

# Dorset Selectboard Meeting Minutes

March 19, 2024

7p Town Offices & Via Zoom

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

Other Present: Rob Gaiotti (Town Manager), (GNAT-TV), Besty Johnson, Ben Weiss, Chrissy Carroccio, Iphone x 2.

## **Board Organization & Election of Officers for 2024:**

Henry Chandler moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to appoint Megan Thorn as Chair, motion passed 4-0 (Megan Thorn abstained). Megan Thorn moved and Frank Parent seconded to appoint Henry Chandler Vice Chair, motion passed 4-0 (Henry Chandler abstained).

## **Meeting Minutes:**

Henry Chandler moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to approve the February meeting minutes as presented, motion passed 4-0.

## **Public Comment:**

None.

## **Board Appointment Review:**

Rob Gaiotti presented the slate of upcoming Board members with expiring terms. There is already 1 vacancy on the Planning Commission. Megan Thorn noted that Board members should think about possible candidates when and if openings do occur. Rob Gaiotti will reach out to board members with expiring terms to see about interest in continuing to serve. Megan Thorn noted that the Board should be thinking about possible candidates if openings do occur.

## **VTrans Annual Financial Plan:**

It was the consensus of the Board to sign the 2024 VTrans financial plan.

## **Short Term Rental Ordinance (continued):**

Rob Gaiotti presented the updated Short Term Rental Ordinance document. He noted that changes from the previous version, adding language about parking and timely trash pick up, as well as amending the liability language, and penalty section. It was noted that \$800 per day was

listed in the penalty definition and there was a question about where the figure came from. Rob Gaiotti will ask attorney Barlow. Jim Salsgiver noted that it might make sense to get pricing on some of the firms or software that helps with registration. They are able to seek out the properties that should be registering and provide information to the Town. Rob Gaiotti will research these options. Frank Parent noted that the first paragraph needed a period at the end of the sentence. The Board will review the Ordinance again in April.

#### **Raptor Lane Housing Capacity Study Proposal:**

Rob Gaiotti presented a proposal from Enman – Kesslering Engineering of Rutland, VT. They will aid the Town in performing a housing unit capacity study for Raptor Lane. This will involve both the Housing Committee and the Selectboard. It will help the Town better understand the possibilities for housing. Discussion ensued about onsite septic and water and possible planning synergies. Rob Gaiotti noted that the proposal budget is \$40,000 and he recommended using ARPA funding for this project. Henry Chandler moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to approve the engineering proposal and to utilize ARPA funding to cover the expenses, motion passed 4-0.

#### **Old Business:**

##### **New Town Office**

Bidding responses are due back on 3/14. Hope to have additional info next week.

##### **Read Farm Lane**

The State instructed us that FEMA has indicated the updated Chantecleer application will likely be approved soon. The Town has conducted the title search for the property and awaits further instruction from the State. The work to replace the railroad bridge has begun.

##### **Route 30 & Route 7 (no change):**

We are planning on having BCRC update a speed study in East Dorset again to see how the median speed is looking and will be in touch with VTrans about paving plans for Route 7 in hopes that the area north of Jiffy Mart can get a “road diet” (narrowed shoulders).

##### **Little Mad Tom/ Tennis Way:**

Done! Only cost \$5,000.

##### **Upper Hollow Lot:**

Test Pits were positive, will begin to look into local permits to confirm site feasibility.

#### **New Business:**

##### **Route 30 Path Discussion:**

Dubois & King has finalized the scoping study. They did a great job and now the Town is able to apply for State/Federal grant funding if appropriate. We tried to boil things down into a defined

project. As far as we see it there are two options for funding/construction:

1. State Grants – 80/20 match (however the grant funds are limited to around \$3 million each year). The State process is very long and expensive. We have heard from some consulting engineering firms that they avoid doing these projects.
2. Local Funding – Town funds and fundraising or other grants outside the State program. We could likely save costs on design/permitting/ construction and accomplish project sooner.

### Define the project?

We picked a path from HN Williams Store area to Raptor Lane

#### Segment 1: Dorset Village to Dorset Quarry

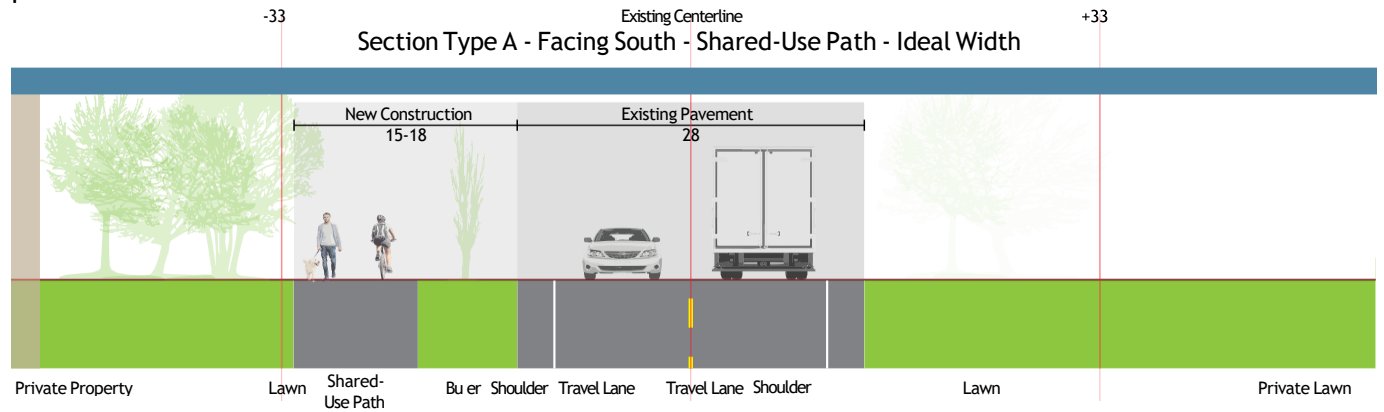


#### Segment 2: Dorset Quarry to Morse Hill Road

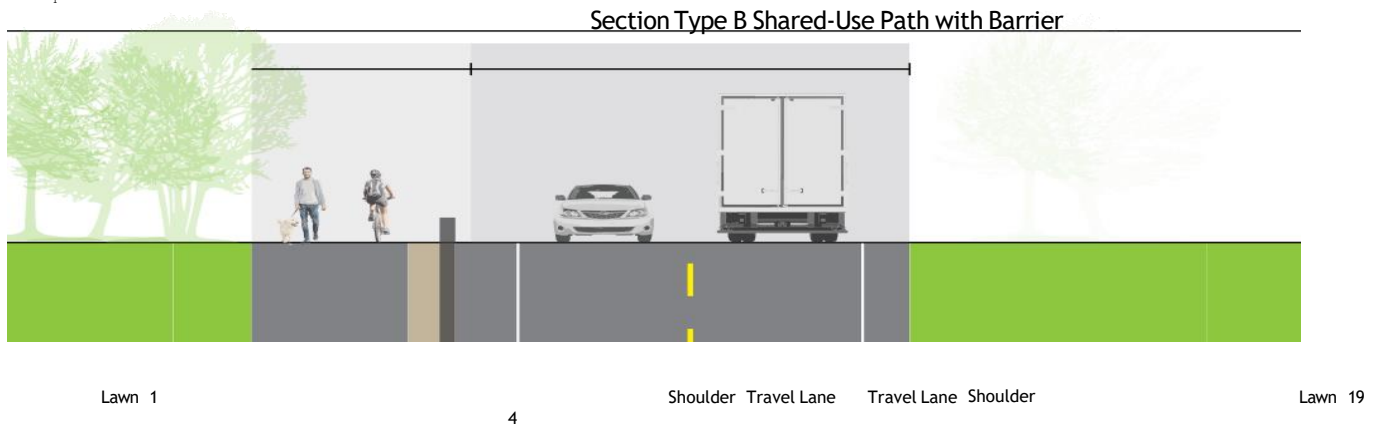


Distance: 1.2 miles (6,350')

1.1 miles of this stretch is shown as “ideal conditions” in the study allowing for the standard path & buffer:



0.1 miles of this stretch is "barrier/curb and path":



**Cost Estimate of the 1.2 miles – Using the scoping study metrics:**

1.1 miles standard path	\$462 per foot x 5,808 =	\$2,683,296
0.1 miles barrier/path	\$693 per foot x 528 =	\$365,666
<b>Path Construction Total:</b>		<b>\$3,048,962</b>
25% Contingency:		\$762,240
Project Management (6%)		\$182,937
PE Design (9%)		\$274,406
ROW		\$20,000
Utility Poles (13 x \$8000)		\$104,000
Construction Inspection (15%)		\$457,344
<b>Project Total:</b>		<b>\$4,849,889</b>

**State Grants:**

If the State grant is pursued at 80/20 – State Share: \$3,879,911 – Town Share: \$969,977  
 (This 80% is more than the program has to give out each year)

More likely scenario: State Share: \$1,500,000 – Town Share: \$3,349,889 or some other combination. We should seek guidance from BCRC and VTrans on how this situation would play out.

**Local Funding:**

Given some of the requirements of the State program we have heard that projects can be done cheaper and more efficiently outside of the program. One option could be to seek out consulting Engineers to get input or bids on the 1.2 miles as shown in the study. A possible place to start could be to develop a design/permitting RFP and see where costs end up. The

Town could have the option to budget for design in the future or use ARPA funding. We should seek guidance from BCRC about this strategy.

Thoughts? Discussion?

**New Business:**

**Appoint Communications Union District Delegate:**

Henry Chandler moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to appoint Jim Salsgiver and Bob Mezaros to the Bennington CUD, motion passed 4-0 (Jim Salsgiver abstained).

**Liquor Licenses:**

Henry Chandler moved and Frank Parent seconded to convene as the board of liquor control, motion passed 4-0. Henry Chandler moved and Frank Parent second to approve the slate of liquor license presented by the Town Clerk:

- Dorset Inn – First Class
  - Dorset Bakery – First Class
  - Barrows House – First Class
  - Dorset Field Club – First Class
  - Dorset Union – First Class, Second Class
  - Has Gas – Second Class
  - Jiffy Mart – Second Class
- Motion passed, 4-0.

**Finance Report:**

**Delinquent Taxes:**

\$97,978 as of 3/14/24 (1 account is \$64,427), last year \$118,025

**FY24:**

We are 73% expended at the 72% mark in the fiscal year. Taxes were collected on 3/12. A record amount of taxes were paid online. Taxes were paid at a pretty normal rate. Expenses last month were pretty light. \$5,000 cost of Tennis Way is shown in Storm emergencies.

**Sinking Fund Balances:**

**ARPA:** \$582,000 (\$282,000 not obligated)

**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

Jim Salsgiver moved and Henry Chandler seconded to approve the monthly finance report, motion passed 4-0.

**Manager's Report:**

**Highway:**

- Winter Road cleanup
- Tree work
- Equipment maintenance
- Drafting 2024 paving bids
- Quote/Purchase new highway truck

**Misc.:**

- DFD is applying for construction permit to possibly add 500-750k in additional work to the current project. This will allow them to maximize grants.
- PACIF meetings in Montpelier
- Housing Committee Meetings – group is making good progress. Next meeting is March 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Solid Waste Alliance meetings
- Conservation Commission is planning a community meeting April 4<sup>th</sup>, see attached flyer. Related to land conservation and Dorset.
- Planning for 2024 Mountain Bike work and continued partnership with NATs
- FEMA reimbursement work continues for the July storm. Total damages are around \$30,000.
- Drafting STR ordinance and research related to STRs.
- Taxes were due March 12<sup>th</sup>, a lot of online payments
- Rachel will be presenting at a Trails symposium later this spring.

**Payroll & Accounts Payable:**

It was the consensus of the Board to approve the weekly payroll and accounts payable warrants for March 19th.

**Other Business:**

It was the consensus of the Board to move the April meeting date to April 9<sup>th</sup>.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Gaiotti, Town Manager