



City of Keene
New Hampshire

**MUNICIPAL SERVICES,
FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMITTEE
AGENDA
Council Chambers B
February 21, 2018
6:00 PM**

Janis O. Manwaring
Randy L. Filiault
Stephen L. Hooper
Gary P. Lamoureux
Robert B. Sutherland

-
1. Winchester Street Bridge Replacement Preferred Alternative
 2. Brett Amy Thelen/Harris Center - Request to Temporary Close a Portion of North Lincoln Street
 3. Portion of North Lincoln Street Closure During Amphibian Migration - Public Works Department
 4. Councilor Jacobs - Process for Considering Proposed Art Projects

Non Public Session
Adjournment



City of Keene, N.H.
Transmittal Form

January 18, 2018

TO: Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee

FROM: Donald R. Lussier, P.E. City Engineer

THROUGH: Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager

ITEM: 1.

SUBJECT: Winchester Street Bridge Replacement Preferred Alternative

RECOMMENDATION:

Move that the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommend that "Option 1", as presented, be selected as the preferred alternative for the rehabilitation of the Winchester Street Bridge over Ash Swamp Brook, and that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to implement this proposed alternative.

BACKGROUND:

The Winchester Street Bridge over Ash Swamp Brook (Bridge No. 118/051) is one of the City's 13 Municipally-owned "red list" bridges and is included in the New Hampshire Department of Transportation's State Aid Bridge program. Under that program, the State funds 80% of the cost of the project, with the City funding 20%.

The City's design consultant will present the findings and recommendation of their Engineering Study. The purpose of this presentation is to select a preferred alternative and authorize staff to continue the design process.



City of Keene, N.H.
Transmittal Form

January 17, 2018

TO: Mayor and Keene City Council

FROM: Brett Amy Thelen, Science Director of Harris Center for Conservation Education

THROUGH: Patricia A. Little, City Clerk

ITEM: 2.

SUBJECT: Brett Amy Thelen/Harris Center - Request to Temporary Close a Portion of North Lincoln Street

COUNCIL ACTION:

In City Council February 1, 2018.

Referred to the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee.

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Communication - Harris Center

Communication of Support - Jessica Baum

Communication of Support - Heather Herring

Communication of Support - Sigrid Scholz

Communication of Support - Stroup McIntyre

BACKGROUND:

The Harris Center for Conservation Education is requesting the temporary closure of a portion of North Lincoln Street for approximately 6 nights during a 6-week period in March and April for the salamander crossing brigade, which ensures the safety of migrating amphibians and the citizen science volunteers who study them.

Letters of support for this initiative are also attached.



In City Council February 1, 2018.
Referred to the Municipal Services,
Facilities and Infrastructure Committee.

Patricia Castle
City Clerk

January 17, 2018

Mayor Kendall Lane and City Council
3 Washington Street
Keene, NH 03431

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council,

I am writing to request the temporary closure of a portion of North Lincoln Street for approximately 6 nights during a 6-week period in March and April, in order to ensure the safety of migrating amphibians and the citizen science volunteers who study them.

Each year, on the first rainy nights of spring, thousands of salamanders and frogs make their way to vernal pools and other wetlands to breed. Many are killed when their journeys take them across busy roads. I have been coordinating the “Salamander Crossing Brigade” program – in which trained volunteers move migrating amphibians across roads by hand – since 2007. During that time, I’ve trained over 900 volunteers, who have moved more than 35,000 amphibians out of harm’s way at road crossings throughout the Monadnock Region. Community involvement in this program is longstanding and enthusiastic.

In the last five years in Keene alone, our volunteers have crossed 1,326 amphibians at Eastern Avenue; 1,006 amphibians at Jordan Road (including 111 Jefferson complex salamanders, which are listed as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in New Hampshire); and 6,715 amphibians at North Lincoln Street. Since 2013, we have also recorded 1,204 road-killed amphibians at Eastern Avenue, 174 road-killed amphibians on Jordan Road, and 1,252 road-killed amphibians on North Lincoln Street. These figures are surely underestimates, as our volunteers are often too focused on saving live animals to conduct complete counts of the dead. In addition, our Salamander Brigade volunteers typically head home before midnight, but the amphibian migration will continue throughout the night if conditions are right.

Studies in other parts of the Northeast have shown that even moderate vehicle traffic can have a significant negative impact on local amphibian populations. Temporary road closures have been used successfully in a number of communities to reduce amphibian road mortality.

Although our volunteers assist migrating amphibians at three locations in Keene (Eastern Avenue, Jordan Road, and North Lincoln Street), we are only requesting a road closure at the largest crossing: North Lincoln Street. On any given “Big Night” at North Lincoln Street, 20-25 volunteers may move up to 1,000 frogs off a 0.1-mile stretch of road in just 3 or 4 hours. Closing this section of road on migration nights would ensure the safety of these animals – which are an important part

of the Robin Hood Park ecosystem – as well as the many volunteers and families who come out to North Lincoln Street to observe the migration.

The amphibian migration is a weather-dependent phenomenon, so I cannot provide specific dates for the requested road closures at this time. However, I have worked with the Department of Public Works to plan a road closure that does not impact anyone wishing to travel to their home on North Lincoln Street. The Department of Public Works has also agreed to use its social media outlets to help inform the public about possible closures when weather forecasts are favorable for migration.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, which would benefit both wildlife and people in Keene. I would be more than happy to meet with you – or to make a brief presentation to whichever subcommittee is assigned this request – to provide more information on the Salamander Crossing Brigade program, amphibian road mortality, or the proposed detour, and to answer any other questions you have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett Amy Thelen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brett" being the most prominent.

Brett Amy Thelen
Science Director
Harris Center for Conservation Education
thelen@harriscenter.org

Jessica Baum
67 Woodburn St
Keene, NH
03431

January 10, 2018

I have volunteered with Brett Thelen and the Salamander Brigades for 4 springs (since I moved here from California). Throughout these years, I've brought many friends and coworkers with me to share in the thrill of Big Night, many of whom bring their children. As a citizen of Keene (and planet Earth!), I urge you to close North Lincoln Street to vehicle traffic on Big Nights in order to protect our amphibian population, and create a safe space for Keene residents to experience a unique opportunity to connect with nature.

As humans, we live in the fantasy of the world we have constructed, believing ourselves to be masters of our own universe. Big Night reminds us that we are merely one of a myriad of species that roam this earth, that there are those that live around and amongst us in need of our care and protection. The Salamander Brigades offer us a rare and magical glimpse of an otherwise unseen world, the chance to connect with creatures like the spotted salamander who spend 95% of their lives underground. Participating in the Salamander Brigades, not only do we get to see these creatures, but we are asked to pick them up and help them! This kind of experiential environmental education can be life-changing for children and adults, alike. Closing North Lincoln Street on Big Nights would ensure a safer and more inclusive experience for participants of all ages, encouraging more Keene citizens to come out and experience the magic of the migration.

Additionally, while we do our best to cross as many creatures as possible, there are those who succumb to traffic at each of our crossings. Even at North Lincoln Street, the best-attended crossing, I've seen countless spotted salamanders, wood frogs and spring peepers dead on the road. In addition to being generally wonderful, these creatures perform essential ecosystem functions such as keeping insect populations (including pests like mosquitos) at bay. According to a 2014 New York Times article, they may even serve important functions for keeping carbon sequestered and thereby helping mitigate climate change.

I began participating in the Salamander Brigades as a grad student in the Environmental Studies program at Antioch. Through that program, I utilized Brett's knowledge and the Harris Center's maps to conduct a research project monitoring the impacts of roads on soil health in known amphibian crossing areas. Largely inspired by my participation in Big Night crossings, this opportunity to conduct research on local ecology greatly elevated and enriched my Masters' experience.

As Sustainability Manager & Community Coordinator at the W.S. Badger Company in Gilsum, I am responsible for organizing our volunteer program. To date, many Badgers and their families have joined in the Salamander Brigades. However, the greatest hurdle of engaging families with small children in this program is fear of the safety of being out on the open road at night. While we place cones and signs and wear reflective vests, cars come speeding down North Lincoln Street (and the streets of other crossings) at alarming speed.

Thanks,


Jessica Baum, M.S.

January 12, 2018

Mayor Kendall Lane and City Council

3 Washington Street Keene, NH 03431

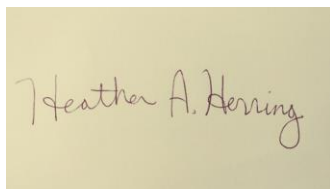
To the Mayor and City Council,

I am writing to add my voice to request the temporary closure of a portion of North Lincoln Street in order to allow migrating amphibians to cross.

As residents of Keene, my daughter and I have participated as citizen science volunteers for the last five years. We eagerly, yes eagerly, don rain gear on cold rainy spring nights to meet at North Lincoln Street and assist on Big Nights when the amphibians are crossing from Robin Hood area to the wetlands in the Woodland Cemetery. This has been rewarding as a direct connection to nature, expanding my daughter's understanding of our local wildlife not seen otherwise, assisting a science project with a direct impact, and educating others.

Keene does its civic duty in other ways by closing roads for the greater cause: there are parades to celebrate Memorial Day, the Pumpkin Festival, and celebrations like the Keene Sentinel's 200th anniversary. Why not allow Keene citizens to celebrate amphibians by assisting in this "night parade?"

Sincerely,

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather A. Herring". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Heather A. Herring

MS in Environmental Biology and

Citizen of Keene

January 17, 2018

Dear Assistant Public works Director,
Dear City Engineer,
Dear Highway Superintendent,

My name is Sigrid Scholz Karabakakis and I am a salamander crossing volunteer/coordinator since the earlier years after its inception by founder David Moon in 2003 at Keene State College. After years of volunteering on North Lincoln Street, I coordinated volunteers at Jordan Road.

For many years our daughter, now 12 (and in the distant past our sons, now 24 and 29 and even sometimes my husband), and her friends enjoyed a shared experience when holding the first Jefferson or Spotted Salamander in their hands, knowing that he or she crossed safely into the wooded realm across the street, where their watery, temporary home/breeding ground awaits them.

I would be very thrilled to know that North Lincoln Street would be closed on Big Nights for various reasons.

1. On a personal level, I love animals and my concern is directed towards all animals who share this earth with us. It is very hard to "do something" on a global scale, but we all can start on a local level, which will eventually impact a wider community by its ripple effect.

2. On an educational level, having home schooled for years, this is an excellent example of hands on learning, which fosters compassion, empathy, curiosity, patience and maybe sparks interest in future little scientists, which brings me to the next reason.

3. Scientifically, amphibians as indicator species will provide us with information about the health of our environment, on land and in water because of their physiological make up.

4. And finally salamander crossing nights bring out families with children. It is also a community event, a gathering of like minded people working on a common goal, providing a safe crossing for amphibians. By closing the road we would also ensure that we consider the safety of all the children who on an impulse seeing a salamander will run towards it.

With great hope that the City officials will find it worthwhile not only to consider, but to implement this change and support this citizen science project,

respectfully submitted,

Sigrid Scholz Karabakakis
89 Woodland Ave,
Keene NH
603 352 2936

To: The Keene City Council

From: The Stroup/McIntyre Family

Re: Support for S. Lincoln St. temporary road closures on “Big Nights”

Date: January 15, 2018

For the past four years our family has taken part in the Salamander Crossing Brigade, a citizen science project organized by the Harris Center. This has become an important part of our lives, making us aware of the ecosystems of the Monadnock Region and the diversity of life right here in our hometown of Keene. When Daniel and Nora started volunteering to help with amphibian migrations they were aged 7 and 11, and though we’ve sometimes gone to known crossing sites on roads in surrounding towns, we most often go to the site nearest to our home, where hundreds of Wood Frogs, Spring Peepers, Spotted Salamanders, and other amphibians cross from their subterranean homes in the woods below the Robin Wood reservoir and down into the vernal pools in Woodland Cemetery. This has brought us mostly joy, even when we get cold or wet on these nights of spring rains, when we get to help these creatures cross over to mate in the temporary ponds. It also brings a chance to talk about life’s hardships, as when we log number and species of killed animals, or witness creatures get run over that we were just about to move. The leadership of Brett Thelen has helped us to practice important safety rules, though we’ve also seen dangerous situations, including when people stop and try to help.

We understand and appreciate the City and the Police Department not wanting to limit access to a road willy-nilly, and we understand that other active crossing sites would be more of an inconvenience to local residents. The section of North Lincoln where we’ve found the busiest amphibian activity is after the last house heading north on Lincoln with the cemetery on your left, ending before you get to George Street and other artery streets on the east side. Every now and then we have turned up when we thought migration conditions looked right for a “Big Night” and we’ve been wrong; other times one or two of us have put on our reflective gear and headlamps “just in case” and then found that we needed to call in reinforcements—those rare times when one car could, without even trying to, take out dozens of creatures. If a designated person could act on what we’d call “a positive Big Night confirmation” and close even just that section of North Lincoln we could point to this as an example of the Sustainable vision of the City of Keene, and a mark of progress as we become a healthy community for humans and for non-humans, too. This could be an easy collaboration between the City, the Harris Center, and volunteers from all over the community, including schools at the K-12 and post-secondary levels.

Thanks for considering the proposal that Ms. Thelen has brought to your attention.

Bill Stroup,
Amy McIntyre,
Daniel McIntyre (Keene Middle School), and
Nora McIntyre (Keene High School)
26 Barker St.
Keene



City of Keene, N.H.
Transmittal Form

February 2, 2018

TO: Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee

FROM: Duncan Watson, Assistant Director Public Works

THROUGH: Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager

ITEM: 3.

SUBJECT: Portion of North Lincoln Street Closure During Amphibian Migration - Public Works Department

RECOMMENDATION:

Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Council authorize the closing of a portion of North Lincoln Street for several evenings that are coordinated with City staff between March and April when conditions are favorable for amphibian migration.

BACKGROUND:

City Staff has met with the Science Director of the Harris Center for Conservation which conducts an annual Salamander Crossing Brigade at several well-traveled migration routes in Keene including North Lincoln Street, Eastern Avenue and Jordan Road. The Highway Division, in consultation with the Keene Police Department believe that closing a portion of North Lincoln Road in March and April only on evenings where weather conditions are favorable for migration (salamanders and frogs migrate on “warm” rainy evenings). It is speculated that upwards of six closings would be necessary.

The closure of a portion of North Lincoln Street would not impact any houses within the closure zone and emergency access would be maintained. Variable message boards would be installed at each end of the detour, at the intersection of Beaver Street and North Lincoln Street and at the intersection of George Street and North Lincoln Street. Access to the houses on North Lincoln Street between Beaver Street and Woodland Cemetery would be allowed even during closure events.

Weather will be closely monitored during the migration time period in consultation with the Harris Center and a decision to deploy barricades will be made before noon on any closure dates. Road closures would occur on “warm” rainy evenings after sunset. The barricades would be removed by 8am the following morning. The Highway Division supports the request for temporary road closures on a portion of North Lincoln Street during amphibian migration season as it does not overly inconvenience the traveling public and provides a public benefit by providing citizen scientists to experience a living laboratory and protects wildlife.



City of Keene, N.H.
Transmittal Form

February 9, 2018

TO: Mayor and Keene City Council

FROM: Councilor Carl B. Jacobs

THROUGH: Patricia A. Little, City Clerk

ITEM: 4.

SUBJECT: Councilor Jacobs - Process for Considering Proposed Art Projects

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Communication - Jacobs

BACKGROUND:

Councilor Jacobs has been working with City Staff, local artists and Arts Alive and has drafted a process for considering proposed art projects.

To: The Mayor and City Council of Keene

From: Councilor Carl Jacobs

RE: Proposed Public Art Policy

Date: February 10, 2018

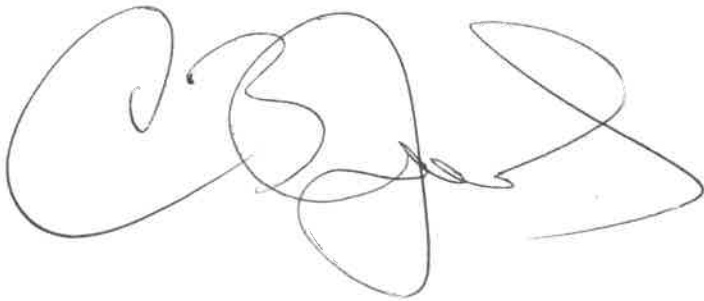
I propose that the attached Policy for Accepting Public Art be adopted by the City of Keene.

The policy is the result of many conversations that included representatives of Arts Alive! and area artists, as well as City staff.

In the past, as public arts projects have been brought forward, there has been no clear path to evaluate and accept or reject them.

This policy sets forth issues to be considered in proposing arts projects and how the City will work to bring Public Art forward. The idea is to facilitate Public Art.

Councilor Carl Jacobs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Jacobs', written in a cursive style.

Public Arts Installation in Keene

2-9-2018

Public Art is welcomed and encouraged in the City of Keene.

The first step to installing Public Art is to submit a written proposal to the Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department. The proposal should address the following:

1. Person or entity proposing Art;
 - a. Note any partners
 - b. Who owns the art; is it an outright gift to the City
 - c. Who to call if issues arise
 - d. Who will remove temporary art
2. Description of the Art
 - a. Design drawings or photographs
 - b. Proposed location; space required; ownership of site verified
 - c. Temporary or permanent installation; if temporary indicate duration.
 - d. Utilities or infrastructure needed
 - e. Ongoing maintenance required
 - f. Statement of intellectual property ownership
 - g. Any safety considerations
 - h. Seasonal considerations
 - i. Aesthetic considerations
 - i. Arts groups support (Friends of Public Art; Arts Alive!; schools; community groups)
 - ii. Consistent with master plan and community goals
 - iii. Development Standards compliance
3. Funding sources
 - a. How the project is funded
 - b. Is the City being asked for funding
 - c. What insurance for liability or damage is needed
 - d. Any ongoing costs for maintenance or utilities
 - e. Any costs for removal of temporary installation
4. City Acceptance
 - a) Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department will work with the Artist to bring the project through the City acceptance process including:
 - b) Which Departments are involved;
 - c) Which is ongoing point of contact