

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
NOVEMBER 11, 2019**

Present: Allison Hope (via phone) Nanette Rogers
Julia Andrews
Bill Cleary

Guests: None

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

ATTORNEY OPINION - HUNTING ACCESS FOR MAPLE SHADE TOWN FOREST

The Selectboard requested a legal opinion from the Town attorney on publicizing access to the Maple Shade Town Forest for hunting. The concern was that hunters will need to cross private property owned by Don Pouliot to get to the forest. The opinion from the Town attorney references State Statute which provides landowners a statutory protection from liability if they make their land available for recreational use, including hunting. With the exception of the Gun Free Zone, as long as the forest and Mr. Pouliot's property is not posted to restrict hunting, the hunters can freely access and hunt on the land. It was noted that neither property is posted.

The attorney cautioned the Town in publicizing hunting access over an individual's property as that could be seen as the Town interfering with property owner rights. Bill feels this is moot given that Mr. Pouliot has agreed to allow hunters to cross his property to access the town forest. Julia and Allison agreed with Bill.

Allison pointed out it was important for the Selectboard to do its due diligence in obtaining the legal opinion to ensure the Town is within its rights and that the town would not be putting Mr. Pouliot in a position that would create a liability. The Board discussed the next step which is to put a post on Front Porch Forum. Bill would like to include a thank you to Mr. Pouliot for allowing access and parking. Julia would like to add that if the privilege of crossing Mr. Pouliot's land is abused, the access will not be available in the future. Bill volunteered to write the post and circulate for edits before posting. Due to the time of year, the Town was not able to create parking at the access on Mr. Pouliot's land in time for this year's deer season.

Bill advised that there are no signs to delineate the Gun Free Zone, adding that hunters want to obey the rules but need the tools to do so. The Board would like the Conservation Commission to put up signs and to identify the pedestrian cut in the wall for the hunting access.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison Hope, Chair
Westford Selectboard

Nanette Rogers
Town Administrator