trying to flow around the northeast wingwall/abutment and eroding the northeast riverbank. Several guardrail posts were hanging in midair, where the river had taken out the bank. There was serious concern that the bridge would be lost if the river didn't recede when it did. As an emergency response, KT Hathaway was called in to shore up the abutment and stabilize the bank.

Josh Carvajal was pleased with the efforts made to protect the bridge. He spoke with the Road Commissioner and contractor about the work completed on the northern bank. They discussed adding rock to the southeastern side as well to prevent erosion in the future.

During the site visit, the Board expressed their frustration with the State not maintaining the Cold River. The Board has been outspoken in past years about the need for debris removal. They also felt that the river is getting wider and thus, when it reaches the bridge where it narrows, it is trying to jump around it which eats at the banks and bridge structure. Josh Carvajal heard their concern and explained that with the river being wider, it allows more time before the river floods and reduces the negative impacts to property. The Board wants to see the sandbar in the middle of the Cold River removed and eventually the river straightened and dredged. Josh further explained that straightening the river speeds up its flow and increases the velocity of water so when it does flood and overflow, the discharge can be more damaging to property.

Josh emphasized that while the State regulates the water, they do not maintain it. If the town is concerned about their infrastructure, it would be the responsibility of the municipality to maintain the river. Josh listed two funding sources that would be beneficial for Clarendon to look into. One is the USDA Emergency Watershed Protection Program which is "designed for the installation of recovery measures to safeguard life and property as a result of a natural disaster." This funding would allow the town to address debris-clogged waterways, unstable streambanks, severe erosion, etc. The other grant program is through the Flood Resilient Communities Fund which is funded by Vermont Emergency Management. This program would help Clarendon get a scoping study done by an engineer and offer alternatives/options for river management. Katie will look into both programs to get the ball rolling on mitigating the environmental issues with the Cold River that have been ongoing since Tropical Storm Irene.

SIGNED:  Mike Klopchin, Chair

Approved August 28, 2023

SIGNED:  George Ambrose, Clerk