

**MINUTES SPECIAL SELECT BOARD MEETING
PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP
1:00 P.M. Saturday, July 17, 2021
DANIELS RD. PARKING LOT**

Select Board

Eric Remick, Chair
Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Dow
Shari Cornish
Michael Deering

Others Present

David Raphael
Kris Lance
Mike Lance
Bert Hooper
Tracy Martin
Sally Anstey
Tobin Porter
Patrick Kane
Diana Peduzzi
Paul Fixx
Katie Tandy
Steve Sampson
Helen Beattie
Cheryl Ives
Duane Wells
Vanessa Fournier
David Gross
Justin Lander

Others Present

Diane Cornish
Eleanor Cornish
Nancy Notterman
Rob Alcusky
Sally Potter
Sybil Messier
Doug McClure
Sherrie Olmstead
Norma Wiesen
Emily Hershberger
Kathleen Sampson
Dave Johnson
Katharine Arnold
Dan Renaud
Paul Schuster
Norma Spaulding
Amy Rosenthal
Bill Hill

Special Meeting

1:00 P.M. – 1:45 P.M. - David Raphael & Bob Neeld met with attendees for “Walk and Talk” on Both Sides of the Bridge

1:45 P.M. – 1:55 P.M. Select Board Chair, Eric Remick, welcomed the 35 attendees and introduced workshop team. Bob Neeld, P.E./Engineering Ventures and David Raphael, Landscape Architect

1:55 P.M. – 2:05 P.M. Elizabeth (Wiz) Dow presentation: Designing Our New Bridge – 7/17/2021
“When you have a community on both sides of a river, you need bridges. Since the mid-1790’s, Hardwick village has had a bridge at the site of the North Main Street bridge. The first information we have about a footbridge in Hardwick appears in an August 1883 Montpelier newspaper's announcement that “*E[merson] Brush has erected a bridge across the river near the hay scales which must prove a great convenience to the public....*”¹

From the Village Restaurant you can see a piece of a dam attached to the bank below Daniels' Block parking lot. From at least the middle of the 1800s, it powered a grist mill that occupied the area now used by the Village Restaurant and its parking lot. The water behind the dam backed up through the village and people referred to it as the grist mill pond.² Emerson Brush lived where Bert Hooper lives (65 Brush Street), and he had a drug store

¹“Hardwick,” *The Watchman and State Journal*, August 22, 1883; 5.

² We do not know when that dam got taken out. If you do, *please* contact the HHS.

on Main Street. In 1883, he built a bridge just wide enough for a person to walk across. He rebuilt the bridge in the Spring of 1884 – we don't know why – this time making it wide enough to accommodate a wheelbarrow.³ The river destroyed that bridge in January of 1885, and, in May, Brush replaced it “...near his residence.”⁴ In November, 1886, when ice threatened his bridge, Brush stood a line of men on it and armed them with poles so they could break the ice and force it under the bridge.⁵ He won that battle, but conceded the war; in January, 1887, he began removing his bridge for the winter.⁶ Brush wasn't alone in building bridges. George B. Shipman, owned a saw mill at the site of today's motel, and in 1889 he built a footbridge across the river, “so as to shorten the distance from his dwelling to the mill.”⁷ He lived where Mike and Melissa Carr live, at the corner of Church and Depot Street. Shipman also had to rebuild his bridge regularly. Until 1903, all foot bridges seemed to have been built up-river from the grist mill dam, paid for by individuals. Then, in March 1903, the Woodbury Granite Company, located at Atkins' Field, won the largest contract for a granite building ever offered up to that time – the Pennsylvania State Capitol. The Company had 24 months to quarry, cut, deliver, and set 400,000 cubic feet of granite. The WGC scrambled to hire workers, and any worker who lived across the river had to use the North Main Street bridge or Brush's bridge to get to work. So, in March 1903, Town Meeting voters instructed the Selectmen to construct a bridge across the Lamoille to Wolcott Street. For the first time they were spending tax money to build a bridge below the dam. I suspect the WGC instigated that vote, but I don't know where they put it. The river must have washed it out, because in May, 1904, the paper reported that the bridge below the grist mill dam was rebuilt by the people who used it.⁸ They couldn't wait for the Town to fix it – they needed it to get to work. The war with the river continued: in 1905, the *Gazette* announced that “*The Wolcott Street footbridge has been constructed*”.⁹ Perhaps at a different place, or perhaps – again.

In July 1906, someone was putting in a foot bridge for the workers across the river at Elm Street.¹⁰ Meanwhile, one block down at Cottage Street, the Town was constructing an iron bridge for both wheeled and foot traffic – where the hump-backed bridge is now. Nothing more appears in the papers about Hardwick bridges until March 1915, when the voters at Town Meeting instructed the selectmen to spend no more than \$350 (\$9,000) to build a bridge from a point between the Gazette Building and the Flatiron Building, which stood where the small park beside the Swinging Bridge now exists. Sam Daniels would pay the rest. I do not know if Brush's bridge was still in place. Sam Daniels had recently purchased what we now call the Daniels Block to set up a foundry. He was an aggressive and highly competent inventor and businessman who may have designed the bridge and definitely took over its construction; he finished it in February 1916. The Town apparently gave him control of the bridge. He posted a sign saying “Private Way: Use at your own risk” at each end, and he regularly closed it one day a year to maintain or assert his authority. Because of the dam, the water was higher than it is now. And Daniels built his bridge high above the water. And he built it well.

A headline from the *Gazette* sums up the Spring flood of 1927:

36 to 40 hours of rainfall caused large and small streams to overflow – highway and railroad bridges swept away – houses washed downstream and destroyed – river channels changed – landscape and roadways changed – thousands and thousands of dollars of damage – no lives lost and no one injured in Hardwick. Probably because of its flexibility, the Daniels bridge survived intact despite the tons of logs and lumber from the sawmill upstream and despite several demolished houses from behind Mill Street – all of which slammed into it and battered its deck.

³“Hardwick,” *The Watchman and State Journal*, May 21, 1884; 5.

⁴“Hardwick,” *St. Johnsbury Republican*, May 7, 1885; 2; “Hardwick Haps”, [Montpelier] *Argus and Patriot*, May 12, 1886; 2.

⁵“Hardwick,” *St. Johnsbury Caledonian*, November 25, 1886; 4.

⁶“Hardwick,” *News and Citizen*, January 27, 1887; 3.

⁷“Hardwick,” *St. Johnsbury Republican*, May 16, 1889; 2.

⁸“Local Lumps,” *Hardwick Gazette*, May 19, 1904; 2.

⁹“Local Lumps,” *Hardwick Gazette*, July 27, 1905; 5.

Sam Daniels' bridge outlasted the 1906 iron bridge at Church Street – wiped out by the flood of 1964, age 58. It outlasted the 1923 iron bridge on Main Street – replaced in 2000, age 77. The Sam Daniels bridge died of old age last year, age 105.

2:06 P.M. -3:00 P.M. - Small Group Brainstorming – Attendees were split into 3 groups with for brainstorming and a review of many types of bridges to consider along with the primary questionnaire. David and Bob circulated around to the groups while they were brainstorming ideas.

3:00 P.M. -3:20 P.M. - Small Group leaders, Eric Remick, Shari Cornish & David Gross. presented the various ideas and priorities from their group sessions.

3:20 P.M. - 3:30 P.M. - Closing Remarks and Next Steps were presented by David Raphael. Questions regarding time frame- for the bridge replacement and permitting that would be required will be followed up on by Shari & Eric. David will compile the questionnaire results submitted prior by individuals (27) who were unable to attend and all other work products from the in-person brainstorming sessions and provide a report to the Select Board in coming days.

There were no Select Board Reports, New Business or Old Business

3:35: Meeting adjourned.

Minutes approved by: _____
Eric Remick, Select Board Chair

Minutes taken by: _____
Shari Cornish, Select Board Member