



## Meeting Minutes

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**Date:** November 12, 2008

**Project:** 08316

**Subject:** South Berwick Transportation Study  
Kick-off Meeting with Steering Committee, South Berwick Town Hall

**By:** Steve Sawyer

**Attendees:** Julia Dawson, SMRPC, 324-2952, [jdawson@smrpc.org](mailto:jdawson@smrpc.org)  
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The attendees met on this date to kick-off the South Berwick Transportation Study. Tom Reinauer had prepared an agenda, which is attached, to guide the initial discussion. The following notations were made during the conversation:

- Tom provided some welcoming remarks, and all participants introduced themselves and their respective roles. Tom then provided an overview of the Study's objectives and schedule. He summarized the recent MaineDOT Route 236 Corridor Study, and the subsequent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process that will need to follow this Study. He said that SMRPC and the Town both had a wealth of background data that would be useful to the Study effort. Much of it was in GIS format.

**ACTION: STI Team to coordinate with Tom to obtain all pertinent information about the Study Area that will be useful to the analysis.**

- Tom then turned the direction of the discussion over to Steve Sawyer. Steve began by talking about the public outreach that will be critical to the success of the project's outcome. The goal will be to have the Town Council write a letter to MaineDOT at the completion of this Study overwhelmingly endorsing the recommendations of the Study and request that it be advanced to the NEPA process. For this to happen it will be most important that we involve all of the potential stakeholders. Some examples would include Berwick Academy, the Water District, the village schools, the downtown businesses, the historic district folks, etc.

**ACTION: Carol will work with Roberta to compile a more comprehensive list of potential stakeholders that we can seek to engage in the Study efforts.**

- Steve also mentioned that he hoped that SMRPC/KACTS was talking with MaineDOT about the upcoming biennial budget to make sure that a placeholder was being included for funding the follow-up NEPA Study, so that that momentum would not be lost from this effort.
- Steve also asked Dennis if he could identify someone from MaineDOT who might be involved in the follow up NEPA process so we could include them in this Study effort to facilitate the hand-off between the two Studies – similar to his participation in our Study to take full advantage of his Route 236 Corridor Study. Continuity is most important.

**ACTION: Dennis to identify a MaineDOT representative for the subsequent NEPA Study.**

- Tom mentioned that originally he thought we would have two committees – a Steering Committee and an Advisory Committee. The Steering Committee might meet every other month (6 times) and the Advisory Committee might meet less frequently (3 times). Conrad thought that having two committees was a good idea. The group agreed.
- Steve also mentioned that two public forums were planned – one to review existing/future conditions and the other to react to possible solutions. In addition, we had planned two meetings with the Town's Council and Planning Board to gain their feedback.
- The group thought that creating an overall Project Timeline would be helpful for all parties that may become involved.

**ACTION: STI to develop a Project Development Timeline.**

- Steve then raised that issue of ultimate planning horizon for this Study. It has been established as 2035. The recently completed Route 236 Study was 2026, which means that the future traffic projections for this Study would need to be extrapolated from 2026 to 2035 and all of the subsequent micro-level analyses redone. Steve questioned the need to go through this effort given the uncertainty of forecasts in the first place. His suggestion is that we consider just using MaineDOT's 2026 projections and not redo their work. This opened up a rather lengthy discussion of the importance of our Study's underlying assumptions. The group was very concerned that we have a solid justification for whatever we finally decide so that we are not subject to questioning down the road. It was mentioned that a new group had just formed to review the current travel forecasting models being used in Maine to see if they were still valid in light of the current economic conditions – unfortunately their work was

just getting underway. It was finally agreed that STI and Tom would meet with MaineDOT to discuss the traffic projections for the Route 236 Study and the need to do any further extrapolation of this data for this Study.

**ACTION: Dennis, Tom, and Steve to arrange a meeting with MaineDOT to discuss the traffic projections to be used for this Study.**

- The first major step in the Study Process will be the identification of the problem, i.e. review MaineDOT's Route 236 Study and form a picture of conditions in downtown South Berwick today and if nothing is done in the way of traffic mitigation into the future. Based on this analysis, we will be crafting a Purpose and Need Statement for the Study effort. This exercise will define for us the vision of what the community wants South Berwick to look like in the future. Steve handed out some sample Purpose and Need Statements from other recent MaineDOT projects for the group to see the kinds of things that might be included in such a Statement. Topics like pedestrian safety, business vitality, parking impacts, and Comprehensive Plan compliance are all valid considerations. The Purpose and Need Statement is also critical because it carries forward into the NEPA process as well and the Army Corps of Engineers' environmental permitting process. Development of this Statement will begin at the next meeting.
- The group then decided that it would be important to hold a public forum at the outset to listen to interested parties about their vision for downtown South Berwick before proceeding with development of the Purpose and Need Statement. The more the input the better and also in this manner the public would become engaged at the outset, not at some later point in the process. As such, we established Monday December 1 at 7:00 PM as the initial public forum designed as a listening session on the vision for downtown South Berwick.

**ACTIONS: Tom, Roberta, and Carol to make arrangements for the December 1 Meeting. STI to prepare a summary of the Route 236 Study results as they relate to downtown South Berwick that can be shared with attendees.**

- It was also suggested that STI review the minutes of the Route 236 Study, because they include some concerns about South Berwick that would be germane to our Study. They should be on the SMRPC website.

**ACTION: STI to review past Route 236 Study meeting minutes.**

- Steve then raised the issue of the Origin-Destination Study that was included in the Study scope. Apparently, the previous study done by SMRPC/KACTS was not deemed accurate enough, and so another investigation was included in this Study scope. STI would like to perform this before snow comes, i.e. in the next few weeks. It was decided that Steve and Tom would meet with MaineDOT to review what should be done in this regard, and then move forward.

**ACTION: Tom to send STI their original O-D Study results. Steve and Tom to meet with MaineDOT to discuss how best to handle this matter, and also whether the evaluation should also include a Route 4 to Route 4 component.**

- The group agreed that the sole point of contact for questions regarding the Study effort would be Tom. He would funnel things to the consultant team as appropriate.
- **The Next Meeting of this Steering Committee would be December 17 at 9:00 AM at the South Berwick Town Hall.**

These minutes represent the understanding of the author as to what transpired at this meeting. If there has been a misinterpretation of any aspect of the discussion, please let STI know so that these minutes can be updated. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this regard.

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Sawyer  
SEBAGO TECHNICS, INC.

SSS:sss/dlf