

EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

The Chair signed Excess Weight Permits for Bevins & Son Inc, David Gaudette, Bedline Unlimited Inc, Brian Lyman, Joe Bissonette, Jay Soutiere, Huntington Homes Inc, Sean F Krusch, Ernest P Krusch, and diStefano Landscaping,

IRREVOCABLE OFFER OF DEDICATION

Allison Hope explained that there is an easement for the proposed recreation path from the Common to the Westford School with Jeff Hutchins, who has approved for the path to go across his property (formerly the Spiller lot). Allison continues that we don't yet know where the recreation path will exactly be placed so the town attorney suggests the signing of an Irrevocable Offer of Dedication.

Julia Andrews moved to approve the Irrevocable Offer of Dedication from Jeff Hutchins to the Town for a recreation path on the property at 26 Common Road (the "Spiller Lot") and to approve Selectboard Chair Allison Hope to execute the Irrevocable Offer of Dedication, seconded by Bill Cleary.

Marge McIntosh asked what was going to be allowed to be used on the recreation path once it is in place. Allison clarified that nothing has been discussed for usage yet and that so far it is just an easement. Pat Haller mentioned that there are restrictions already and that no motorized vehicles will be allowed on the recreation path. Allison confirmed that this is already part of the easement.

There was no further comment. The motion passed: 3-0.

LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Nanette Rogers provided a draft copy of the Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) to Steve Willard and Joshua Smith for comments. Steve provided some on behalf of the Fire Department. Nanette submitted the draft to the CCRPC for preliminary approval and was given the thumbs up. Julia Andrews moved to adopt the Local Emergency Management Plan as drafted, Bill Cleary seconded, motion passed 3-0.

PERMISSION TO USE TOWN COMMON FOR RICHARD'S RIDE

John Williams requested permission to use the Town Common for his event, Richard's Ride. Nanette Rogers explained that this is the 3rd year that the event has come through town and that it is a bike ride. In previous years there were no problems and that those attending the event are advised they must follow the rules of the Common. Bill Cleary motioned to approve, Julia Andrews seconded, motion passed 3-0.

WESTFORD TOWN LANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Allison Hope stated that she feels the Board has had their opportunity to ask the questions they wanted to ask and that she wants this meeting to be for the public to voice their thoughts and concerns.

Bill Cleary thinks that the Plan is very thorough and the Committee that put together the plan should be commended. Bill likes that the Plan includes hunting, but thinks the access issue does need to be cleared up. Allison agreed that the hunting access was an issue and a point of concern.

Julia Andrews brings up that in the Management Plan that further recommendations and the making of finalized plans falls to the Conservation Commission. She thinks that the Plan is clear.

Barb Peck says it sounds like there is a use, hunting, that is allowed but that currently there is no access for that approved use. She asked if the Conservation Commission could clear up the issues prior to anything being approved. Allison replied that this is not a yes or no answer. In the Plan hunting is approved. Allison would like to understand what access looks like within federal and state laws with the town attorney. Barb suggested that until the access question can be settled that the Plan not be approved. Allison doesn't disagree, she did not think that the Plan would be approved at this time.

Julia Andrews sees the issue differently. She thinks that the Plan is not just about hunting and that approving the Plan empowers the Conservation Commission to move forward and find that viable access. Barb Peck says that the land was purchased with what is permissible. If the committees responsible can't come together the Board should not go forward until the issue is settled.

Robert Bancroft says that the Management Plan is a plan. Approving it is approving the goals in the Plan, not finalizing anything. Robert thinks it is a fruitful plan and that if we approve it, it allows the committees to meet those goals.

Koi Boynton, from the Planning Commission, mentions that the recommendations are based on research and recommendation of the town lawyer and that the current access is too close to the school to be used for hunting. Koi also mentioned that according to federal law there cannot be guns on public land within 1,000 feet of the school and that this was confirmed with the town lawyer.

Bill Cleary wonders where the 1,000 foot buffer comes from. Koi mentions that it comes from a shared agreement with the Westford School and reiterates that it is 1,000 feet. Allison mentions that the documents of the agreement between the school is on the town website and that the document provides context for the buffer.

Robert Bancroft stated, in regards to the 1,000 foot buffer, that it does not apply to private property. Allison clarified that the parking lot at the school being a parking place for hunters is the issue as it is part of the shared agreement with the school and that the document does not mention other access points. Robert mentions he could walk up private property and enter the forest. Julia Andrews says that was her interpretation as well, but that she thought the Maple Shade Forest was public property. Robert says he doesn't see what the issue is, where people park is not his concern.

Tom Schmidt brings up that by Vermont State law it is legal to walk up to the Maple Shade entrance. Federal Statue that mentions the 1,000 foot buffer was design in 1992 for states that didn't have existing code. Vermont has its own school zone code and hunting and fishing codes. Tom says if somebody wants to open carry, even in the Misty Meadows Forest, they can and are not committing a crime. He says that it is not about hunting, but the individual right to bear arms. He thinks the 1,000 foot buffer is an interpretation of the law to the extreme and, in his opinion, it is because the Board purposely wants to block hunters and that it's a personal issue.

Allison says that she hears Tom's concerns, but that she is not going to interpret law because she is not an attorney. Tom says that he thinks it is more important to give hunters access to the property than develop any further trails.

Nick Rogers states that he wants to touch on what Robert Bancroft was saying. He asks if anybody has reached out to Vermont Fish & Game and then mentions that he himself has done so. Nick states that Vermont Fish and Game has clarified that the 1,000 foot buffer does not apply to private property.

Bill Cleary wonders if it would be possible to build an access on the opposite side of the road. Allison says that she doesn't have answers and that those questions are for the Conservation Commission and Selectboard to figure out together. Bill asks what a potential budget for this would be, but Allison would feel more comfortable if Greg Barrows, Treasurer, was present if funds are to be discussed. Allison says there are certainly access options that can be figured out, it just cannot be the school parking lot.

Marge McIntosh brings up that she has comments in regards to recreation opportunities on the property. Marge mentions that she spent most of her career in recreation so she was very interested in this aspect of the Plan. Marge goes on to thank the Committee for putting together the Plan and acknowledges how hard it is to write a document from scratch. Marge has put together some suggested edits of the Management Plan and provided a summary of the suggestions to the Selectboard. Marge suggests expanding the language on what is allowed on town lands recreationally and that we cannot predict what the future of recreation will be so keeping language broad will ensure the document is relevant for years to come.

Julia Andrews asks Marge if she thinks the addition of language for bicycles is sufficient and asks how general Marge wants to go. Marge mentions that language like "Including, but not limited to" is the what she is looking for.

Marge also brings up that the Maple Shade Forest only has access for pedestrians and asks what we can do to ensure that the mobility impaired as thought of in terms of access to both Maple Shade and Misty Meadows. She mentions that the Plan mentions access for mobility impaired, but doesn't list it as a goal.

Marge lists the permitted uses of the Maple Shade Forest and reiterates that recreation is always evolving so it is important to be broad. She also thinks that the language in the Plan stating that no new trails will be built on Maple Shade Forest is too aggressive. She mentions there was talk of connecting the trails to logging roads, etc. In her opinion it is okay to limit new trails, but she thinks no new trails is too harsh. In her opinion the Plan is not ready to be adopted and she would like to submit her changes to the Committee and Selectboard.

Allision Hope mentions that we are working with the Vermont Land Trust which makes the land public. Marge adds that the Vermont Land Trust has an easement on Maple Shade Forest, but not Misty Meadows.

Nick Rogers thinks it sounds like the next step is to vote to adopt the Plan. Julia disagrees and Allison clarifies that the Board will not vote on the Management Plan tonight since things still need to be worked on and that this meeting was purely for the public to voice their opinions and be part of the conversation.

Dennis Briggs says that he liked Marge's additions to the Plan and thinks that access for hunters needs to be in the goals. Julia mentions that providing access for hunters is goal #4 in the document.

Tim Johnson mentions that if we provide access to the mobility impaired it could allow impaired former hunters to come hunting with able bodied folks. He wonders if Westford can be an example to other towns on how to provide hunting access for those with limited mobility. Bill Cleary thinks there is potential for limited motor access for these cases.

Darryl Montague brings up that in terms of access on the Maple Shade Forest side of Brookside Road that it would not have to be large in size, just enough for a car. He brings up that turkey season is soon. Allison says that this will probably not be resolved by the time turkey season arrives. Robert Bancroft states that putting in even a small parking space is not as easy as you would think.

Tom Schmidt says that the 1,000 foot buffer is the maximum suggested and wonders why we have to be at the maximum. He asks if the access is within that 1,000 feet if the town would be okay with that.

Bill Cleary brings up that the Management Plan only mentions deer and turkey season and wants the seasonal language to be broader, he states that people hunt more than those two animals. Koi Boynton mentions that the Plan does not limit the specific animal that is hunted, only the times of the year that hunting can occur on the Town Lands. Koi states that this is just a recommendation at this point and that the recommendation was made with community input from both hunting and non-hunting residents. She mentions that residents wanted to know when hunting was happening on the property so they can walk the trails safely.

Pat Haller mentions that he feels safer with his children outside on the off-season than when it is hunting season. He thinks the purpose of the public hearing was to hear what all residents would be comfortable with and that he would feel nervous if hunting was allowed all year long. Bill thinks that people don't think about how little the forest would be used for hunting. Allison disagrees that people have not thought about it. She mentions that the Committee talked to many people on both sides of the conversation before making their recommendation.

Marge says that according to the Outdoor Foundation that the percentage of participation for hunting has risen from 5.1% in 2007 to 5.7% in 2017. She compares these percentages to participation in cross country skiing, which is a current popular use of town lands in Westford. In 2007 participation for cross country skiing was 1.3% and in 2017 it was 1.7%. She concludes that hunting is very popular.

Allison says that the Board will be clear to residents when the next steps for the Plan are figured out. She mentions that there will be transparency and communication and that there are some open-ended questions that they don't yet have the answers to. Julia Andrews thanks all that showed interest in discussing the Plan.

PETITION FOR FIRE ORDINANCE

The Selectboard warned a Special Town Meeting for June 3rd, 2019 in response to a petition filed by residents regarding the Fire Ordinance adopted in March. The meeting will begin at 7:00 pm.

CHITTENDEN SOLID WASTE DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

Julia Andrews moved to appoint Michelle DaVia to serve as Westford's representative on the Chittenden Solid Waste District Board, Bill Cleary seconded, motion passed 3-0.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL

The Board approved the accounts payable and payroll warrants.

PROCEEDS FROM SPILLER LOT SALE

The Board agreed to use the proceeds from the sale of the Spiller Lot to make a principal payment on the Maple Shade Town Forest loan. Bill Cleary motioned, Julia Andrews seconded, motion passed 3-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

Allison received an email from Gerry Thibault on Cambridge Road about when the road would be graded. John mentioned that the section of Cambridge Road from Common Road to Plains Road was graded four times so far this spring and the rest of the road was graded once.

Bill Cleary mentions he reached out to the Vermont League of Cities & Towns and asked about the Town adopting a Fire Ordinance that supersedes state law. They confirmed that is not the case. The Town can make an ordinance more stringent, but not less than the state. Julia mentions in terms of the Westford Fire Ordinance that the document was initially complex, which the Board thought was a poor idea and stripped it back.

Allison states that at the beginning of discussion on the Fire Ordinance a lot of public feedback was given about the size of the fire pit and the Board agreed with those residents. Since the Board had gotten a lot of engagement at the beginning of the process, she did not expect this much confusion going forward and she thinks the Board needs both be more direct and more frequent with their communication. Allison also thinks that for residents to assume there is ill-intent behind the Board's decisions is frustrating since that is not the case.

Bill had noticed that misinformation was often present on Front Porch Forum. He wonders if there is a better way to get the correct information to residents. Allison mentions that it is unrealistic to expect Selectboard members to moderate the Forum as they all have full-time jobs. The best sources for correct information are Town and State websites or residents can contact the Town or a board member.

Bill brought up the possibility of posting the minutes in full on Front Porch Forum. Nanette says that a link to the minutes is posted on Front Porch Forum since the minutes themselves are too long for a single post, but that it might be possible to do a summary in addition to the link. Allison mentioned she loves when residents are directed to the Town website via the link because the website has a lot of valuable information.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison Hope, Chair
Westford Selectboard

Callie Hamdy
Assistant Town Clerk

TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.
ROAD SCHEDULE
April 26, 2019 – May 9, 2019

Work to be done

- Pothole/ soft spot repair when we can.
- Grade roads when we can.
- Tree and brush cutting on Rogers and Rubaud Rd. to start grant work.

Work completed

- Filled potholes on most roads.
- Graded Osgood Hill Rd., sections of Woods Hollow, Brookside and Old stage Rd.
- Fixed a mud hole on Seymour Rd.
- Hauled gravel to the shop.
- Removed a beaver dam on Cambridge Rd.
- Met with Tyler Brown (state wildlife) about beavers
- Fixed some signs.
- Repaired leaking axle seal on 2014 Western Star.
- Repaired a split coolant line on the 2014 Western Star.
- Attended Chittenden County Foreman meeting.

Approved at the 4/25/19 Selectboard Meeting.

TOWN OF WESTFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
GUEST LIST

Date: April 25, 2019

Name (please print)

Address

NICK ROGERS

933 Osgood Hill Rd

DENNIS BRIGGS

31 GREENWOOD LN

TJ ELDT

771 Woods Hollow

Wayne Brown

138 Huntley Rd.

DAVE LAUZZE

138 #11 Rd.

Sheryl Lulek

Woods Hollow Rd

Michael Howrigan

780 Woods Hollow Rd.

Robert Bancroft

Brookside Rd

Tim Johnson

802 Woods Hollow

ART WOLF

557 Cambridge Rd

FRA ALLEN

1601 / 128

EDWARD MERZHAJ

1088 Rt 128

Barb Peck

1088 Rte 128

Koi Baynton

5 Wildberry Lane

Marge McIntosh

201 Huntley

Wayne Fleury

784 Woods Hollow Rd

PAT HALLER

123 Brookside

David Whitney

315 Plain Rd

TOWN OF WESTFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
GUEST LIST

Date: April 25, 2019

Name (please print)

Address

John Sliker

175 Pelling, 11 Rd ^{Westford} ~~Essex Junction~~, VT

Darryl Montague

173 Pettingill Rd Westford

Steve Willard

191 Old Number 11 Rd