

Richmond Selectboard
Minutes 7/28/2020

Members Present: Katie Mather, Bard Hill, David Sander

Absent: Christine Werneke, Roger Brown

Others Present: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Kyle Kapitansky, Police Chief; Pete Gosselin, Highway Superintendent; Jeremy Hoff, Richmond Land Trust; Lou Borie, Richmond Land Trust, also present: Diane Mariano, John Rankin, Jeannette Quintal, Jeff Pugh, Bob Bombardier, Andy Squires, Denise Barnard, Karyn Parker, Barbara Quin, John Cohn, Tim & Marie Schonholtz, Alex & AJ Rocheleau, Andy Bessette, Jane Miller, Tim & Marcia Waite, Denise Barnard, Veronique Beittle

Location: Eastern end of Cochran Rd. between the bridge over the Huntington River and the bridge over the Huntington River

Called to Order: 7:02 PM

Welcome by David.

Comments from the public:

John Rankin was concerned that there was not enough notice for people to be able to attend that would want to even though legally the notice was sufficient. He said that since the posts and ropes went up people have been forced to park in the 45MPH zones which makes it less safe. He suggested taking down the ropes and allowing people to park on the straight parts of the road.

Jane Miller wanted to open-up the 5 spaces that are available in Bombardier's field to keep cars from being around her house.

Bard said that as a point of order the Selectboard members speak first on a subject then the public is invited to speak and the subject being spoken of was on the agenda.

I. **Additions or Deletions to Agenda** - none

II. **Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**

a) **On site review of the parking on the eastern end of Cochran Rd. between the bridge over the Huntington River and the bridge over the Winooski River.**

David said after the last meeting he envisioned the posts and ropes being placed only on the blind corner and by the bridge adding that their current placement has stirred the conversation to move forward with a more permanent solution.

Bard said he has had conversations and received emails that prompted him to drive Cochran Rd and visit Volunteer's Green over the weekend to see the situation for himself. He said that there is unprecedented demand for use of the river and parking was definitely a problem. The dilemma he said was safe parking that was not overly intrusive to property owners.

Katie said that since the last meeting she has received emails and calls regarding the posts and ropes. She proposed opening parking up on the straight-a-ways until a permanent solution could be found.

Discussion included:

- that Bard asked Pete what the public right-of-way is. Pete responded that it is 25' from the center line. Jane H. said, that is in her front yard.
- that AJ Rocheleau said he is landowner that maintains the right-of-way, that his understanding is that the Town has a right to access the land in necessary but that does not allow people to park on his lawn and he could have them towed. Kyle responded that even if he (AJ) towed someone at his own expense he (AJ) could be opening himself up to a lawsuit. Katie added that without the Parking Ordinance AJ would be right.
- that Bard asked Jeremy Hoff to explain the easement and parking spaces. Jeremy Hoff said that the land was conserved for its scenic value, access to the river, endangered species and archeological sites. He said that 5 spots were designated in case they were ever needed. He felt that there were other sites, like the Houle property now owned by the Town for parking. A resident responded that there are a crazy number of people looking for parking to access the river. Bard replied how do we let people use or town for recreation without destroying it.? Jeremy responded that if alternatives were available people would use them.
- Marie Schonholtz said the more parking there is the more people will be in her backyard. She said last weekend there were 50 people. Marie said that after the last meeting she thought there was going to be hash marks painted at intersections showing where there was already no parking allowed by Ordinance. Bard responded that the Ordinance is the long-term solution instead of asking Pete to figure it out.

At 7:40 the quorum was lost when Bard Hill needed to leave the meeting. Katie let everyone know that although no decisions could be made that night the Board was meeting again in 6 days and the meeting could continue to generate information and ideas that could then be voted on.

Discussion continued:

- Denise Bernard said she didn't know why the land trust could not allow parking in the field during peak times. Lou Borie responded that the project was funded with conservation in mind and conservation funding was used to purchase it that required the easement and limited parking to the 5 spaces if they were ever needed.
- Diane Mariano spoke about the near misses she has witnessed and how fearful she is that someone is going to get hurt because of cars parked on the side of the road and traffic traveling too fast. A resident said they have called the police several times for people speeding.
- Alex Rocheleau said she feels the ropes have not addressed the safety issue. That cars are traveling too fast. Her solution would be to make the 5 spaces a drop off area with parking at Cochran's Ski Area. That the Town should invest in a bike share

program so people could drop off people and equipment, drive to Cochran's and park, pick up a bike and ride back to meet their group.

- A resident asked about putting up signs that say "Congested Area" to slow them down. Pete responded saying people do not read the signs up now.
- Karyn Parker said for the amount of taxes she pays she is not seeing a lot of enforcement from the police department. Katie replied that the force is down to 2 officers.
- Karyn said that people are damaging the property and river, that they are not respectful at all. Another resident added that she has seen nudity, trash, a couch, a mattress, people building fires, generally being disrespectful and abusive.
- Tim Schonholtz said he and his wife put a sign up in their backyard that says "Welcome to our backyard" with a few rules and for the most part people have followed them. He said they have seen a large increase of the number of people in their backyard.
- Lou Borie was asked if the Conservation Commission that provided the funding could be asked about changing the easement. Lou responded yes.
- Karyn Parker said she had parking available.
- Tim Waite thought it would be more practical to park somewhere else.
- AJ Rocheleau said he wants to see the field preserved, not turned into a parking lot.
- Jeremy Hoff suggested that the town has committees set up to deal with these types of issues like the Transportation, Trails and Recreation Committees and that they should be brought into the discussion.
- Kyle said that he and the other officers will try to have a bigger presence. He advised that the 25 MPH speed limit is already the lowest speed limit available outside a city limit in the state of Vermont.
- Katie said that the Town is looking at having speed studies done on Cochran, Hinesburg and Huntington Roads
- A resident suggested a flashing "Slow Down", sign or one that shows how fast your going. Pete said there is a sign designated for East Hill Rd that has not been installed yet. He added that those signs cost about \$7000.
- Katie asked Pete to come up with a number to widen the side of the road where cars could park on the straight-a-way in a safe manner. Pete will have information for the next meeting.

III. **Adjourn**

There was no formal adjournment as there was no quorum. The meeting began disbanding at 8:35PM with only 4 people remaining in the field at 8:45PM.