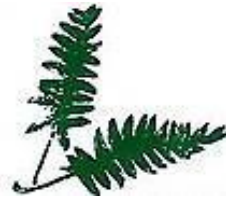


# Town of Dorset, Vermont



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*Chartered*

## Regular Meeting of the Dorset Select Board March 16, 2021

Present: Megan Thorn, Henry Chandler, Tom Smith, Liz Ruffa, Jim Salsgiver  
Also, present: Rob Gaiotti (Town Manager), Sandy Pinsonault (Town Clerk), Anna Johannsen, Tyler Yandow (Zoning Administrator), Martina Barnes (US Forest Service), Darren Marcy (Manchester Journal)

Megan Thorn, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:001 p.m.

### **Approve Minutes of February 16, 2021**

Jim Salsgiver moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to approve the February minutes as presented, motion passed 4-0.

### **Public Comment**

None

### **US Forest Service Update:**

Martina Barnes, District Ranger of the Manchester Region of the Green Mountain & Finger Lakes National Forest. Martina noted that she has been reaching out to all 30 of the Towns that span her District. She gave a few examples of the cooperative work taking place between USFS and local municipalities. In the case of Dorset: bike trails on Grouse Lane, Mad Tom Trail efforts, VAST, and worked planned around the Dorset Mountain Ridge Trail. Martina's family lives in Manchester and her children go to local schools. Tom Smith inquired about any planned work for the Mad Tom/ Otter Creek notch area. M. Barnes will forward any respective information to the Town Manager. Megan Thorn welcomed Martina and thanked her for reaching out to the Town.

### **Sign Permit Review: Mettowee Mint 4977 Route 30:**

Tyler Yandow was present to give a summary of the sign permit application that he had referred to the Selectboard for review/approval. Anna Johannsen was present to further explain the details of the permit. The previous sign was a double-sided sign, on a wooden post, perpendicular to Route 30. The new sign would be metal lettering on a marble block that is parallel with Route 30.

The new sign is further from the road, and blends better with the current fencing and aesthetic for the property. She noted that the marble block would be roughly 8' high and 4' wide, and the lettering size would conform to the current sign ordinance. Discussion ensued about the use of the marble block vs. traditional wooden post. T. Yandow noted that Mettowee is a pre-existing non-conforming use in the zone. Jim Salsgiver stated that he understood the application was non-traditional, but thought that it fit in appropriately with the area. Henry Chandler noted that this process is a bit tricky because of possible precedent that could be set. Discussion ensued about the ways to include the Board discussion as part of the decision. Liz Ruffa noted that she agreed with J. Salsgiver that the sign was appropriate for the area and looked nice. T. Yandow noted that the Selectboard could compose a findings of fact that could outline the decision making process for the approval, and would serve to explain the rationale behind the decision. M. Thorn noted that she could work with R. Gaiotti on crafting the document.

Tom Smith moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to approve the application as presented with the inclusion of the findings of fact with these minutes and the approved permit, motion passed 4-0.

### **Speed Limit Discussion Route 30 North of Dorset Village:**

R. Gaiotti noted that calls were received from concerned residents on Route 30 near the Townline with Rupert. It was noted that Route 30 has a 50 mph zone that starts carries over from Rupert to just before Danby Mountain Road. M. Thorn noted that this area had some challenges like curves, and a commercial property, and groups of houses, which make turning into these properties dangerous. T. Smith inquired about the VTrans process for setting the speed limits. R. Gaiotti replied that they would likely require a speed study. Discussion ensued about the best strategy for petitioning to have the 40 mph zone moved out to behind the Route 30 and Route 315 intersection. R. Gaiotti noted that the residential density could be a good factor that the Town could bring up with VTrans. R. Gaiotti will moved forward to start these efforts and report back at the next meeting.

### **New Town Office Discussion:**

R. Gaiotti presented a memo that outlined the beginning of a narrative for the project and laid out a timeline. Discussion ensued about collecting as much public input as possible through: surveys, public meetings, and walks of the site area on Raptor Lane. M. Thorn noted that around 80 people were present at Town Meeting and the feedback was all positive, with people asking if the meeting room was large enough. J. Salsgiver noted that the Town should make sure the outreach is as broad as possible. Further discussion ensued about details of the surveys: an initial survey of East Dorset Village residents with regard to what they would like to see for the use of the current office property; and a survey of the entire Town with details about the New Office and a list of simple survey questions. T. Smith noted that the format of the survey was

important. M. Thorn noted that the process has some momentum and that it seemed prudent to continue the discussion while the Town has people aware of the project, rather than having things go quiet for a time. The general timeline: March – June: Surveys, public meetings, site visits, outreach, June-August: prepare for and hold bond vote by early August 2021; Permits are expected to take about 12 months with groundbreaking in 2023 (roughly). R. Gaiotti noted that interest rates and construction costs are factors in the discussion with timing etc. H. Chandler noted that he agreed with the approach and the timeline. T. Smith noted that he thought the timeline was aggressive, but that he supported the project.

Henry Chandler moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to approve the timeline and strategy for the New Town Office, motion passed 4-0 (T. Smith abstained).

### **Liquor Licenses:**

Town Clerk Sandy Pinsonault was present to outline the Liquor Licenses for 2021. She noted that: Inn at West View Farm, Dorset Field Club, Dorset Inn, Dorset Bakery, and Barrows House had applications for Indoor/Outdoor and 3<sup>rd</sup> class licenses. Jiffy Mart, HasGas and HN Williams has 2<sup>nd</sup> class licenses. S. Pinsonault noted that board members would need to sign the licenses by Friday.

Jim Salsgiver moved and Tom Smith seconded to approve the slate of Liquor Licenses as presented, motion passed 5-0.

### **Old Business:**

Rob Gaiotti gave updates about previous items and projects which included: The East Dorset pedestrian project and future green space; FEMA grant applications for Read Farm Lane flooding prevention; and Raptor Lane.

### **Finance Report**

The finance report was presented by R. Gaiotti. He noted that the Town was 72% through the fiscal year and the general fund is 67% expended, which is a good sign. Monthly expenses included: mailing ballots, highway items etc. It was noted that tax year 20-21 delinquencies were trending down with more people paying online etc.

Henry Chandler moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to accept the Finance Report as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

### **Manager's Report**

Topics discussed:

- Highway/Mud season
- Continued support for DFD Bond Vote
- Reed Farm Lane follow up.

- Town meeting prep
- Town Forest.

### **Other Business**

Jim Salsgiver noted updates with regard to Fiber internet service and the communications union district. Tom Smith noted that it would be nice to know how best locals can approach the issue of upgrading internet service in the needed areas throughout town.

Jim Salsgiver also brought up the previous lease agreement that Northshire Rescue Squad had with the Town for the purchase of a new ambulance. Essentially the Town was party to the lease agreement and had a sub agreement with NRS, with NRS covering all costs. It saved a significant amount for NRS, which is a non-profit. Megan Thorn noted that she though the previous process worked well and that Dorset could look to continue it if needed.

Tom Smith inquired about the status of zoning bylaw changes related to the Slate Ridge situation in Pawlet. Megan Thorn noted that this issue and the Helipad item should be addressed by the Planning Commission. R. Gaiotti inquired about the timing for the changes. It was the consensus of the board to ask the Planning Commission to craft zoning language related to the restricting either of these uses in Dorset as soon as possible.

Jim Salsgiver moved and Tom Smith seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:00pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Rob Gaiotti, Town Manager