

SELECTBOARD MEETING
Approved Minutes

May 13, 2013

7:00 p.m. Calais Town Hall

Attending: Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, Donna Fitch, Alfred Larrabee, Mike Garand, Bill Davis, Doug Lilley, Linda Schutz, David Ellenbogen, Michael Woodfield, Cynthia Johnson, Steve Cusick, Craig Line, Judy Copa, Jack Russell, Rolf and Alma Mueller, Conrad Smith, Cy Lamberton, David Curtis, Gail Graham, Trey Martin, Dirk Vansusteren, Kim McKee (Central VT Regional Planning), Lucy Wollaeger, Eva Grumprecht, Doug and Andrea Braasch, Chester Harvey, Peter Harvey and Will Walters (Hardwick Gazette).

Absent: Rose Pelchuck

7:02: Denise Wheeler, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes of April 22 and 29

The minutes of April 22 and 29 were approved unanimously with one change on page two, paragraph four of the April 22nd minutes: “Denise was also very concerned about the amount of money left in the highway budget *and that it should be returned to taxpayers.*”

Trees Marked on Adamant Road

Alfred Larrabee, road commissioner, explained the process by which the town annually submits the “Annual Financial Plan Town Highways” to the State Agency of Transportation (AOT) listing the major road projects for the next fiscal year. The town receives State aid for these projects. For fiscal year 2014, the roads are Fowler, Singleton and Adamant. The Selectboard approves the plan within 60 days from town meeting and submits it to the State. Before beginning work on the road, the road crew ditches and removes problem trees. Alfred said the Adamant Road project is no different than other projects done in past years and referred to Sadie Foss and Max Gray Roads. He would like to see all roads look like Sadie Foss. Alfred said a typical road is 20 to 25 ft. wide, but it varies. He said the main object is to remove berms from roadsides so that water can drain off.

David Curtis, tree warden, explained that Alfred told him there was a project for Adamant, Singleton and Fowler Roads. David said he marked what he thought were a minimum number of trees to get rid of the berms, the majority being dead, dying or old growth maples that are cracked. Alfred said he planned to have the trees marked and then talk with the neighbors, but the trees were marked and residents responded before he had a chance to look at the trees. He is willing to have a conversation about the trees whether a tree is in or out of the town right-of-way. In his opinion, he said, the locations of some trees create an unsafe situation and are on the corners of intersections. He referred to an incident where a town truck hit a tree to avoid a car.

Denise asked residents to speak one at a time and introduce themselves.

Trey Martin, Adamant Road, attorney for Agency of Natural Resources, but speaking for himself, prefaced the reading of a letter signed by 39 people (see Attachment A) by saying that the tree canopy on Adamant Road makes it one of the most beautiful roads in Washington County. The letter begins by saying, “The prospect of losing the tree canopy has sparked our deep concern. However, we also feel this presents an excellent opportunity, a ‘test-case’ if you would, for all of us, town government, citizens, road crew and outside advisors, to deal with what is an increasingly complex question here and everywhere in the world: how to balance the need and desire for ease, convenience and instant access, with equally

important aspects of quality of life - environmental concerns, aesthetic values, preservation issues and sense of well being.”

Eva Gumprecht, Adamant, said there is a need to have input on mature trees. She read a letter from Barbara Weedon, Adamant, who was unable to attend the meeting. (See Attachment B.) Barbara referenced the road design standards in the town’s Land Use and Development Regulations, Table 6.2, which determines lane and shoulder widths. “Adamant Road is posted at 35mph from Lightening Ridge Rd and then at 25mph as it approaches the village. With a volume of traffic at 50-100 cars the maximum allowable width of the road is 18 feet with 0 shoulder.”

Doug Lilley, Lightening Ridge Road, spoke to the width of roads, stating that when you take away trees, you start widening the road. He mentioned the speed (50 miles an hour) that people drive on Lightening Ridge Road and the need to slow people down, not make roads wider so they speed up.

Gail Graham, Leonard Road, said she was in the middle of the road on this, explaining that she grew up with the trees. “They are beautiful. I was astonished when I saw the markings. Some are on my property. I’m trying to be objective about this.” Saying she wanted to address the safety issue, she noted that one dangerous spot is between Leonard Road and Lightening Ridge where the road narrows and people drive too fast.

Scott Bassage read an email from Sharon Fannon, Tucker Road, explaining her concern about wider roads. (See Attachment C.)

Conrad Smith, Adamant Road, said he counted either 79 or 80 trees marked, with only one dead tree. He handed out State statute 24 V.S.A. § 2509 Hearing (See Attachment D): “ A public shade tree within the residential part of a municipality shall not be felled without a public hearing by the tree warden, except when infested with a recognized tree pest, or when it constitutes a hazard to public safety...” Conrad said there are not accidents along the road, and there is no exception to the hearing statute for widening roads or ditching, a public meeting was never held. Referring to the road experts the town uses, he read from the Better Back Roads and the Vermont Local Roads manuals, pointing out these resources encourage wider roads. The experts are not giving a whole picture, at least not as the residents have put in the Calais Town Plan, he said. “Making all our roads like Sadie Foss and Max Gray is not what we want.” Conrad suggested the Selectboard get detailed road construction plans and make sure road commissioner and tree warden know that there is more to it than wider roads and bigger ditches.

Mike Garand, Lightening Ridge Road, East Montpelier road foreman, past Calais Selectboard member, gave examples of resurfacing or upgrading roads from Class 3 to Class 4 in East Montpelier without cutting trees or widening the road. Water may not run off the roads and there may be potholes. “Do people complain about potholes? Yes. Are they narrow? Yes. It’s a balancing act. I feel for Alfred.” Mike said he thought that the width for a Class 3 road was the width it took for pleasure cars to pass each other. He noted there are some trees at the intersection of Adamant and Lightening Ridge roads creating a dangerous situation.

Chester Harvey, grew up on Fowler and Old West Church Road, currently grad student at UVM’s Rubenstein School of Environmental and Natural Resources and a researcher at the UVM Transportation Research Center, wrote a letter for his parents to bring to the meeting, but decided it was important enough to come in person. (See Attachment E.) Chester’s letter ended with, “If you intend to maintain town roads as quiet corridors shared by drivers, walkers, and bicyclists, I encourage you to maintain the roadside trees with which Calais has been well endowed by former generations. If these trees are cut today, their value cannot be practically restored within our lifetimes.”

Linda Schutz, Kent Hill Road, admitted she is one-sided when it comes to trees. She noted the hedges in England that keep roads narrow. "What is the objective?" she asked. "Is it going someplace or *being* someplace?" Craig Line, Old West Church Road, said he was shocked at the work that occurred on Sadie Foss and Balentine Roads. He asked if there is a mechanism to identify which roads are main thoroughfares and which are not and what the process is for determining priorities. Denise explained that the Selectboard plans to reconstitute the road committee and one of its mandates will be to determine scenic byways and main arteries. Craig said if a tree is in the road it may be because the road has widened; he understands the need for safety, but priorities need to be set. "It's Calais; I expect mud," he said, noting that the potential tree cutting would be a drastic change for Adamant Road. Denise noted that the Selectboard and road commissioner received many compliments this mud season.

Alma Mueller, Lightning Ridge Road, said the element of surprise was one of the reasons people were coming together. When they saw the markings, no one knew what it meant. My concern, she said, is when thinking of a major change that it is not something that is done by one, two or three people, it needs to be brought to the community and discussed. She said when the town gets a grant for road repair, people aren't aware of what that actually means. This meeting is a good place to start, she said, to come up with pros and cons; it's not productive to not have community involvement. Denise said she was also surprised to see the markings. John Brabant said when the Selectboard approved the roads chosen to be included in the Annual Financial Plan for Highways the board said there was to be no widening of the roads.

Peter Harvey, Old West Church Road, said he is conscious of driving too fast sometimes, confessing that about 10 years ago he ran into Doug Lilley's manure spreader. This is an opportunity for involvement, he said, noting it has always been a struggle to get people involved. He said both the Planning and Historic Preservation Commissions have addressed that roads are more than just a utility to get somewhere; they are a public spaces. Peter pointed out that trees, stonewalls and granite fence posts are often old, legal boundaries that were planted to keep the road in the right-of-way. All roads were laid out over private land which we still own; traditional boundaries are being pushed around; so legal boundaries are being pushed around. Peter concluded by stating that this is a chance for people to work together. (See Attachment F for Peter's notes.)

Doug Lilley suggested spending money on more sheriff patrols. The town receives a portion of the money from the speeding tickets. David Ellenbogen, Curtis Pond, suggested implementing "calming measures" for speed control. He referenced "The Orange Book: A Handbook for Local Officials." [Available by email from the town clerk or in hard copy at the town office.] If people had a choice, he said, they would prefer traffic calming measures rather than cutting trees.

Mike Woodfield, County Road, said he was aghast at the markings and it would be impossible to bring back huge trees. If the trees were gone, the roads would be hard to maintain, he said, and there may be a wetland in that area. He noted the dust on Fowler Rd where there are no trees and where it opens up before the intersection with Adamant Road; the tree canopy holds dust down. Mike suggested the Selectboard and residents walk the road. Steve Cusick, Maple Corner and Conservation Commission Chair, spoke to the impact that cutting trees has on natural life and scenic qualities. "I hope it doesn't happen like this again," he said. Denise reassured him that the goal is to come up with a better process.

Cy Lamberton, East Calais and past Selectboard member, said we need to think about the road commissioner who is trying to get rid of mud in springtime. If that doesn't happen, the Selectboard will get more telephone calls with complaints. Cy noted there is a lot more traffic, including big trucks, and that residents need to work with Alfred who is trying to keep roads safe. "The Selectboard needs your support too," Cy said. Mike Garand agreed there is a muddy area from Conrad Smith's driveway to Lightning Ridge Road and recommended putting down a type of fabric. He also said Alfred needs a lot of support and he disagrees with bumpy roads to reduce speed because then the road commissioner gets complaints. Chester Harvey said he thought the last thing the town wants is speed limit signs and cops.

Eva Gumprecht said that Barbara Weedon is willing to join the road committee. Eva suggested the Selectboard give residents options and choices regarding roadwork; for example, it might be necessary to cut trees so Internet can be available. Gail Graham reminded people that the roads were designed back in the horse and buggy days. Most people were farmers and didn't use the roads. Calais has changed. Being road commissioner is a tough act, she said. Craig Line asked to be put on the road committee.

Alfred responded by saying he felt like he'd been beat up. He said he'd been road commissioner for three years and all these changes didn't take place in the last three years. He explained that he follows the State road standards that the Selectboard approved. That's all I have, he said, besides the road workshops I go to. Denise agreed that Alfred is working off last year's "Town Road and Bridge Standards." The Selectboard did not approve the January 2013 standards. John noted that the roads have been discussed by the Selectboard throughout the winter and at town meeting two years ago when a road committee was organized. Unfortunately, the road committee wasn't as productive as the Selectboard had hoped. He said the Selectboard directed the road commissioner to take down berms, but not to widen roads or cut trees. Alfred suggested holding meetings for things like guardrail installations. He said he can't be expected to follow a standard in a book and then have people upset about the work.

John read the draft of "Calais Scenic Road Committee Operations Standards" saying that the Selectboard wants the committee to be clear about what its charge is.

- Committee members will be appointed by the Calais Selectboard at a regularly warned meeting
- The Committee will generally operate under Robert's Rules of Order (see website: <http://www.robertsrules.com/>);
- The Committee will appoint by a majority vote of the Committee quorum all officer positions including the positions of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary;
- The Committee will establish a proposed schedule for regular meetings of at least 1 time per month, with the draft schedule to be approved by the Selectboard;
- Meetings will be held in a public place so that members of the Calais general public may attend;
- The Committee will allow for public input during a portion of the meeting as determined by the Committee;
- The Selectboard will participate in committee meetings with at least one Selectboard member attending each meeting;
- Committee Charge: the Committee will consider and report out their findings and recommendations regarding the following topics of importance:
 - Scenic roads and maintaining the scenic character of Calais Roads
 - Scenic shade trees and approaches for their protection and reestablishment
 - When and under what circumstances should shade trees be removed
 - Evaluate road maintenance standards to be applied on Calais Roads, with sensitivity being given to roads of a scenic or rural nature;
 - Evaluate and develop a categorization system for Calais roads based upon criteria to include level of use, speed of travel, road width, scenic/historic character, safety, impact to residents, environmental protection, sprawl, traffic calming, and ease/cost of maintenance;
 - Evaluate possible variations between roads and applicable maintenance standards to the road category
 - Evaluate roads that require upgrades
 - Evaluate roads that may be downgraded
 - Other matters that may come to the attention of the committee through public input or from the Selectboard

Denise said that the draft could be posted on the town web site and on Front Porch Forum for feedback. The board is trying to address the concerns they have heard over the years, but they only meet twice a month and have a lot of things on their plate. Scott said the Selectboard heard from a lot of people who didn't like the way this project was going and the board needs to get back to residents with more specific plans. Toby Talbot said he thought Alfred is tuned into having discussions with people along the road. What may or may not be problem trees were identified and it did what it was intended to; it got people to pay attention, he said.

Craig Line said he didn't want Alfred to feel beat up, that he is concerned about process. It's not Alfred; it's the road commissioner position. I've complained about all of them, he said. Denise said the Selectboard would do a better job of notifying people of what's going on. There will be meetings on the Adamant Road project as well as other projects. The resurfacing of Adamant Road is on hold. Alfred reminded the group that this is construction season so there is a need to move forward.

Executive Session

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 with Steve Cusick, Chair, Conservation Commission. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-0. The board returned from the executive session at 8:50 p.m. with nothing to publicly report.

Hazard Mitigation Plan

Kim McFee, assistant planner, Central VT Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), will assist the town in updating its local hazard mitigation plan, last done in 2005. The plan expires after five years. The plan's purpose is to improve the town's ability to reduce the financial, social, and environmental impacts after a storm. A FEMA-approved plan makes the town eligible for FEMA money after a disaster. Without a plan, the town is still eligible for FEMA funds in an emergency, but the plan helps in receiving grant money for mitigation. CVRPC will write the plan and arrange meetings with the Planning Commission, road commissioner, Selectboard and others with knowledge of the town's infrastructure to identify/prioritize potential problems and look at mitigation. There will be two one-hour meetings. CVRPC brings worksheets to collect the data; the plan goes to FEMA; FEMA conditionally approves; the Selectboard adopts it; it goes back to FEMA for final approval. This process can take a few months but the deadline for submission of the plan is in July 2013. Jack Russell, chair, Planning Commission, said the Planning Commission had looked at it and the mitigation planning has a lot to do with roads. He said the town is okay with flood plains, have met with the State and FEMA. The Planning Commission will be involved as necessary. Toby noted that the last time the hazard mitigation plan was put together it was a meeting of the town's emergency management coordinator (Toby), the road commissioner and CVRPC. Denise said she would like to be notified of when that meeting is scheduled. She wants the Conservation Commission to approve the plan. Kim said there's a public process requirement also.

CVRPC and CVEDC Consolidation

Rolf Mueller, zoning administrator and town representative to the CVRPC said there will be a discussion of the merger of CVRPC and Central VT Economic Development Council at CVRPC's May 14th meeting, but there will not be a vote. There are currently four commission members against the merger. He has emailed their letters to the Selectboard. All meetings are videotaped and are on-line. Denise stated the board is not in favor of the consolidation. At the next CVRPC meeting, Rolf will ask how the town will benefit from the consolidation.

Route 14 Bridge Construction

Scott Bassage showed a presentation prepared by Chris Williams, Structures Division – Agency of Transportation, which Chris presented at a previous meeting at the town office. There are plans to replace portions of 3 bridges on Route 14 in Calais. The first bridge to be reconstructed is bridge #82, located

after town garage toward Woodbury. The town is being asked to give input on how to deal with traffic. Maps and presentation in hard copy is available at the town office. Scott reviewed the proposal for new decking and precast concrete. To maintain traffic during construction, there are three options: 1) Off site detour; 2) Phased construction; 3) Temporary bridge on east side of Route 14. The detour option would completely close the bridge. Construction would be completed in nine days. Traffic would be redirected on state highways via north Montpelier and West Danville to Hardwick. The local bypass would be via Pekin Brook Road. The State will give the town \$10,000 for signage, sheriffs, DMV presence, and dust control. Alfred said trucks driving outside of the detour can be fined. Scott stressed that AOT wants to hear from town officials and residents. There is a need to talk to business owners, emergency responders and Woodbury and Hardwick. Scott said there is no official deadline, but the town should provide input soon. A public hearing will be held on July 17, 2013 at 6:30 p.m., at the East Calais Recreation Center with AOT and CVRPC in attendance.

Executive Session

At 9:20 p.m. Denise Wheeler 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 relating to the Calais Poor Fen. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-0. The board returned from the executive session at 10:15 p.m. with nothing to publicly report.

A motion was made, moved and seconded to continue the meeting to Tuesday, May 14, 2013 at 7:00p.m. at the town office.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Fitch, Town Clerk

SELECTBOARD MEETING *Approved Minutes*

May 14, 2013

7:00pm Calais Town Office

Attending: Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot and Fred McCullough

At 7:00 p.m., Denise Wheeler called the Continued Selectboard Meeting to order. Denise Wheeler 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 with Fred McCullough relating to the Poor Fen on the McCullough Crushing, Inc. property in East Calais. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

The Selectboard resumed the regular session at 8:15p.m. Denise Wheeler had nothing to publicly report. Scott Bassage made a motion to adjourn at 8:16pm. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Bassage
Selectboard Member

May 11, 2013

Dear Denise, John, Scott, Toby and Rose,

We are writing as a group of town residents regarding our concern over the proposed cutting of a large number(approximately 70) of trees along Adamant, Singleton and Bliss Pond Roads.

The prospect of losing the tree canopy has sparked our deep concern. However, we also feel this presents an excellent opportunity, a "test-case" if you would, for all of us, town government, citizens, road crew and outside advisors, to deal with what is an increasingly complex question here and everywhere in the world: how to balance the need and desire for ease, convenience and instant access, with equally important aspects of quality of life - environmental concerns, aesthetic values, preservation issues and sense of well being.

We do not know precisely what the aim was of the road resurfacing proposal which was voted on and approved, on April 22, 2013. We would guess that the intention was to make the roads more resilient to the rigors of weather, thereby meeting the Calais citizens' needs to travel safely on our roads. Also, it seems, to possibly deal with the road quality in a more long-lasting way. And perhaps to respond to some of the state recommendations (not requirements) around dealing with the run-off from dirt roads. These are all positive aims.

Now the question becomes how to best achieve those aims, with the least detrimental impact. And whether this plan actually serves those aims.

We urge the Selectboard to consider the environmental value that mature hardwood trees provide. During the spring, summer and fall, mature trees in full canopy shield the road from the full velocity of rainstorms, helping to prevent some of the erosive impacts of rainfall on unpaved roads. The foliage also diverts some of the water, helping to lessen polluted runoff from our roads.

Likewise, the dense root mass of such trees plays a very important role in stabilizing the down-slope banks of the roads. The cost of engineering our roads to prevent such erosion if these mature trees were removed needs to be carefully determined, before any trees are cut. Our admittedly inexpert understanding is that an engineered system, which would equal the protection offered by the trees, would be extremely expensive. The perverse result of causing road erosion should not follow from a town-directed road "improvement" project.

Furthermore, the amenity value of these mature trees, which have grown and developed as an integral part of the town's scenic character for scores of years, should not be underestimated. Preserved or conserved resources hold important economic

values – supporting property values and attracting visitors and potential new residents. The tree-lined dirt roads were an important factor for many of us in choosing to settle in Calais. Natural, tree-lined roads contribute importantly to the health and well being of residents and visitors alike.

It is our feeling that the maximal interpretation of this proposal, and the cutting of any significant number of trees along the road, does not best serve the desired aims.

Aside from the concern about the content of changes to the roads, we have some questions about what the process for adopting such major changes should be. The Town Plan speaks directly to this. We are curious, and would appreciate clarification, about how things would have unfolded, had some of us not become alarmed and contacted the Selectboard. Our understanding is that the Road Commissioner asked the Tree Warden to mark trees which might need to be cut down in order to implement the planned "resurfacing" project. If no one had said anything, would there have been any other checks and balances before the tree cutting and road project began?

It seems from the Town Plan, as well as the history of communal decision making and public discussion which is so much a part of Vermont's unique character and history, that any plan which would create such a major change in a community should be completely transparent, and allow for review, debate and discussion reflecting community sentiment, both pro and con, as well as allowing for a full impact study.

We therefore request that the proposal voted in on April 23, 2013 be re-opened for such a community process, and for a full impact study.

Please see the attached pages which contain sections from the Calais Town Plan pertinent to the issue at hand.

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Calais

Lucy Wollaeger	1155 Old West Church Road, Calais
Trey Martin	608 Adamant Rd, Adamant
Roberta Torren	608 Adamant Rd, Adamant
Suzanne Rexford-Winston	2220 Lightening Ridge Rd, Calais
Janet Pocarobba	4413 County Rd, Calais
Jim Hogue	492 Tucker Rd, Calais
Eva Gumprecht	517 Adamant Rd, Adamant
Barry Zimmer	517 Adamant Rd, Adamant
Jo MacKenzie	1573 Lightening Ridge Rd, Calais
Elisabeth Mandell-Seaver	2169 Lightening Ridge Road, Calais
Barbara Weedon	262 Adamant Rd, Adamant
Linda Schutz	833 Kent Hill Rd, Calais
David Schutz	833 Kent Hill Rd, Calais

Donna Smyers
Andrea Serota
Rick Winston
Kay Gibson
Sally Olmstead
Ginny Sassaman
Eliza Gardner-Morse
Cynthia Gardner-Morse
Jennifer Sassaman
Gail Elizabeth England
Elizabeth England
Judy Copa
Jane English
Allyson Evans
Alice Blachly
Craig Line
Ilona Lind
Warren Coleman
Scott Grzankowski
Pat Walters
Cindy Cook
Padma Meier

438 Quarry Rd, Adamant
Lightening Ridge Rd, Calais
Lightening Ridge Rd, Calais
24 Luce Rd, Calais
167 Fowler Rd, Calais
90 W. County Road, Calais
819 County Road, Calais
819 County Road, Calais
90 W. County Road, Calais
421 Bliss Pond Rd., Calais
421 Bliss Pond Rd, Calais
1777 W County Rd, Calais
56 - 10 Pond Road, East Calais
Kent Hill Rd, Calais
184 Fowler Road, Calais
Old West Church Rd, Calais
18 Going Rd., Calais
2556 Balentine Rd. E. Calais
1694 Balentine Rd. E. Calais
1476 W County Rd, Calais
991 Adamant Rd, Adamant
492 Tucker Rd, Calais

Other

Janet MacLeod
Patricia Balckom
Kathleen Moore
Leon & Mary Jane Harris

458 Templeton Rd, E. Montpelier
220 Taylor Road, Montpelier
Marshfield
4839 Center Rd, Adamant

Here is language in the Town Plan that supports our request that the decision to cut trees along Adamant and Fowler Roads not be made lightly or without input from residents and other stakeholders.

The Town Plan Aims to Preserve the Rural Character of Calais in all Land Use Decisions.

The Calais Town Plan, adopted in 2009 ("Town Plan"), envisions this municipality as a place that "will proactively adapt to global environmental and economic changes while preserving our rural characteristics." Town Plan at 4.

Our collective sense of community, according to the Town Plan, is "created by more than solely geographic proximity." And: "On the one hand we share the visible beauty of living in a very appealing natural setting. On the other hand there is a there is a sense of being in this together and doing what generations of Vermonters have done before us: weathering winter, enduring mud season, stacking wood, raising our kids, making a living, and finding meaning where we can." Town Plan at 10.

A consistent goal in the Town Plan is to "guide growth in a manner that preserves this rural character and minimizes impacts on natural resources." Town Plan at 27.

The Decision-Making Process Before a Decision to Remove Old Growth Trees Must be Robust and Inclusive.

In order to foster community, the Town Plan asserts the goals of ensuring that: "current and new residents are aware of opportunities to become involved in local government," and sponsoring "face-to-face citizen study groups to examine food, energy, transportation, and economic issues of interest to the town." Town Plan at 13.

This is consistent with the goal of legislature that municipalities "encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process, and to assure that decisions shall be made at the most local level possible commensurate with their impact." 24 VSA 4302(b)(2).

The Town Plan Expresses a Preference for Maintenance of Mature Trees along our Roads.

The Town Plan expresses the following goal for decision-making regarding road improvements as follows:

What additional roads or sections of roads, if any, should be paved or otherwise improved? Some residents believe that paving, widening, regrading or rerouting certain roads is desirable; others do not. Some residents believe that such changes are inevitable; others think the town can, and should, decide which roads we want to "improve" and which roads we want to leave tree-lined, narrow, and unpaved -- essentially unchanged for the foreseeable future.

Town Plan at 16.

The Town Plan further states: "The Town should encourage tree canopies as a traffic-calming device where appropriate. Tree canopies slow traffic because of the perception of a narrower road." Town Plan at 17.

The preference for tree-lined roads is further expressed:

"The Town should develop policies and programs for the preservation and enhancement of town roads such as programs to encourage the preservation of tree canopies and the planting of trees along appropriate stretches of town roads, private roads and pedestrian walkways, as well as zoning, development and historic preservation guidelines that preserve and enhance the scenic beauty of town roads."

Town Plan at 18.

Rec'd
5/13/13

May 12, 2013

Calais Select Board

Re: Road resurfacing and tree removal

The road design standards adopted by the Town of Calais regarding road width appear in Table 6.2 in our Land Use and Development Regulations. This is a chart which determines lane and shoulder widths based on a correlation of allowed speed and volume of traffic and it should be noted that the Regulations further stipulate that these SHALL BE considered to be the maximum standards.

Adamant Road is posted at 35mph from Lightening Ridge Rd and then at 25mph as it approaches the village. With a volume of traffic at 50-100 cars the maximum allowable width of the road is 18 feet with 0 shoulder.

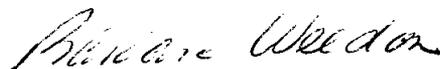
I have measured the road width at every red blazed tree from Adamant Village to Lightening Ridge Rd. None of them encroach upon that 18 foot maximum road width but most stand like sentinels on the edge of it to guard against further expansion.

It wasn't always like that. Our trees were once set back from the edge of the road. Over the years we have watched the road widen by small increments until the trees lining our property and providing the green canopy along the roadside have had their roots and trunks buried with soil pushed against them with each grading of the road. Now the mark of the graders blade comes close enough to graze the bark of the trees.

You will hear from others tonight about the detrimental environmental impacts to follow the removal of our tree canopy and I join in those concerns but I am also concerned about safety issues. As trees are removed from the side of the road the roads get wider. We have had first hand experience of this on Adamant Road when trees were clear cut along a stretch of the road several years ago to install new power lines. The road there has since widened from 18 feet to 20 feet. Further up the road towards the intersection with Lightening Ridge there has been a conspicuous widening of the road to as much as 22 feet along a section where there are no trees to mark the road's edge. Wider roads encourage faster speeds and the road into Adamant village becomes more dangerous for walkers, bikers, and other traffic.

Our trees may present constraints in the way the road resurfacing project is designed and implemented but they should not be allowed to be considered as mere obstacles to be dispensed with.

Barbara Weedon



262 Adamant Road
Adamant, Vt 05640

Sharon Fannon 5/11/13

I can't make Monday night's selectboard meeting. This is the time of year the kids go in a million directions.

I want to weigh in on the road and trees conversation. I don't object to cutting down trees for purposes of forestry management, health the of the tree, etc. but I'm not sure that's what's going on.

When Alfie's team grades the road it's much appreciated. But I'd live without grading -- the roads were dirt when we all moved here and we knew what we were getting into . . . if the road is bumpy you just drive slower.

I DO agree the roads are getting wider and that's a problem. I don't want my road to be a thoroughfare. I grew up in Vermont, as some of you did, and the dirt roads hold no promise of two cars passing comfortably. That's not the point of a dirt road -- never has been, and nothing's changed to require the roads to be wider.

I'd rather invest in signs reminding all of us and the passers through that dirt roads are narrow and require a slower speed.

The other observation I have is this has happened before, and yet every time the roads get graded they're wider -- why is that? Haven't we as a town and the selectboard already had this conversation? Why does it keep coming up?

Sharon

P.S. If we're all just imaging the roads getting wider, then let's do a test. Next time Alfie is going to grade, he could give me and my neighbors a couple of days notice. We could do our own measurement, Alfie should even join us -- before and after. That way, the facts themselves could arbitrate the issue. Without that shared step both before and after, the arguing on what's real will continue. But we shouldn't have to argue when we could take steps to have the facts.

The Vermont Statutes Online

Attachment
D

Title 24: Municipal and County Government

Chapter 67: PARKS AND SHADE TREES

24 V.S.A. § 2509. Hearing

§ 2509. Hearing

A public shade tree within the residential part of a municipality shall not be felled without a public hearing by the tree warden, except that when it is infested with or infected by a recognized tree pest, or when it constitutes a hazard to public safety, no hearing shall be required. In all cases the decision of the tree warden shall be final except that when the tree warden is an interested party or when a party in interest so requests in writing, such final decision shall be made by the legislative body of the municipality. (Amended 1969, No. 238 (Adj. Sess.), § 6.)

May 13, 2013

Calais Selectboard
c/o Town Clerk: Donna Fitch
3120 Pekin Brook Road
East Calais, Vermont, 05650

To the Calais Selectboard:

I am discouraged by the recent plans to cut large trees from the sides of Bliss Pond, Fowler, Singleton, and Adamant roads. Tree-lined back roads with low-speed traffic contribute importantly as community spaces and as the primary vantage point from which we experience the town's landscape. I spent my childhood on them walking to the store, learning to ride a bike, stopping to chat with neighbors, waiting for the school bus, and eventually learning to drive; I think we can all identify with this variety of uses. It is important that the design and maintenance of back roads continues to make them make them safe and attractive for more than just a speeding vehicle.

As a student of transportation planning and natural resource economics—I am a graduate student at UVM's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources and a researcher at the UVM Transportation Research Center—I urge you to consider the value of roadside trees that has been identified in a variety of fields. There is broad agreement within the planning field that mature trees standing close to the road edge slow vehicle traffic and encourage walking and bicycling. They do this by enclosing the roadway, giving drivers the perception of a narrower corridor. This effect has been demonstrated by empirical research that correlates reduced speed and traffic accidents with roadside trees and other edge-defining landscape features. Walkers and bicyclists are also attracted to intimacy of slow-speed and highly vegetated roadways. A substantial body of public health literature demonstrates the importance of landscape aesthetics in promoting active lifestyles that include walking and bicycling.

If you intend to maintain town roads as quiet corridors shared by drivers, walkers, and bicyclists, I encourage you to maintain the roadside trees with which Calais has been well endowed by former generations. If these trees are cut today, their value cannot be practically restored within our lifetimes.

Sincerely,

Chester Harvey

Monday, May 13, 2013

My thoughts on the planned road work, including widening, ditching, and cutting of trees.

Involvement - For decades both Calais boards and the public have been frustrated by the lack of meaningful involvement in governing ourselves. This is a clear opportunity for the public to have meaningful positive involvement in our local governing process that will create a long lasting impact on the lives of all Calais residents, whichever way it turns out.

Public Spaces – our roads are more than just a transportation utility for cars and trucks. When we rewrote the Design Review Guidelines for the Historic District (I was the chair of that Committee) we discussed the importance of the roads as Calais’s dominant shared public space, our most valued public asset. This shared public space is so important because it ties our community together.

Legal Boundaries - Our Town Road right-of-way boundaries are ill-defined. Calais never set out land for roads when it was originally laid out. Instead right-of-ways were granted over private property. Boundaries have traditionally been defined by stone walls and rows of trees. With this much controversy and interest, I believe it is time for the town to hire a surveyor to determine accurate right-of-way boundaries preceding the widening of roads or cutting of trees that may be beyond the legal right-of-way.

Peter Harvey
1155 Old West Church Rd
Calais, VT