

TOWN OF ACWORTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Selectmen
Approved Minutes for Public Hearing of January 28, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.
Small Roads Initiative Team (SRIT)
Town Hall, 13 Town Hall Rd, Acworth, NH 03601

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: Jim Jennison; Ray Leonard; Kathi Bradt

STAFF PRESENT: Charlotte Comeau, BOS Admin. Assist.

SMALL ROADS INITIATIVE TEAM: Gregg Thibodeau, Jennifer Bland; Frank Emig; Mark Girard, Ray LeClair; Brenda Melius

OTHERS PRESENT: Approximately 55 people

CALL TO ORDER FOR PUBLIC HEARING: Jim called the public hearing to order at 1:03 p.m. and then recused himself as one of the small roads for discussion was his.

Gregg went through the slide show presentation explaining the method the team used to determine which roads to reclassify to Class VI. The roads recommended were Nelson, McWethy, Meader, Russell, Echo Valley, Breier, Coffin Hill, Langdon, Parsons and Hoagland.

There was over four hours of discussion, with feedback and questions from the people in the room. The following were some of the main points of concern:

- Maintenance, improvement and vehicle cost savings are overstated
- Homeowners insurance could be impacted
- Town lawyer should be engaged to determine if the effort is legal
- Recommend project team calculate the actual cost for each road over the last 5 or 10 years
- Recommend project team calculate the actual loss in tax revenue
- Would FEMA reimbursement be impacted on roads if they are reclassified to Class VI or private
- Reclassification could pose significant hardships for some of the residences to maintain their own road
- Reclassification would pose a risk to subdivision capabilities and loss of potential revenue to the landowners
- Cost to maintain the road privately would be higher than the stated costs for the town to maintain
- Historic references for some of the properties did not identify stone walls , cellar holes or other historic features
- It is not fair that some taxpayers pay for roads that are individual landowners driveways
- Reevaluate the team's definition of commercial use
- Question asked if Echo Valley could be made private
- Polly Hill discontinuance consideration was to be discussed at the next Selectmen meeting
- Landowners bought these properties as a Class V road; changing it afterwards is unfair
- Some of the roads claim to provide significant public use
- Overall folks that opposed the effort considered it to not be worth the benefit
- The engagement should have been earlier in the process
- Communications regarding the event could have been more directed, earlier and more frequent
- Increase awareness to the public regarding when the team meetings take place
- Recommendation was made to delay any actions until next year
- Recommendation was made to stop the effort
- The project team will be compiling and publishing a complete list of feedback and questions received over the next several weeks.

Ray Leonard adjourned the hearing at 4:40 p.m.

Audio recording of the meeting is available at the Selectmen's office.

Respectfully submitted,



Charlotte Comeau, Administrative Assistant