

Town of Royalton
Selectboard Meeting Minutes DRAFT
9/13/2022 6:30 PM
Virtual / In-person Meeting

Royalton Selectboard: John Dumville, Jerry Barcelow, David Barker, Tim Murphy, Chris Noble (6:34pm)

Town Staff & Committee Members: Victoria Paquin (Town Administrator), Rita Hull (Treasurer), Loretta Stalnaker (Police Chief), John Leighton (Transfer Station Manager), Demi Boles (Road Foreman), Stuart Levasseur (Planning Commission), John Dettwiler (Conservation Commission), Patrick Dakin (Planning Commission), Peter Anderson (Planning Commission)

Public: Jo Levasseur, Hoyt Bingham, Nell Gwin, Shirley Jefferson, Kathy Hassey, Peg Trombly, Brad Sick, Pamela Vesilind, JJ Pochalik, Mike Hogan, Kate Caldwell, Charles Hunter

Meeting called to order @ 6:30 PM

Approve the Agenda: The agenda was approved with the addition of items from the transfer station manager and railroad right of entry permit

Public Comments: The chair reminded the gathering that all public comments would be given during the public comment period, and would not be heard during the specific agenda items, as that time is for the board to discuss.

Stuart Levasseur presented to the board a news article regarding a recent fatal ATV accident and reminded the board that by not allowing atv's on the road, they might be saving a life.

Peter Anderson asks that his wildlife corridor pamphlet be included in the meeting minutes.

Mike Hogan reports that ATV's have been travelling Russ Hill Rd, and that although he was told Russ Hill Rd is not included for consideration, logic indicates that it will be used. Notes that additional noise, and dust are a reduction in quality of life for residents. Also notes that the board was presented with a letter and statistics regarding safety.

Brad Sick notes that at the last meeting a lot of things were left up in the air, and thinks that the amount of road travel requested exceeds the miles of private trails available.

Pamela Vesilind reminds the board that the Planning and Conservation commission are against allowing ATV's on town roads, she also noted that nothing in the town plan would support ATV's on the roads. Pamela also asks the selectboard to go back through the information that the ATV committee compiled and answer lingering questions before making a decision.

Hoyt Bingham presented the board with a letter and signatures from both Royalton residents and area residents in opposition to a dollar general.

James Gauthier noted that Aubuchon has not been forthcoming with their plans. In his opinion, crime soon follows into areas where Dollar Generals are established and local businesses should be supported.

Kate Caldwell noted that Aubuchon's has high prices and are making their money off the town and that Dollar General would likely be similar. She would rather pay more to buy local.

Stearn Rd. Railroad Crossing Petition: Charles Hunter (VP of Governmental affairs G&W Railroad) was present to discuss the town's petition for upgrade to the Stearn rd. rail crossing. The railroad has partnered with Amtrak to do line upgrades and the crossing is included in that plan. Charles requested that the board withdraw or hold the petition until such time that the project is completed as the planned project renders the petition unnecessary. There was some discussion about the details of the proposal and the current status of the petition. Chris moved to hold the petition in abeyance. Jerry seconded and the motion carried.

Transfer Station: John Leighton presented two quotes for security systems at the transfer station. He noted that he has also requested a quote from the company the town currently uses to provide this service. David moves to allow the purchase of a security system at a cost of up to \$4,600. There was some discussion about not giving a specific dollar amount, such that the bid that provides the best value could be selected. Jerry seconded and the motion carried.

John would like to relocate the diesel fuel tank so that it can have an electric pump and be more readily available. Discussion continued regarding legal requirements and project costs. John will bring project cost to the board at a later time.

Highway Department: Demi reports that the roadside mower needs to be replaced and suggests a rebuilt solution at a cost of \$36,000. Discussion was had regarding the service life of the current mower, and whether the funds were available for the replacement. Victoria has reworked the equipment replacement schedule and we can afford the replacement. David moved to authorize the replacement of the roadside mowing apparatus. Chris seconded and the motion carried.

Jerry Moved to approve the highway access permit for 97 N. Windsor St which was submitted to repair an existing driveway access. David seconded and the motion carried.

The board and Demi discussed current project status and asked for an update on line painting. Demi will work on getting the lines painted when the time sensitive grant work is complete (pending cooperative weather).

Act 250 Application: David moved to send a letter to the district commission aligning with the planning commission. John seconded. There was some discussion regarding a concern that the applicants have not been forthcoming regarding the future tenant. The motion carried.

The board discussed the petition received by Hoyt Bingham. It was determined that the petition would be held for now. The board feels this information will be more relevant and appropriate if Dollar General is confirmed as the future tenant.

ATV Ordinance: Tim presented a chart that distinguishes what items are controlled by State Statute and what the board has control over. Tim would like to add non-binding language that

discourages large groups and organized events. He would like the ATV club to draft rules that incorporate this language. Jerry expresses that in that case we should table the discussion as there was no representative from the ATV club this evening. John notes that the current proposal is against what the voters were asked to do and expects that we will get a petition when we pass an ordinance. He suggests we should hold off on passing an ordinance so that the petition (if received) could be addressed at town meeting. Discussion continued regarding areas that the board would like additional knowledge and guidance on. The board determined that it would be best to speak with a lawyer regarding the ordinance before taking any further action.

Town Administrator: Jerry moved to appoint David Barker as the representative for VLCT/PACIF annual meeting. John seconded and the motion carried.

Jerry moved to approve the alcohol permit request from 802 Pizza to increase their square footage. David seconded and the motion carried.

Strategic planning with Kevin was tentatively schedule for Tuesday, October 25th.

Chris and Tim will attend the VLS meet your community event on Saturday, September 24th.

The selectboard approved of closing the office on Monday, October 10th (indigenous people's day) to allow for carpet cleaning.

Victoria reports that we have learned that a constable is not able to enforce municipal ordinance unless they are a certified officer. Discussion regarding the necessity of the position and whether we should add the elimination of the position to the town meeting agenda. The board generally approved of eliminating the role.

Approve Warrants: The warrants were approved as presented.

Approve Minutes: John moved to approve the minutes of August 23rd. David seconded and the motion carried.

Other Business: It was noted that the radio station event sign on the green needs to be removed. The meeting of the Selectboard with a lawyer was discussed. This meeting will be warned as a public meeting.

On Sept 23rd a volley ball tournament is being held at Carpenter Field. The Rec Department was contacted to ensure there was no scheduling conflict.

Adjourned: 8:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Victoria Paquin
Royalton Town Administrator

ATTACHMENT: LETTER FROM CASCADNAC VALLEY WHEELERS

August 23, 2022

To the members of the Town of Royalton Selectboard:

First and foremost, thank you for your time and efforts that have resulted from the potential shared town public highway use for ATV's. We appreciate all the courtesy and hope to always have good lines of communication with the Town, Selectboard members, our neighbors, and entire community.

We feel the process went well overall and gave a chance for our community to say and hear various concerns from many points of view. As a club, we hear the same discussions happening all over the State and see local governments generally responding similar to Royalton. Based on the current VASA trail maps of the entire State, there appears to be 59 municipalities that have some allowance of shared town highway use on at least a portion of class IV and class III town highways, which is about 24% of Vermont's combined total of 251 towns, villages, cities, and gores. As a club and part of VASA, we have learned a lot from the successes and learning situations with what other municipalities are doing. While provided responses to each community member concern would be difficult, I wish to keep this letter quick with our club's final request for shared town public highway use for ATV's.

While we believe most criteria referenced in community member concerns can be controlled with the proposed ordinance and the help of law enforcement (Royalton LE, and Windsor County Sheriffs at VASA's cost), there are two points we as a club want to urge the Selectboard to consider increasing public safety and protect our public town highways. One, reduce speed limits as necessary across the town. Speeding has been repeatedly discussed as a concern where some residents don't feel safe walking on their public town highways or posted speed limits exceed safe travel. While the maximum speed limit for ATVs is in the draft ordinance as 20 MPH and less than current limits, lessening other regular use speed limits may have some merits for all residents. Two, consider adopting an ordinance regarding Class IV highway usage including; post roads prohibiting wheeled traffic between December 15 and April 15th (for snowmobiling season) if not longer at the discretion of the Selectboard, and limit logging operations from using public town highways to skid or forward logs (or include them in a case-by-case allowance to permit and bond the use to ensure the Class IV public town highways are returned to satisfactory conditions). Certainly, exceptions may be included for landowners trying to access their remote lands but again should be addressed in case-by-case allowances.

We feel the ATV Committee was able to deliver an ordinance with good regulatory and operational content, and understand the critical remaining part of the proposed ordinance are the locations of proposed shared use on the public town highways. As a committee, there was much discussion regarding balance of how much shared use and where the shared use shall occur. There was also much discussion of our potential private trails to shorten the amount of shared town highway we needed for a viable riding network with the long-term goal of connecting to other neighboring towns. We as a club brought a list of common town highways to the final ATV Committee meeting in hopes of having a discussion about the shared use of those public town highways, one by one if needed. However, as it became clear that no consensus was to occur with the ATV Committee, the whole list was turned over to the Selectboard. In the interest of keeping the proposal abbreviated to what currently makes sense to us as a club, proposed roads as follows make a loop on the south to west area of town and access the backside of South Royalton Village with two separate roads in the north central area that run along multiple private properties that have given permission for private trails as part of this shared public highway trial.

Current list of roads for proposed shared use of public town highway with ATV:

- i i. Otto Merrill Road from Back River Road to Oxbow Road
- ii ii. Back River Road from Otto Merrill Road to Johnson Hill Road
- iii iii. Oxbow Road from 2062 Oxbow Road to Pleasant St.
- iv iv. Pleasant St. from Oxbow Road/South St. to Rainbow St.
- v v. Rainbow St. from Pleasant St. to 108 Rainbow St.
- vi vi. Seawall Brook Road from Royalton Hill Road to North Road
- vii vii. Rousseau Road (East) from North Road to Davis Road
- viii viii. Davis Road from Johnson Hill Road to Royalton Turnpike
- ix ix. Royalton Turnpike from Davis Road (North Intersection) to Sewall Brook Road
- x x. Gee Hill Road from Route 14 to Rix Road
- xi xi. Happy Hollow Road from Deer Haven Lane to Rix Road

*Explicitly does not include North Road, Back River Road beyond Johnson Hill Road headed north, any portions of Royalton Village, South Royalton Village around the Green, or any shared use of a State Highway, and other sections not named for quick reference.

As stated before, as a club we will need to make an application to VTrans to have a crossing at Route 14/Gee Hill Intersection where the snowmobile club has a current crossing permitted by VTrans.

As a club, we would like to defer review of private trail locations with the Selectboard and Town at this time. We have had landowners receive criticism for their allowed use by their neighbors and would like to keep this discussion with the Selectboard specific to public town highways at this time. Please understand we have obtained written or verbal permission of 14 separate private properties solely in the areas of roads requested in the above provided list.

Again, we wish to thank you for your time and careful considerations with this potential ordinance.

Sincerely,

Ian MacKenzie

President, Cascadnac Valley Wheelers