

Special Meeting Minutes

Poultney Board of Selectmen

Wednesday, June 29, 2022 – 4:30 PM

Site visit at Pomeroy Place and then reconvening at Poultney Town Hall

Jeff King called the meeting to order at 4:45PM at the intersection of Watkins Hill Road and Pomeroy Place. Selectmen present included: Jeff King, Terry Williams, Carol Bunce, Sheryl Porrier and Richard LaPierre. Others present included Paul A. Donaldson, Ron Kelley, Debbie O'Rourke, Harry O'Rourke, Dick O'Rourke, Ethan Ward, Stacey Dobeck, Jack Dobeck, Gioia Kuss, and Mary Sue Reed.

Adoption of the Agenda: Sheryl Porrier made a motion to adopt the agenda. Carol Bunce seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Approval of Minutes: Carol Bunce made a motion to approve the minutes of 2/14/2022 with the correction of some grammatical errors. Terry Williams seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

Site Visit:

Parties in attendance traveled the length of the road from the intersection of Watkins Hill Road and then in a general northerly direction to the presumed Castleton town line and made observations about the condition of the road, water courses, and surrounding properties. At the end of the site visit the meeting was recessed and reconvened at the Poultney Town Office for evidence taking.

Evidence taking: Those wishing to provide evidence were administered an oath.

Jack Dobeck stated the following:

-in 1980, he purchased his property which borders the road with a partner from Ethan Ward's family;

-At the time of purchase there was access at both ends of the road, in Castleton and Poultney;

-In 1980 the town provided some gravel to the Dobecks which permitted them to do repairs to the road in order to have a wedding party on their property;

-Now that he and his wife, Stacey, have aged towards retirement age, they want to enjoy their property more than in the past;

-He and Stacey started to restore the meadow with brush cutting. The meadow used to be used for hay and other crop producing uses. They wish to be able to continue access to the property in order to keep the meadow more maintained;

-The Dobecks have marble blocks on their property and they wish to improve the road access in order to market the marble and also process firewood for personal use.

Stacey Dobeck stated the following:

-She wondered if there were grants available that the town could apply for in order to repair the road;

-She inquired as to whether there had actually been a Road Erosion Inventory (REI) of the road. Paul Donaldson stated that when the Rutland Regional Planning Commission undertook the most recent REI, they did not believe Pomeroy Place was still an active road as it was very overgrown and blocked with a fallen tree. He stated that if the road does continue to be classified as a Class 4 road, the next time the town does an REI it will need to add this road to its inventory. He stated that if the road remains a Class 4 road then the town will need to bring it up to the State of Vermont Municipal Roads General Permit ("MRGP") standards which deal with road erosion.

-She stated that the Dobecks would like to chance to possibly log their property, improve it with water and power, and have the opportunity to get power to the property.

-She is concerned if the road is downgraded to a trail that the property value would decrease, and that getting utilities along the road would be impacted.

Debbie O'Rourke stated the following:

-If the Dobecks wish to log or retrieve their marble she wonders where they will land it. Jack Dobeck advised he's not talking about a commercial logging enterprise, but processing firewood for their own personal consumption. He also stated the plan to retrieve the marble would be via a sixteen foot 2 axle trailer one pallet at a time.

Harry O'Rourke stated that the road is the same width now as it was when the Dobecks purchased their property. The O'Rourkes wonder if the road is a 3-rod road or a 1-rod road. Ron Kelley and Paul Donaldson will see what they can find for information on the width of the road.. The O'Rourkes have been using the road for generations with horses.

Gioia Kuss was present to support the Dobecks. She questioned whether the town could access grant funds to improve the road. She stated the Dobecks do not want to turn the road into a 3-rod road, they simply want better access to their property.

Ron Kelley opined that unless it is stated somewhere, the road right of way is presumed to be a 3-rod road as far as he knew.

Ethan Ward questioned with the value of the properties touching this road, including his own property would be negatively affected if the road is reclassified to a trail.

Further discussion followed.

Transact Any Other Lawful Business: None.

Adjournment: Terry Williams made a motion to recess the meeting to another date, to be determined, in order for the board to deliberate. Richard LaPierre seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

s/Paul A. Donaldson