

Selectboard Meeting Minutes
November 24, 2014
Approved

Present: Selectboard members John Brabant, Toby Talbot, Rose Pelchuck, Denise Wheeler; Scott Bassage via telephone. Others present: Jan Brough, Renee Carpenter, Stephanie Kaplan, Ginny Kern, Paul Rose, Alfred Larrabee, Will Walters (Hardwick Gazette), Rick DeWolfe, John McCullough, Jan Ohlsson; Ann Gilbert and Ginny Burley (Central VT New Directions Coalition); Clancy DeSmet (District 5 Environmental Commission Coordinator).

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm at the Town Office by Denise Wheeler, Chair. Scott Bassage joined the meeting by telephone.

Change to agenda: Sand Hill Road discontinue decision to be discussed at next meeting on December 8.

Letter in support of Chickering Bog: The board voted unanimously to send a letter under Denise Wheeler's signature in support of The Nature Company's application to the VT Trails & Greenway Council adding Chickering Bog Natural Area (off Lightening Ridge Road) to a list of statewide trails. Rose Pelchuck asked if this would increase parking on Lightening Ridge Road. Scott Bassage said the Bog is listed in many publications already. Because this item was not on the agenda, it will be put on the next meeting agenda and the vote ratified at that time.

Conservation Commission appointment: John Brabant made a motion to appoint Jan Brough to the Conservation Commission (term ending 2016). Toby Talbot seconded the motion and the appointment was approved unanimously 5-0.

Minutes: The minutes of November 10, 2014 were approved unanimously with two minor changes.

Road Commissioner Update: Alfred reported the 2007 plow truck is in the shop for a head gasket, but the spare truck (2004) is available and ready to plow. The 2007 truck has over 100,000 miles on it.

Reviewing the possibility of increasing the turnaround area at the section of Upper and North Calais Roads (in response to the closure of the bridge linking Upper Rd and North Calais Rd), engineer and Calais resident Rick DeWolfe reported that moving the guardrails six feet away from the road toward Barbara Butler's and Curtis John's properties would allow drivers and plow trucks coming down from Upper Road to turn left onto North Calais Road and would also provide space for school buses to back up. Toby restated that the purpose of this investigation was to make maintenance easier while the bridge is closed since snow is usually moved across the Upper Road bridge due to the narrowness of Upper Road. Rick's advice is to leave well enough alone, unless the town has a strong feeling about it, especially since this plan encroaches on neighbors' properties. It doesn't gain anything, he said. Rick provided drawings to the town at no charge. Denise read a letter from the school bus company saying the bus no longer uses the bridge linking Upper and North Calais Roads.

Operations Manager Update: Toby contacted Green Mountain Power (GMP) about two lights out in East Calais. He was told if the lights are more than 25 years old, GMP will replace with LEDs at no cost. One light has already been replaced due to work on a pole and both Toby and Alfred said the new light is much brighter. There are 10 lights including the light by the post office. Regarding sanding the elementary school parking lot, Jason Rowell said the way it has been done in the past works for him, ie.,

Alfred sands when he thinks it needs sanding. However, Jason does have a radio so he can communicate with the road crew. The antenna needs to be put back on the school roof in order for the radio to work.

Central VT New Directions Coalition: Ann Gilbert, Director, and Ginny Burley, Prevention Specialist, explained the resources and recommendations available to towns when considering actions that will make communities healthier, especially substance abuse prevention but also including nutrition, physical activity and health. The organization covers Montpelier and surrounding towns. Towns may enact ordinances that, for example, limit cigarette and alcohol advertising or smoking outside town buildings. Montpelier is working on an ordinance to make parks smoke free. Adamant Co-op was praised for no longer selling cigarettes and Maple Corner Store for having cigarettes behind the counter in a less visible area. Further information about the Coalition is available at the town office.

Act 250 one-acre/ten-acre town: Planning Commission member John McCullough continued an investigation which began two years ago to determine if Calais is a one-acre or 10-acre town in the eyes of Act 250. The definition determines when applications for Act 250 permitting is required. Working with Clancy DeSmet, Act 250 District 5 Environmental Commission Coordinator, it was discovered that the State had missed a step in their processing of Calais zoning regulations and, therefore, did not recognize the town as having duly adopted/enacted zoning regulations, making Calais a one-acre town by default. Mr. DeSmet attended the meeting ensure Calais understands the implications. Simply put, if Calais is a one-acre town, commercial development requires Act 250 approval. Commercial projects are defined by Act 250 as the exchange of product and service for money. Operation of a business out of a home does not necessarily trigger Act 250.

Mr. DeSmet said there are many factors, not only environmental, that Act 250 considers when reviewing an application. Differences between one-acre and 10-acre towns, and the pros and cons, were discussed. Mr. DeSmet said that Calais has a good zoning ordinance and might not need the additional oversight that Act 250 provides at the one-acre level. The Calais zoning regulations with DRB review are similar to Act 250, he said, but Act 250 has resources the town does not have, for example, hiring engineers or other specialists if that is necessary to understand the impact of a proposed project. Act 250 application costs vary depending on the project. Additional information is available at the Natural Resources Board web site <http://www.nrb.state.vt.us>.

Engineer and Calais resident Rick DeWolfe supports a 10-acre town. He praised the Calais zoning regulations and said he saw no advantage to going to a one-acre town. Engineers would still need to apply for the state permits required, he said. The Selectboard has the authority to vote on whether Calais should be a one or 10-acre town.

Town and School Meetings time: By statute, Town Meeting must be held on the first Tuesday in March or one of the three preceding days. In order to hold the meeting on any other day, the town would have to implement a charter. Donna Fitch reviewed the conclusions of the Board of Civil Authority (BCA) and the committee that met during the past summer to discuss location, time and day of Town Meeting. The school board would like the school meeting to end before the town meeting begins (or after it ends) and is willing to start earlier than 9 am, the time of last year's school meeting. Research that was undertaken by Susan Shedd, a member of the summer committee, shows that moving the date and time of town meeting does not result in greater participation in the long run. Questions for a Survey Monkey questionnaire were developed but the survey has yet to be circulated. Toby Talbot said he supported the recommendations of the BCA. Donna will provide documentation of Susan's research. John Brabant said he would like to see the school meeting "imbedded" in the Town Meeting so that budgets and

warning items with the most tax impact are addressed when attendance is at its peak. He says Woodbury does this. Denise wants to include this idea in the Survey Monkey questions. Alfred Larrabee suggested holding an informational meeting so that questions could be answered prior to Town Meeting and lessen the time needed for explanation during the meeting itself. The Board agreed to hold both the town and school meetings on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 with time to be determined. Denise will call Vt League of Cities and Towns about melding town and school meetings together.

Brook Field Service contracts: Toby made a motion to approve the service contracts for the school and town office generator maintenance at two visits per year and for Denise to sign the contract. Rose seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ancient Roads Site Visit: The schedule was reviewed. December 2 (Tuesday) site visit ancient roads Grist Mill 1 and Newton. Meet at 8 am at the intersection of Moscow Woods Road and Route 14. December 3 (Wednesday) 8 am site visit ancient road Dodge Road. Meet near the intersection of Dugar Brook Road and Bayne Comolli Road. December 8 (Monday), 6 pm, Town Office public hearing on discontinuance of ancient roads: Dodge, Grist Mill 1, Newton. December 13 (Saturday), site visits 16 ancient roads. Meet at Maple Corner Community Center, 9 am. Public hearing Monday, December 22, at 6 pm at the town office.

Executive Sessions: At 9 pm John made a motion to go into executive session in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1) for the purpose of discussing a legal matter. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-0. (Scott was no longer in attendance by telephone.) At 10:05 the Board came out of executive session with nothing to report.

At 10:06 John made a motion to go into executive session in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3) for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter. Toby seconded the motion and it carried 4-0. At 10:30 the board came out of executive session with nothing to report.

Budget: Turning to the budget, Donna requested that the town office maintenance budget be increased to hire someone to provide maintenance at the town office as is done now at the town hall. A list of the tasks this person would perform was circulated. \$100 a month will be added to the FY2016 town office maintenance budget.

John made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rose seconded the motion. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 10:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Fitch, Clerk