

MINUTES FOR SELECT BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Attendees

Select Board: Jared Cadwell (Jared), Chuck Martel (Chuck), Michael Jordan,

Select Board Assistant: Patti Lewis

Road Foreman: Stuart Hallstrom

Minutes Taker: Betsy Carter

Guests: Rob Perry (MRVTV), Gary Kessler, Lisa Koitzsch, Pete Colgan, Erika Nichols-Frazer, Corrie Miller, Woody Dugan, Sally Dwyer, Jennifer Grant, Janet Bisbee, Wendy Bridgewater, Darlene McCormick, Amanda Astheimer, Freddie Graves, Rob Tierney, Liza Walker, Dorathy Langevin and Richard Davis.

1. Meeting called to order at 5:01pm

2. Approve Select board Minutes of July 27, 2021

- a. *Motion to approve minutes from July 27, 2021 by Chuck, seconded by Jared. All in favor, none opposed, motion passed.*

3. 5:00 – 5:30 p.m. Boyce Hill Town Forest Check-in

- a. Pete presenting progress report of the BHTF steering committee inclusive of planning process update, public input summary, Steering Committee “sense of what’s possible,” and solicit Select Board feedback.
- b. 3 zoom public forums were held regarding management planning, natural resources, and recreation.
- c. Online Survey
- i. Total of 241 survey responses received from a mix of Town and Valley residents. General sentiment amongst respondents is for long term preservation of the view.
 - ii. General focus areas (in priority order): Recreation, natural resources, education, and views.
 1. Clean water/wetlands and soil health top concern within natural resources. Specific natural resource priorities include improving wildlife and ecosystem values, consideration of habitat “and soil health for ‘open’ land. And vegetative buffers near water.
 - iii. Top recreational activities desired: hiking/running/walking, snowshoeing. Least preferred: Mountain biking, fishing, hunting, camping/campfires.
 - iv. Mobility/Accessibility response considered high priority by 40% of survey respondents and 48% respondents considered it a moderate priority.
 - v. How much of land should be part of a balanced management plan? Many respondents favored keeping it open or some balance of open/return to natural state.
- d. Steering committee sense of what’s possible
- i. Easement is the baseline guiding document
 - ii. Priority is balance (pastoral feel, recreation, resource restoration, education)
 - iii. Management zones: intensive use zone, protected habitat, selective cutting
 - iv. Connectivity: manage first as an isolated parcel, then work out agreements with abutting land owners for trail access.
 - v. Natural resource restoration: Places where reforestation may make sense.
 - vi. Equity: opportunity for mobility-impaired access.
 - vii. Abutters/Carrying Capacity: Boundary signage, limited parking.
- e. Select Board Feedback
- i. Jared: Have you estimated how much acreage is in the category of soil restoration? Have you thought about what techniques that may be applied?
Lisa: There are no specific ideas at this point. There have been some areas

- that have been intensively mowed in the past that can't support vegetation. We have no concrete plans yet. Lisa: Also healthy soil helps with water control and runoff. Jared: Are there noticeable signs of erosion taking place now? Pete: yes, right around the parking lot.
- ii. Jared: About how many acres are in the NW corner? Lisa: That area is a forested wetland and there's been ATV usage in that area, so that area has been deemed a priority for protection.
 - iii. Jared: A few general points
 - 1. The baseline established by the VLT easement is a great starting point. The wetland area is a great example of figuring out what we do or not do with them.
 - 2. With the pond, I recognize that there is great value of the vegetative buffer around the pond, but that is around the total bank or can a portion be kept open for public access for swimming? The structural integrity of the pond needs to be considered.
 - 3. The view conversation is interesting. I view this as forest/meadow upland property. In my mind this has historic value and we have cellar holes on the property. How do we go about preserving the meadow and habitats in that area? The habitats will be rich and diverse whichever way we go forested vs open meadow.
 - 4. Considering mobility access is a great consideration, but I am leery of building any additional infrastructure on the property. It's low maintenance, but raising it to the level of mountain biking, etc creates a different level of maintenance.
 - iv. Mike:
 - 1. It's great to see the survey results coming back supporting the initial thoughts/intents/aspects of the initial consideration of what the town forest is.
 - v. Chuck:
 - 1. The town accepted the property with the current value and current use. Through the work with the steering committee, understands keeping the property as-is is still a lot of work.
 - 2. There definitely is a lot of people concerned with keeping the land as it is; there's been concerns with the mowing and how extensive it is.
 - vi. Feedback from the committee:
 - 1. On behalf of the conservation commission (Corrie): I think the committee has heard about the view but also the conservation of the natural resources. I just want to ensure that the learning we've achieved over the past 18 months is reflected and understood in the management plan. It's important that we find the balance
 - 2. Freddie noted 241 people is not a large sampling of our population and that those responding likely have very strong feelings about particular topics.
 - vii. Jared: Have you discussed when the ideal time would be to start working on the management plan? Lisa: Now as outlined in the last slide of the presentation. Pete: We've explored what other towns have done and some plans have been written by the steering committees, whereas others have hired consultants ranging from \$10-20k.
 - viii. Jared: How can the Select Board help things move forward?
 - 1. Corrie: We've solicited quotes for a viewshed analysis. What we're also needing is just steering committee members' time, which is tough right now.

2. Corrie: Where is the sense of urgency you (Jared) are speaking of to create the plan? Jared: I think taxpayers have an expectation and it would be helpful to have a sense of the timeline.
- ix. Wendy, I'm a little concerned with the emphasis is put on the survey. I felt that some of the questions were a bit leading. Pete: Where we did have questions around the public preferences, we did include areas for additional responses.
- x. Darlene: What is the procedure to determine what the mowing plan is for this year? Corrie: What we did last year was to determine what would be unrecoverable if we did nothing, so we anticipate doing the same for this year. Mike: A lot of what we've seen in the slides that were presented is that people want it to stay the same, so we need to do that; but with some of the woody spindly birches, those will grow and make the area not the same and create a wall for the view.

4. Road Foreman Update:

- a. North Fayston Road Paving/Culvert Update
 - i. 15 culverts complete and 4 to go. Should be complete next week. The excavator goes back as soon as the last culvert is complete.
 - ii. Road side mowing is pretty much complete; Mike Q is tackling the grading for now.
 - iii. Waitsfield is completing their North Fayston culvert work on Friday and Monday coming up.
 - iv. When is paving planned? Close to end of September.

5. Review Mileage Reimbursement Rate

- a. The IRS recommended rates have increased since the last time the town updated them (\$0.54 per mile).
- b. *Motion to accept the federal mileage reimbursement rate as provided and updated annually by the IRS by Jared, seconded by Mike. All in favor, none opposed. Motion passes.*

6. Fireworks

- a. In recent discussions around fireworks, the Town has researched the private displays of fireworks. The state regulations are very clear for public displays requiring a permit. The private portion is very vague.
- b. Chuck: According to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns the state statutes state that private purchase and possession of fireworks is illegal. We as a Town cannot place any additional ordinances that go above and beyond what the State provides. We can leverage the noise ordinance. The concern there is the enforcement – who will enforce it?
- c. Jared: I believe people should do the neighborly thing and notify neighbors regarding fireworks

7. Read Mail and Sign Warrant

- a. No Mail
- b. Warrant – read and approved.

8. Other Business:

- a. Richard Davis et al: Speeding on North Fayston Road and horseback riding.
 - i. Richard: There are two things – the first being the speed and what can be done and second being that a civil response being the right way to go. This is the third time we've come to the Town and previously there's just been an appeal to people to slow down.
 1. When I was here 2 years ago, the SB did agree we could put handmade signs along the road. I have a few examples and would like to ask landowners for their thoughts and permission to place the signs. We'd also like to seek permission from the Town to place signs along this road.

2. For future, we would like to discuss getting some radar signs with changeable messages (ex Tunbridge) to motivate people to slow down.
 3. I would also like to discuss law enforcement as people have been hurt (hit & run).
 4. I would like to encourage the Town to look consciously at the changes taking place with the COVID migration and changes that may happen that are irrevocable.
 5. Richard shares examples of the signs.
- ii. Freddie: The speed is an issue and we keep widening the road which allows for higher speed. The edges of the road are soft, and pedestrians/horses/bikers cannot get over because it's not safe. I think walkers/bikers/horse riders also need to consider clothing color. Jared: Do you know who the offenders are along North Fayston Road? Freddie: No, contractors and out of staters. The recent incident was with motorcycles with out of state plates.
 - iii. Jared: Are we ok with Richard setting out these signs? Mike: We already did a few years ago.
 - iv. Amanda: This stretch of road (in front of town office) is a racetrack. I was hoping the roadwork would slow people down, but people are still flying. I'm out daily running and wear bright clothing and people still fly by.
 - v. Richard: I've stopped riding on North Fayston Road because of the speed.
 - vi. Freddie: What's the process of moving forward on a radar sign? Jared: It's a budget item. Mike: We got a grant for the ones next to the school, but they didn't last a year because the road salt got into the cabinet and fried the circuits.
 - vii. Amanda: Is law enforcement an option at all?
 - viii. Jared: I think the last 18 months have impacted the Valley and Vermont in ways we have not anticipated. The law enforcement topic is a 3-town conversation and a very expensive option.
 - ix. Jared: This is a very important conversation, but for future meetings ensure you send your request to be on the agenda 2 days in advance of the meeting.
- b. Gary Kessler (Green Mountain Stage Race)
 - i. We are planning to move ahead with the race with COVID precautions in place.
 - ii. The race will start at Mt Ellen on Sept 5 and will close the App Gap (Rt 17) for about 2 hours. This will impact German Flats Road.
 - iii. We've been in contact with the state COVID commission to keep up with what's required and any forthcoming restrictions.
9. *Motion to Adjourn by Chuck, seconded by Jared. Meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.*

**Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Carter**

Approved: Jared Cadwell

