

Dorset Selectboard Minutes

November 21, 2023 at 7pm

Members Present: Henry Chandler, Liz Ruffa, Jim Salsgiver, Frank Parent

Members Absent: Megan Thorn

Others Present: Rob Gaiotti (Town Manager), Kate LeVine (GNAT-TV)

Henry Chandler called the meeting to order at 7:01pm

October Minutes:

Jim Salsgiver moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to approve the minutes with the following corrections:

1. Correct spelling of Salsgiver on Page 2
2. Add that it was the consensus of the Board to allow the Town to assist a property owner located on Brookside Drive investigate a possible flood buyout.

Motion passed 4-0.

Liquor License Process:

Rob Gaiotti noted that the Town Clerk had requested that the Town amend the Liquor License approval process because applications will be rolling through the year and applicants might have to wait until the next Selectboard meeting for approval. The licenses also no longer need to be signed and are all electronic. It was the consensus of the Board to allow the Town Clerk to approve Liquor Licenses to be fully ratified at the following Selectboard meeting. This will only apply to returning applicants. New applicants would be reviewed at a Selectboard meeting.

Housing Task Force:

Liz Ruffa gave an update about the first meeting of the Dorset Housing Task Force. The meeting went very well and there was great discussion about the host of issues and possible solutions related to housing in Dorset and the surrounding area. One of the important points in the group review was "who is the housing effort for?" and working families are lacking available housing in the community.

Old Business 11-21-23

New Town Office (No Change) Had a design meeting with Maclay in early October. They have met with Naylor & Breen who will prepare yet another updated cost estimate in November that will help us set the stage for bidding in January-March to start work spring/summer 2024.

Permitting will take place in April-June; Design April-August; Bidding/Pricing Sept-Dec; Site Work possibly by winter 2023 with building starting in spring of 2024.

Read Farm Lane We await the final decision from FEMA related to the increased costs of the buyout. The State has told us to get a closing attorney on board, and that they would expect a decision by the end of the year.

Broadband: Dorset is fully built out with fiber and many places now have 2 internet options. Comcast appears to be possibly extending service to new areas to compete as well.

Legal Trail 6 (no change) Tread Lightly! Has documented lots of ATV use on the legal trail, some users have been covering up the cameras and cutting trees to access the road on their ATVs.

Route 30 Village Concerns: We will be removing the Village speed signs soon for winter weather. FYI – we need to apply for right of way permits with the State when we put them back out next spring.

New Business:

Little Mad Tom/ Tennis Way:

During the July 10th FEMA storm last year a portion of the Little Mad Tom Brook shifted to a new channel. During heavy rains the water now runs under Route 7 into the Tennis Way industrial park. At least 3 times after the storm, water has ran over septic systems and overwhelmed the stormwater infrastructure at the park.

Property owners at the park have reached out to the Town to inform us and ask for guidance. The Town has worked with river/wetland permitting staff and the US Forest Service (property owner) to scope a solution. The current plan is for the Town to apply for the permits and the property owners in the park will hire a contractor and pay them to do the work.

The attached map and sketch gives an idea on the type of project. It will require a medium size excavator to track up into the woods and rebuild a stone berm to redirect the stream back into it's historic channel.

We anticipate having permits and permission for USFS in 30-60 days.

Village Street License Agreement:

As briefly discussed at the last meeting the Town has entered into a license agreement with Vermont Renewable fuels to allow access over the town garage parcel to the rail siding. VTRF will have rail cars with wood pellets stored on the siding and will be accessing the cars during the winter to make fuel deliveries. They have 1 delivery truck that will make 1 (sometimes 2) trips per day, 5-7 days per week. The location of the siding is where VT Rail had store rail ties and equipment for many years. Under the license agreement, VTRF pays the town \$250

annually and names the Town as additionally insured on their policy. As mentioned previously, this does not require local zoning and the Town can't regulate the operations, VTRF has agreed to help with screening from neighboring properties if appropriate.

Paving Survey Response Kirby Hollow Road:

Rob Gaiotti presented the paving survey information for Kirby Hollow Road. In general the majority of those responding heavily favored paving both sections of Kirby Hollow, from LTS to the east and from LTS south to Peace Street. Those not supporting the work noted concerns about speeding and water drainage issues.

November 21, 2023 Finance Report:

Delinquent Taxes:

\$106,334 as of 11/17/23, last year \$123,394

\$62,500 belongs to one property. Delinquency rate: 0.008%

FY24:

We are 42% expended at the 41% mark in the fiscal year. Still early in the expense side of the year. Monthly expense like payroll, utilities etc.

Coolidge Lane payments have been trickling in.

Highway repairs: we had substantial repair bills for the large tractor and one of the large trucks so far this year, this has eaten up a huge part of the budget. Some of the budget expense from the Mad Tom retaining wall project will be offset with a \$25,000 grant.

Paying the Fire Protection Tax payments to the Fire Districts paid last month.

Sinking Fund Balances:

ARPA: \$436,500

Reappraisal: \$195,044

Equipment: \$195,044

Highway Paving: \$203,388

Unemployment: \$50,882

Land Records: \$30,533

Town Buildings: \$11,383

Highway Bridges: \$10,141

Debt: Equipment Loan: \$0 2021 Town Office Bond: \$3,600,000 (bond rate: 4.01%)

Assets: 10 acres Upper Hollow Road / 308 acres Raptor Lane

Town Manager's Report 11-21-23

Highway:

- Finished the retaining wall on Mad Tom Road, we received a grant to cover both materials and labor (which was done in house).
- Preparing for winter, getting snow tires on trucks and plows ready. We have had to treat roads twice so far.
- Equipment maintenance

Misc.:

- DFD project is around 40-50% complete. Crews are finishing the last bit of fieldwork this week and next week. It still appears that the project will be \$500,000-\$700,000 under budget, which gives opportunity for mainline work next spring to maximize grants received.
- VTCMA meetings in late October, good discussions about town/city issues like housing, law enforcement etc.
- Bylaw map amendment has been warned for the December SB Meeting.
- Planning continues for the Route 30 pathway, we should have a presentation to the Selectboard at some point in the next few meetings. This will help set the stage for possible next steps like phasing or design.
- FEMA reimbursement work continues for the July storm. Total damages are around \$30,000.
- Pre-construction meeting for the rail bridge. We have been working with the owner of Safe Place to remove beaver dams that were built after the EWP work.
- Housing Task Force held first meeting, which went very well.
- Working with Tennis Way owners to help permit the stream channel work to prevent further flooding of the park.
- Test pits at Upper Hollow Road tract of land should take place soon, this will give us a sense of whether it can be developed.

Short Term Rental Regulation:

Henry Chandler noted that the Board had previously mentioned that possibility of crafting a short term rental regulation because of the impacts of STRs on portions of the housing market

and general availability of rentals and single family homes to purchase. It was the consensus of the Board to continue to collect data to then craft an ordinance in the near future.

Jim Salsgiver moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm, motion passed 4-0.