

**Road Discontinuance Hearing  
Grist Mill I and Newton Roads  
Dodge Road Hearing Continued to December 15, 2014  
December 8, 2014, 6 pm, Calais Town Office**

Present: Selectboard members Scott Bassage, John Brabant, Toby Talbot, Denise Wheeler; Doug Braasch, Darby Bradley, Reed Cherington, Peter Harvey, Karen Lane, Rebecca and Chris Reed, Syver and Mary Rogstad; Donna Fitch, Clerk. Rose Pelchuck arrived later.

The hearing was called to order by Denise Wheeler at 6:02 pm.

Site visits for Grist Mill 1 and Newton Roads were conducted on Tuesday, December 2, beginning at 8:05 am. Selectboard members John Brabant, Toby Talbot, and Denise Wheeler were present. Also present at were: Syver Rogstad, Chris and Rebecca Reed, Reed Cherington, Peter Harvey, Jim Hogue, Doug Braasch, Rolf Mueller.

Grist Mill I

Scott Bassage said the road is a valuable town resource and should be kept open. It is a good illustration of the option available to keep ancient roads open to the public; the walk is fascinating, it's along the river and there is lots to see. Denise Wheeler mentioned the foundations of an old mill and furniture factory. Karen Lane agreed that it is a nice walk. The Ancient Roads Committee wrote a report recommending the road be kept open for the public, and Darby Bradley stated that the report spoke for itself. Kathy Rogstad said she walks on the road often. Syver Rogstad pointed out that the E. Calais Fire District has a deeded right-of-way that goes through the road from Helen Wilson's house (47 Moscow Woods Road) to Moscow Woods Road. Peter Harvey stated the road should be kept public for historic reasons. Reed Cherington pointed out this is the only road that is generally viewed as a public right-of-way by the landowners.

Newton Road

Toby Talbot stated there was no public necessity to keep Newton Road. Scott noted it makes a loop around Chickering Bog. Charlotte Bassage spoke in favor of keeping the road open. Having ridden horses in town for 40 years and seeing more and more land with no trespassing signs, she suggested "let it lie."

Regarding the July 1, 2015 decision deadline, Darby Bradley pointed out that the Selectboard has already made the decision to get rid of roads not discernible. The July 1, 2015 decision deadline applies to roads that are not discernible. Nothing changes, he said, if you can see the road. The Selectboard must actually throw up the road in order to get rid of it. John Brabant said he'd like the selectboard to make a decision on all the roads, referencing the official highway map.

Jeff Fannon asked that Newton Road be kept open for biking and walking. Denise mentioned making it a trail. Toby said trails can be put on the official highway map. Karen Lane said keeping the road open offers a recreational opportunity to residents. Landowner Rebecca Reed pointed out she and her husband have not posted "no trespassing" signs. She is not in favor of keeping the road open to the public. We pay the taxes, she said, and maintain the trail for us and our neighbors. She said they have never said "no" to people who have called and asked for permission to be on their land. She said she appreciated the process the Selectboard is pursuing. Chris Reed said that from the landowners' perspective he pays a lot of money in taxes and, therefore, feels he has some rights. "But I've never not

let people on the land," he stated. He mentioned trees had fallen down and someone had cut them in 4' logs. The fallen trees would have been lumber to him. He said he wanted the road thrown up. Peter Harvey said putting the road on a state map makes it open to others via the internet. Scott said the fourth class road that ends in front of his house is on the map and the few people who have come by were interested in the history of the road when Scott went out to greet them. Doug Braasch spoke in favor of discontinuance. Chris Reed pointed out that a 1985 survey of his land didn't show the road; the road was discovered later. Jim Hogue spoke in favor of keeping the road in the public domain.

Tony French said the loop to Chickering Bog would go through his property. He said the Reeds live in E. Montpelier and no one uses Newton Road more than he does. He also mentioned wood cutting on his property and a feeling of violation. The loop is my concern, he said, linking Newton Road to Chickering bog. "I never post my land, and I hope I never have to." Though he has mixed feelings about it, he said he would be in favor of discontinuance.

Denise asked the Selectboard for their thoughts. Toby said that, absence the approval of landowners, he would be for discontinuance. Scott said this is a tough one but it's a road that is part of our history. He said he was against discontinuance. John said it was a difficult decision, but deference needs to be given to the landowners. He said it creates a loss if the road is discontinued but the town should be setting up a network of trails in town and arranging permission from landowners. Landowners can control access better, he noted. He voted to discontinue but working out an arrangement with the landowners for public access. Rebecca Reed said they would need to consider how they felt about making it a trail. She uses E. Montpelier trails and she would like Calais to be able to use their property. Chris said he worried about publicity if it was a trail and the possible increase in traffic to the bog. Tony pointed out that the road is already being used as a trail. He is open to its being an official trail, but wants to know what the trail designation would mean. Toby said it would not be an Agency of Transportation trail; it would be a town trail. Denise stated that she would vote in favor of discontinuance if she felt that the Newton Road neighbors would work in good faith with the Trails Committee to establish a "town trail" on the property. The neighbors (Reed/French) replied that they would actively pursue this as an option.

Toby made a motion to retain Grist Mill I Road. John seconded the motion and the Board voted in favor with Rose abstaining since she had not been at the site visit.

Toby made a motion to discontinue Newton Road. John seconded the motion. Denise voted in favor. Scott voted no and the motion passed 3-1. Rose abstained.

Darby offered to work with the landowners as they considered having a trail on the now discontinued Newton Road.

The hearing on Dodge Road was continued to December 15 at 6 pm at the town office.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Fitch, Clerk

