

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING ON QUABOG RIVER BRIDGE

Project File No. 605283 9

Meeting Date: May 15, 2012

Request from Brookfield Historical Commission.

The commission has always sought to protect this beautiful vista which is reflected in the early writings and descriptions of the Quaboag Valley and the settlement of Brookfield as "Quaboag". We feel these suggestions will preserve the character of the area and allow progress.

1. That all efforts be made to landscape the new bridge area with suitable planting that reflect the current natural growth of the area. There are currently Shad trees in the impact area. We would like to see additional Shad included in the landscape plans along with other natural low growing bushes such as bayberry, beach plum, native azaleas or cranberry.
2. That the bridge sidewalls be open railed as to not impede the viewscape. (Perhaps similar in color and design as the Connecticut River Bridge in Northampton.)
3. That the bridge material be of a finish to reflect the natural environment such as stone or made to have the same look of the existing bridge.
4. That the proposed steel guardrails be of weathered steel or wood to reflect the recreational aesthetics of the area.
5. That there be a western "scenic overlook" of the River Valley. Perhaps with a "curved bump-out" at the north-western side of the bridge and an informational pedestal sign about the Quaboag River Valley, its land and its people. This river crossing was originally a Native American ford way which was in existence at the beginning of Quaboag Plantation in 1660. Records show that sometime after 1715 a bridge was built by the ford way and in a 1773 Town Meeting a vote was taken to pay Lt. Ephraim Walker 38pounds, 18 shillings for his construction of the bridge. A "Historic-Scenic Overlook" would be very appropriate at this place.

We hope you'll agree with our suggestions and help make this a beneficial project for both the Town of Brookfield and the State of Massachusetts.

Thank you,
Ron Couture, chairman
Brookfield Historical Commission