

DRAFT CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
January 28, 2019
Craftsbury Town Hall

PRESENT: Diane Morgan, Carol Maroni, John Brodhead, Steve Wright, Elinor Osborn, June Cook, Farley Brown, Susie Houston, (Select Board Liaison)

ABSENT: Joe Houston

GUESTS: Select Board: Bruce Urie, Chair, and Jim Jones. Clark Wact(?), Colby Masse, Logan Masse, Jason Waterhouse, Joe LaMare, Susan Waterhouse, Tucker Williams, Joel Hodgdon, Roy Darling, Gordy Waterhouse, Kelly Marckres, Jason Allen, Sonja Darling, Don Darling, S. Menard, Ernie Menard, Heather Waterhouse and several others who didn't sign in.

MINUTES: The December 17, 2018 minutes were approved.

ATV: Diane explained this meeting with the select board was informational and generated from discussions of increased usage of ATV's. Prior to the meeting, questions had been submitted to the select board regarding current town regulations and policies, concerns there may be, addressing issues that may come up, landowner rights, placement of signs at waterway crossings, and educational outreach on regulations. There seemed to have been some misunderstanding on the part of the Select board thinking that the Commission had a proposal to present, but it was cleared up that the meeting was simply to obtain information.

June noted that ATV's riding in Wild Branch River and waterway in Collinsville and Hatch Brook Road were observed and reported. The Conservation Commission had researched regulations and requested the select board place signage at these crossings to alert ATV riders of the regulations and fines. This was the background for raising the questions to the select board.

Wording for signs was researched and passed by state offices. Commission was awaiting select board action. Jim Jones reported signs would be put up in the Spring.

Bruce explained a town ordinance allows ATV's on Hatch Brook Road and Collinsville/Eden Mountain Road which connects to Eden. The board is having more conversations about ATV's being allowed on other roads for riders to get gas, snacks, etc. Bordering towns of Glover, Albany, and Eden have opened all town roads to ATV's. Posted signs indicate 35 mph for ATV's.

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A vigorous discussion ensued with those attending the meeting, and information was given to the commission by attendees relative to rules and regulations which ATV drivers must follow. Posted ATV speed limits are 35 mph. Drivers must have valid driver's license; ATV registered and insured. Drivers under 16 can have a certificate allowing them to drive after passing a course. ATV's are not allowed on

state highways. All state laws apply and ATV's must follow the same rules as other vehicles.

VASA (Vermont ATV Sportsmen Association) is an organization for ATV riders, similar to VAST (Vermont Association of Snow Travelers).

Machines are registered with the state. ATV's bring business to village center. The police and Fish & Game Wardens have power to police ATV's.

The Conservation Commission's concern is not about ATV's traveling on roadways but ATV's traveling off roads, in waterways, and on public and private land.

The commission is on a fact-finding mission as to what is the law, who protects landowner rights. The commission's responsibility is to understand these laws and regulations about ATV's. With increased usage, the goal is protecting the environment and enjoying ATV recreational use and assisting the Select board in educational outreach.

One person said ATV's get muddy and sometimes people drive in the river to clean them off. VASA sets up signs on roads. Road usage may increase but speed limits are set for ATV's. Many young people are coming through VASA and VAST and respect the rules. ATV riders police each other, several attendees emphasized. VASA governs off-road trails, similar to VAST.

Those ATV riders present supported having signs at river access points in the problem areas on the Collinsville and Hatchbrook roads.

Steve Wright reported having ATV's driving through his property and observed riders on private property tearing around. The perception of such behaviors is something ATV riders need to alter and change.

Tucker Williams explained that ATVs have morphed into motorcycle class and lines are blurred from recreational vehicle to motorcycle class. Side-by-Side ATV's are what people use now and not the old, handlebar type of ATV's. When purchased ATV's need to be registered before they leave the dealership. All ATV's have a license plate that can identify the vehicle.

Discussion ensued on the process for opening up all town roads to ATV's. Bruce explained hearings are held and the board decides. Roads opened to ATV users have signs as to speed limits specific to ATV's.

Diane thanked the large crowd for attending and providing information about vehicular/driver regulations dealing with ATV's and VASA.

BETTER BACK ROADS GRANT AND HYDRAULIC CONNECTIONS: Farley explained the hydraulic connections with watersheds and road pollution had come through

the Planning Board and Better Back Roads grant. The issue was not connected with ATV's but was part of the state' watershed and pollution program. Bruce said all roads have been evaluated in town for drainage, slopes, and grader berms. The town has 400 or 500 segments of roads considered as hydraulic/watershed sensitive areas. Hydraulic segments are areas of a roadbed that drain eventually into watersheds and a source of pollution. The state has implemented a program to curtail this pollution and towns need to address how to do so.

OTHER BUSINESS: The commission voted to forward Tucker Williams' name to the select board for consideration as member of Conservation Commission. Names of Phil Lovely, Bruce Lindwell, and Heidi Rich had been submitted previously. No action has been taken by board.

The commission will meet on Monday, February 25, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Submitted by:
June Pichel Cook, Secretary