

**TOWN OF CHARLOTTE
SELECTBOARD MEETINGS
NOVEMBER 10, 2008**

APPROVED

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Russell, Chairperson; Jenny Cole, Winslow Ladue, Ed Stone (Absent: Frank Thornton).

OTHERS: Ellie Russell, Dorothy Pellett, Norman Pellett, Dana Smith, Joe Smith, Hugh Lewis Jr, Jamie Chen, Kathy Blume, Woody Eyre, Melissa Eyre, Greg Duggan, Jim Sheldon-Dean, Robert Mack, Moe Harvey, Mary Meade, Linda Hamilton, Holly Sullivan, Nancy Walch, Matthew Hough, Sherry Preston, Andrea Grayson, Lorna Jimerson.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Russell called the Selectboard meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Added:

- Dangerous Corner – Consider Signage
- Selectboard Priority List Additions

3. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

None.

4. MINUTES OF OCTOBER 6, NOVEMBER 3

MOTION by Ms. Cole, seconded by Mr. Ladue, to approve the minutes of October 6, 2008 as written with the following corrections/additions:

Page 1, Public Discussion, delete the words "...which happens every five years."; Transportation Action Grant, there was a question if the grant was approved, or not.; Trails Committee Goals and Report, 5th sentence, change to read "...and by permission only so are not included."

Page 2, 1st sentence, correct the spelling of the word "happening."

Globally correct the spelling of the name "Frank Thornton."

Approval of the minutes were tabled until a complete copy of the transcript was available.

MOTION by Mr. Ladue, seconded by Ms. Cole, to approve the minutes of 11/03/2008, as written with the following correction:

Page 4, Work Detail at the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge, 1 paragraph, delete the name "Bob Hyams".

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Thornton); motion carried.

5. WAITSFIELD AND CHAMPLAIN VALLEY TELECOM – Petition to Replace Buried Telephone Cable Within the Right-of-Way of Lake Road Between Whalley Road and Holmes Road

Joe Smith, Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom representative, briefly reviewed a proposed project to replace a buried telephone cable.

MOTION by Mr. Ladue, seconded by Ms. Cole, to approve a petition by Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom to replace buried telephone cable within the right-of-way of Lake Road between Whalley Road and Holmes Road.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Russell said a concern was how the line would cross an existing culvert. Mr. Lewis, Charlotte Road Commissioner explained that the line would go down into the ditch and around the culvert.

Mr. Smith said that the purpose was to replace two existing cables with one cable. The lines are currently on private property, which causes access issues. The boring would go down 30 inches below the bottom of the ditch. Mr. Lewis stated that if the cable was 30 inches below the ditch bottom then it would not cause any problems.

In response to Board questions, Mr. Smith explained that the replacement cable in this area would not be fiber optics. There could be future discussions related to fiber optic cables. The project is for maintenance purposes and there will be some mechanical digging in the ditch. Any disturbance would be put back in "as good or better" condition as possible.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Thornton); motion carried.

The Board signed a draft petition document.

6. WATER FILTRATION SYSTEM FOR TOWN HALL AND LIBRARY

Mr. Russell reviewed a proposed water filtration system to service the Town Hall and Town Library. The Library has a water softener and charcoal system currently, but no pressure tank. There was a concern regarding a potential of water backing up into the Town Hall if the Library ran a water pump.

There was brief discussion regarding the location of the current water well and water lines in relation to the Town Hall and Library; a sulfur odor to the Library's water; and usage based on use versus time.

7. DISCUSS USE OF VOTING MACHINES

Mr. Russell noted that the use of voting machines has been voted down by Town voters two times. This year there was a large voter turnout, which takes a lot of time to hand count. Staff has asked that the item be brought before the voters again. Staff would research the potential cost. The topic would be added to the Selectboard agenda in January.

8. PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER MODIFICATIONS TO DESIGNATED SCENIC ROADS (Roscoe Road and Monkton Road) BY PAVING 20 FOOT APRONS AT COVERED BRIDGES

MOTION by Ms. Cole, seconded by Mr. Ladue, to open a Public Hearing to consider modifications to Designated Scenic Roads by paving 20' aprons at the covered bridges on Roscoe and Monkton roads.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Thornton); motion carried.

Mr. Russell reviewed modifications for road and covered bridge maintenance to allow the Highway Department to properly grade the transition between the end of the covered bridges and the road surface.

Holly Sullivan, Charlotte Conservation Commission representative, handed a copy of a Conservation Commission Task Force Committee report, dated 11/10/2008, to the Board, and read the report into the record.

Matthew Hough, 399 Monkton Road, stated that he has lived next to the covered bridge for 6 years, and spoke in opposition to paving the aprons. There was no paving on his side of the bridge. Paving would impact the historical nature of the bridge and lead to further paving. He likes the rustic dirt road, which made drivers slow down and kept it safer. Because the road on his side was not flat, water runs toward the bridge, and the road surface was rough. Mr. Hough volunteered to help put new planking down on the covered bridge.

Jim Sheldon-Dean, resident, reviewed his credentials as a civil engineer, and reviewed that the apron paving proposal goals were to protect the covered bridge decks and to address potholes in the road surface. However, paving the road surface would encourage speeding into and out of the bridges. Accidents would increase and the bridges would be damaged as well. The paving would impact the scenic nature of the road, speeding would increase wash-boarding if the amount of paving was increased. The potholes slow speeders and that decreases wash-boarding. Paving gains nothing. Instead the Board should consider installing grates, gravel should be removed from the bridge decking regularly, and the Town should follow the AOT recommendations.

Kathy Blume, resident, explained that she lives at the bridge. A 20' paved apron was a 20' solution to a 2' problem. Grates were a good solution. She would be happy to sweep out the bridge.

Lorna Jimerson, 221 Roscoe Road, said that she has not witnessed accidents, but does hear screeching brakes and tires as people come to the bridges. There were concerns for safety for walkers, horse back riders, bikers, and cars that use the bridge. Speeders would only increase if a hard surface was installed at each end of the bridge. The potholes force vehicles to slow down. She understood that is hard on the road crew to fill in the potholes. Ms. Jimerson expressed concern that paving would impact the esthetics of the area, and if the road was paved 20' we might lose our scenic designation.

Raven Davis, Toad Road resident, said that she has driven through the covered bridges for 35 years. The potholes do slow down traffic. Paving the edges of the bridges would

wreck the scenic designation. There were 50-60 people who attended the scenic roads designation meetings and were in favor of the designation, pointed out Ms. Davis.

Sherry Preston, resident, said she was not in favor of paving the roads.

Gretchen Morse, resident and former legislator, explained that she spent eight years in the Legislature and supported the scenic road designation. Both bridges are historic resource sites on the national and state levels. Ms. Morse thanked the Conservation Commission for their work on the scenic designation study. The Board should look at a more comprehensive solution. I live near the bridge and there have been accidents and burning of rubber on the north side of the bridge where it is paved. Most people slow down because of the potholes.

Mr. Harvey handed in color photographs of the covered bridge for Board review. Mr. Harvey said that gravel is washed from the road into the creek, which should be addressed through proper grading. New planks were laid down 2-3 years ago. Mr. Harvey handed in a copy of a letter outlining his concerns related to the lower bridge. Was there consideration for removing the scenic road designation, asked Mr. Harvey. Mr. Russell replied that the Board has to evaluate impacts that paving would have on the scenic designation. There has been no consideration of removing the designation, said Mr. Russell. Mr. Ladue asked if paving would impact the scenic road designation. Marty Illick said that paving would impact the value of the scenic road designation. There would be a negative impact to the scenic nature of the road. The Conservation Commission has an inventory and criteria for the designation in the report, which should be taken into consideration.

There was lengthy discussion regarding criteria for a scenic road designation, which was to be maintained in the condition as when the designation was granted; what impact paving a 20' section in a 520' road would have; neighbors living near the covered bridges that spoke in favor of maintaining the dirt roads as is; a prior recommendation of the Conservation Commission to pave the aprons to conserve the covered bridge decks (the 11/10/2008 report reversed that recommendation); and a quote for replacing the running board decking with white oak and lag bolts of \$25,000. Mr. Lewis suggested fixing the ends of the boards, putting down a 1' wide cold patch at the bridge ends to allow the plowing at the bridges.

Ms. Morse asked that the Road Commissioner and the Task Force Committee members collaborate and make recommendations regarding the bridge entrances. State and federal grants should be explored. Mr. Lewis said that there were sufficient funds in the Highway budget to pay for cold patch. Mr. Sheldon-Dean stated that 1-2' of cold patch should not negatively impact the scenic road designation.

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Ladue, to close the Public Hearing to consider modifications to designated scenic roads by paving 20 foot aprons at covered bridges (Roscoe and Monkton roads).

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Thornton); motion carried.

9. COVERED BRIDGES IN EAST CHARLOTTE – Consider Need for Repairs

Nancy Walch, Bridges Committee representative, stated that the needs of the bridges go unmet. If the Conservation Commission wants to remain in control, then a strong active committee is needed that would report back to the Selectboard. The covered bridges need to be vacuumed out at least three times per year. Mr. Russell agreed that a “Friends of the Charlotte Covered Bridges” is a good start.

Linda Hamilton, Conservation Commission representative, said that the Conservation Commission would be happy to facilitate a Friends of the Charlotte Covered Bridges Committee, which should work with the Highway Department to monitor the condition of the covered bridges. The AOT report should be reviewed. It makes sense to have a report brought to the Board with suggestions for solutions and a long term management plan to help implement that plan.

Mr. Lewis said that we need to prioritize repairs and regular maintenance of the bridges. The Town does vacuum the bridges in the spring and fall.

Ellie Russell suggested that the committee research and apply for historic preservation grants, and other funding sources.

10. RIP-RAPPING ALONG LEWIS CREEK – Consider Need for Repairs

Mr. Ladue reviewed concerns of excessive erosion of the Lewis Creek banks at the lower bridge. Bank stabilization permits were not required for work.

Mr. Sheldon-Dean noted that there was tremendous erosion of the Lewis Creek banks. A number of large trees have been lost and bank stabilization was needed along Spear Street.

Mr. Russell asked Mr. Lewis if this would be a good use of the Town shale. Mr. Lewis replied that he was not sure that shale was a good material to use.

Ms. Morse noted that rip-rap was used on her side of the bridge/road in the late 1970s. Rock and vegetation was put in as a conservation project. The other side of the road was not done and it is clearly impacted.

Ms. Illick said that Phase II assessments have been done and recommendation was for bank stabilization. The Charlotte CCMPO representative needs to get a bank stabilization project listed on the CCMPO TIP to get the cost earmarked.

The Board determined next steps to include the following:

- Ms. Illick would discuss the project with Jeff MacDonald (to get it on the CCMPO TIP).
- The Selectboard would write a letter of support to get a rip-rap project on the CCMPO TIP.

11. DISCUSSION OF REAL ESTATE NEGOTIATIONS: EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mr. Stone, seconded by Ms. Cole, to recess the meeting and to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Real Estate Negotiation Matters.

VOTE: 4 ayes, 1 absent (Mr. Thornton); motion carried.

The Board recessed the regular meeting and entered Executive Session at 8:45 p.m.

12. APPROVAL OF BILLS AND WARRANTS

The Board signed Bills and Warrants.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Cole, seconded by Mr. Ladue, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kathlyn Furr, Recording Secretary.

These minutes are subject to correction by the Charlotte Selectboard. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Board.