

**Road Discontinuance Hearing
Sand Hill/Bliss Road 4th Class Portion
October 13, 2014, 6:30 pm, Calais Town Hall**

A site visit was held on Sand Hill Road on October 13 at 4:30pm. The hearing convened at 6:30pm at the Calais Town Hall.

Present: Denise Wheeler, Scott Bassage, Rose Pelchuck, John Brabant (Selectboard); Alfred Larrabee (Road Commissioner); Reed Cherington, Gail Graham, Tim Howe (Trails Committee); Ehren and Mario Noguera, Geraldine Gilman, Tony Pearce (abutting landowners). Peter Harvey, Julie Shedd, Warner Shedd, Suzi Shedd, Edie Shedd, Marion Gray.

Reed Cherington, Chair – Trails Committee – important to retain right-of-way (ROW) as a public asset and for possible use as a walking trail; would be extremely expensive to upgrade the road; 4th class roads provide good links for walking trails; if the road was eventually made into a trail, alot could be done to ensure there are no washouts.

Tim Howe – neighbor and Trails Committee member – no consensus by Trails Committee members regarding retaining as trail or 4th class road, but all agreed it was important for town to retain ownership.

Tony Pearce – abutting landowner- would have a problem if road was turned into more than a walking trail.

Suzi Shedd – neighbor – agrees with Trails Committee; upgrading would be expensive since the road was never built with the infrastructure of current roads; critical for town to maintain ROW; may have value in future.

Warner Shedd - neighbor – town should not give up ROW; ROW provides public access and has value for entire public; publicly thanked Noguerras for allowing him and his family to go across their land for hunting; in 1964 he drove a VW bug down the road from the top; though he believes town should retain ROW, Noguera's ownership of abutting land should be taken into consideration by the Selectboard.

Geraldine Gilman – abutting landowner – concerned about future flooding and the road washing out onto her property as it did in 1984 when they lost land and beef cattle and received no help from State or Federal government; agrees in many ways with turning the road into a trail but still concerned about run-off onto her property.

John Brabant – Selectboard – in some places the stone wall along the road is about 12' above the road, indicating how much the road has washed out.

Reed Cherington – Trails Committee has no plans at the present time to make the road into a trail.

Peter Harvey – this is a resource the town should not give up; has no problem with its being turned into a trail.

Alfred Larrabee – Road Commissioner – agrees with town retaining rights, either as a 4th class road or a trail.

Mario Noguera – abutting landowner – no need to change status to trail; keep as 4th class road.

Ehren Noguera – abutting landowner – if it's a trail, it landlocks their property; bought property knowing it was a 4th class road; best case scenario for her is to keep it as is; it affects the value of their property; 700 feet of their property borders this road.

Gail Graham – Trails Committee – concerned about the expense if the road were to be used again and upgraded; Selectboard needs to take that into consideration.

John Brabant – there are two different issues: 1) legally changing a road to a trail and 2) reconstructing the road into a trail.

Reed suggested that the ROW width of a trail be determined as that might affect Selectboard decision.

Marion Gray – ask listers if road classification is considered in value of property. (The town clerk later spoke with listers and roads do not affect value of property.)

Reed asked if the Selectboard can make a trail a walking trail only? Warner said the Selectboard could close the road to traffic except for landowners.

The Selectboard reported that Steve Gray had called each one of them to keep the road as 4th class. He was asked if the snowmobile club wants to maintain it and he said no.

Denise stated that 60 days after the road discontinuance hearing ends, the Selectboard must issue its decision.

John made a motion to continue the hearing to Monday, October 27, 6:30 at the Town Hall. Rose seconded and the motion passed, 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Fitch, Clerk