August 20, 2020

Dear Residents,

The Selectmen’s Office has received calls concerning work on the 1935 bridge over Mill Brook on Cogswell Rd. The bridge was inspected by Connecticut D.O.T. who recommended its replacement 25 years ago. Instead the Town rehabilitated it with some patching of the parapets and installing a membrane over the thick bridge underneath the asphalt. Since that time the concrete parapets have deteriorated again and the concrete has lost its bonding capacity. The decision was made by the Board of Selectmen to replace the parapets with a metal beam rail as the replacement of the concrete was estimated to cost over $200,000 more, an additional expense that would be lost when the whole bridge is replaced. The bridge structure underneath the road is deemed to be sufficient for the immediate future, but does not have another 85 years. The guiderail system had to be updated as it was also in bad shape. It is unclear whether new concrete parapets would even be able to safely attach to the old deck.

You can see an alternative on Rt 128 where Conn DOT ran beam rail inside the old bridge at Wright Hill Road, which would not work here. Happily, there are two other WPA Bridges nearby on Cream Hill Rd area in much better condition having also been repaired 20 years ago.

I hope this helps explain the Board’s reasons for repairing the Bridge in this manner. I like old bridges, but unfortunately the concrete on the top of this one was in even worse condition than we thought and has crumbled. Please feel free to contact the Board further if you wish.

Sincerely,

Gordon Ridgway
1st Selectman, Town of Cornwall, CT

P.S. – You can find our deliberations on video at www.cornwallct.org (February 18, 2020 BOS Meeting)