

APPROVED 07/17/2008

The Board's meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm. Present were Selectmen Gene Cordes and Brett Hunter; Mike and Sue Miller; Stantec Engineer Bill Rollins; and Town Administrator Heidi Carlson.

The Town's Consulting Engineer from Stantec, Bill Rollins, presented some photographs that he had taken of the wall while on site, and had a plan done by RSL Layout and Design this past week. He referenced an area near a utility pole at the 61 North Road driveway for orientation purposes, and the beginning of the wall area.

While reviewing the photographs Rollins had taken, Mike Miller mentioned another area closer to the driveway at 61 North Road where there was additional erosion of the shoulder and wall area.

Rollins said that his firm had hired Rich Ladd from RSL Layout & Design (licensed land surveyors) who had done a good deal of work in the area, including survey work for the Miller's subdivision and proposed driveway. The drawing referenced by Rollins this evening is labeled by Stantec and showing RLS Layout & Design as a consultant; and is numbered Project No. 195111720 Drawing No. 1.

Ladd had done a survey of the area of frontage of North Road to locate the wall. Rollins said that it represented a common boundary of the Miller's property and the Town's North Road right-of-way, which he said was common practice for stone walls. Rollins also brought a driveway access plan of proposed lot 06-047.001.00.001 (11/25/1996 Job No. 3031-1) that the Miller's said had been denied by the Town. Rollins referenced this plan and some of the drill holds shown on it. He indicated that Ladd found three of the drill holes on the easterly side of the wall (as standing in the Miller's yard); and could not locate the three westerly drill holes.

Rollins said that the wall represents the shared property line, and said that as we reconstruct the wall, we need to know the proper location for the wall, and its center on the property line. Part of what RSL was hired to do includes also reinstalling drill holes in the top of the stone wall once reconstructed.

Ladd had told Rollins that when you get to the top of the wall, it will be best to put a substantial stone on there to relocate the three drill holes. They have also put markings in the field so they can take from it to rebuild the wall. This includes a 10 foot tieback – stake (hub) in the Miller's lawned area adjacent to the wall and a nail in the pavement on the street side. The Millers said they had seen the stakes.

Rollins said that when they are in the field rebuilding it, they have a way to locate the points and run a string to keep it plumb; and set the string line and move it up every couple of courses of rock. He said they will try to build a little batter in back from the Miller's side toward the road, meaning angle it back, so it will slope back toward center of the road to give it more structural integrity. Sometimes walls move after they sit for some time, but it will not have the appearance of being out of plumb when/if it shifts some. Rollins said that in the road and in the field that they can tie off of from the points.

He said most landscapers/masons want to clean up the rocks that have fallen down and lay them out.

He said we do not want to undermine what is there. Rollins will keep an eye on the project, including setting up so the base is even, and ends up where it should be, at the top. The layers or levels of rocks will tie in a little bit further each layer.

He said he wants to take down as little as possible but need to stagger the stone in so it is continuous and "feathers" in. He said he is looking at backfilling with crushed stone so it is free-draining.

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Rollins said they will also do some grading on the shoulder, so that water is uniform in how it sheets off the road. He said we do not want to concentrate the water in one place, but have it sheet off equally across all areas of the shoulder.

Mike Miller said he didn't disagree with what has been said thus far. He said that the work done in March was that on the shoulder side, all of the dirt was removed from the shoulder. By doing that, he said it had significantly disturbed everything that was there. He said that when you get to the stone wall, it is about a five (5) foot vertical rise, and leans toward the Miller's property which it did not do before.

Miller said that he thought the stone wall supports the roadway and it is not cemented, it is a dry laid stone wall, and he wondered how this had held up.

Mike Miller expressed concern that the maples trees (viewed in photographs the Miller's had located and brought in) are now all gone, and he felt this whole situation had worsened with the reduction in vegetation.

Mike Miller had photos of the road prior to all of this work going on (copies were not retained in the Town's file). He pointed to areas where the water used to go, and said it did not go where it goes now. He said that the changes started the year after they moved in there and that the Road Agent had over time tilted the road for drainage. He felt that the tilting over time had killed the vegetation (due to increased water); and while Miller knows why this was done, because Holmes could not get the water to drain, he doesn't like the water being drained off to their pond. Sue Miller said that the pond feeds the protected wetland shown on the Town's maps (and pointed to the prime wetland maps in the Town Hall).

When we fix the wall, the Miller's said they would like to have the drainage filtered before it hits the pond, such as perhaps through the crushed stone in the shoulder area. Mike Miller said it is a fragile area.

Rollins said they would use crushed stone, but that he will talk to the structural engineer in their office for more information. What he said really works on these stone walls over the years is the freeze and thaw. He said you don't want water pressure to build up and it won't then have the expansion during freeze and thaw. He suggested that maybe we should use a clean gravel instead. He said we do not want any hydraulic pressure in there.

It was agreed by all that North Road is getting more use now (volume and weight) than it did ever before.

Cordes said that for practical purposes, it is functioning as a retaining wall.

Cordes asked if it was possible to take it down and restack it so it is angled back toward the center of the road such as in the repair area. Rollins said that you can rebuild the entire wall section. There was discussion about the bottom of the wall being stationary, so you could likely grab the top couple feet and bring it back in.

Mike Miller said that when they proposed to put their driveway nearer the pond (plan referenced above), that they also offered to put a catch basin in and the Town denied the proposal.

Mike Miller said that this is a scenic road and the work has been done without a public hearing. He said it has been done over time and perhaps some work done unbeknownst to the Selectmen.

Mike Miller said that the trees are now gone, and previously that vegetation was keeping the water from cascading over the wall, and it was filtering down there prior to getting to the pond.

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It was discussed that Holmes had dug out the loamy material in the shoulder area, replacing it with gravel. That is when the rocks were disturbed. Cordes said they did not get into the detail with Holmes about how much he removed, but that when replacing it with the gravel, he did not have a compactor, and was doing it with the tires of his backhoe.

The Miller's agreed that they wanted to fix it and fix it right the first time. It was agreed we would rely on Rollins to give us our options about what is the best material to fill in and keep the pressure off the wall.

Cordes said that the Selectmen have asked Holmes for a master list of maintenance items on North Road to take care of the public hearing process, and this list needs to be refined, but includes a wide variety of maintenance items. The hearing process will also include the work plan to fix the stone wall and any drainage matters associated therewith.

There was discussion about siltation control fabrics that allow water through but not soils. That will prevent the silt from migrating, and it may be done vertically here, and may also lay some out horizontally as they have different stabilization characteristics.

Rollins said they will need to finalize their best engineering thoughts on what to put on the shoulder; and he will talk to whoever is going to rebuild the wall, including meeting them out there and collaborate with whoever is going to do the work.

There may be other areas and there may be some subsequent damage and he needs to review that and get input from the Town on the scope of the project.

There may be another abutter (61 North Road) who needs notification of the project, if the other erosion area is not on the Miller property. Cordes said the Town will need to get permission of other abutters if appropriate.

Cordes said the Board has not decided yet who is going to do the work. He recapped that the last time they talked about it with the Millers, if the Selectmen were taking jurisdiction and oversight of the Road Agent then the Miller's had a comfort level with Guerwood Holmes doing the work. Mike Miller said their comfort level with Holmes doing the work is not there any longer. He said they cannot talk with them, if he was involved, he could not be the one in charge of what is going on in that the Miller's cannot talk to him about it.

Mike said he had previously gone to the Police when this matter started. He said Carlson does not have the authority over the Road Agent, and the Board only meets once per week. Miller said it was extremely stressful and troublesome and to this day, they have not seen or heard from Holmes. He questioned how this could happen. Miller's said they work at home and they are there most of the time. Miller said that he felt Holmes made that choice.

Cordes said that for tonight, he would like to leave it that the Board will make it an agenda item for tomorrow, and when further decisions have been made, they will let the Miller's know.

Rollins will make another visit to evaluate the wall in total, and although that is outside of the scope of the work, Rollins said he will be fair with the town and charge only for actual work done. The project was a not-to-exceed lump sum, but if the cost is half, the actual costs are what the Town will pay.

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Rollins said his role, once someone is established to do the work, is that he will spend more time in the beginning and watch them get started and be sure that everything is in order. He said he has watched a lot of construction over the years and can get a sense of how it will go.

Sue Miller said she did not mean the question to be unkind, but wondered if Guerwood had ever built a wall like this.

Mike Miller said he is concerned that whatever we do, we do not have to revisit this and it is done right the first time.

Rollins said we need someone involved who has some experience in masonry and/or stone wall building.

The Millers said it was OK for Bill Rollins to access the wall via their property.

It was also discussed that any disturbed areas of the grass adjacent to the wall would be rake off and resseed if needed, at the conclusion of the work.

The Miller's gave Bill Rollins information on how to get to their home/business if he wanted to talk with them during any of his visits to the site.

Carlson indicated that the Scenic Road Public Hearing would be held at 7:30 pm on Wednesday August 20, 2008 due to notice requirements and the Planning Board's existing schedule items.

There were no additional questions or items for discussion this evening.

Hunter moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm. Cordes seconded and the vote was unanimously approved 2-0.

The next regular Board meeting will be held on Thursday July 17, 2008 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Carlson
Town Administrator