

## **Belvidere Selectboard Minutes of Road Reclassification Site Visits and Public Hearing**

**April 12, 2023**

### Site Visit - Sackett's Harbor / Smithville Roads convened at 5:00 PM.

Selectboard Members present: Ken Adams Jr., Earl Domina Jr., and Kevin Leavitt. Guests: C.J. Manchester, Alan Manchester, Henry K. Manchester

Guest comments:

- Inquired about the proposed changes in classification and the impact of the classification change
- Guests had no other questions, but explained they own property in the Towns of Waterville and Bakersfield that is accessed by the Class 4 section of Smithville Road in question
- As neighboring landowners, they would prefer this section of Smithville Road to remain a Class 4 road. Their property does not adjoin Sackett's Harbor Road and therefore they have no concerns with this road's reclassification proposal.

### Site Visit – John Lot Road convened at 5:35 PM.

Selectboard Members present Ken Adams Jr., Earl Domina Jr., and Kevin Leavitt. Guests: Barbara and Michael Becoratt, David Mann, Chris Mann, Ted Palmer, Jack Slagle

Guest comments:

- Why is the SB proposing the change in classification
- When did this road become a Class 4 road, and when did the Town last work on the road
- If the road becomes a trail or is left as a Class 4, are the adjoining landowners allowed to perform maintenance and upgrades
- If reclassified as a trail, is there any liability exposure for the adjoining landowners
- Will motorized vehicles be prohibited, and under whose authority
- Could the adjoining property owners install a gate at the beginning of the road leading from Vt. Rt. 109
- According to Jack Slagle this road is called a "Pent" road in some old town records
- All guests present are adjoining landowners and this road bisects three different properties
- Another property owner (Machia) has a camp beyond the termination of John Lot Road and has a private Right-of-Way agreement with the Mann's to reach his camp
- Ted Palmer inquired as to status of old Vt. Rt. 109 that leads to the former "Collins Camp"; SB explained it does not appear on the Town's highway map, so assume it was relinquished to adjoining landowner when new road was constructed in the 1980's, and advised Ted to research records

### Site Visit – Basin Road convened at 5:55 PM.

Selectboard Members present Ken Adams Jr., Earl Domina Jr., and Kevin Leavitt. Guests: Sean Manahan, Pete Manahan, Owen Manahan, Griffin Corse

Guest comments:

- Inquired about the proposed changes in classification and the impact of the classification change

- Guests are all owners of camps accessed by the current Class 3 & 4 sections of Basin Road and their main concern is maintaining the Basin Bridge in sound condition, and inquired if the bridge expense would fall on the landowners in the future
- Several comments on the proper maintenance of a Class 4 road, and what if any maintenance would a Legal Trail receive
- Owen voiced his concern about reclassifying the Class 4 section of Basin Road to a Trail; prefers it left as is
- Would the road reclassification affect property values and tax assessments
- If the Class 4 section of Basin Road becomes a Trail, would the Town maintain the existing culverts

Road Reclassification Public Hearing convened at 6:35 PM at the Belvidere Town Clerk's Office.

Selectboard Members present Ken Adams Jr., Earl Domina Jr., and Kevin Leavitt. Guests: Barbara and Michael Becoratt, David Mann, Chris Mann, Ted Palmer, Sean Manahan, Pete Manahan, Owen Manahan, Griffin Corse, Roger Mann, Jr., Zack Jaminet, Jeff Langmaid, Stephen Nickerson, Debra Nickerson, Scott Nickerson. Also present Cathy Mander-Adams, Belvidere Town Clerk.

It was noted that the Town had received email correspondence prior to the public hearing with questions and comments from concerned parties regarding the proposed road reclassifications.

Guest comments for Sackett's Harbor Road: None

Guest comments for Smithville Road: None

Guest comments for John Lot Road:

- David Mann asked for a definition of a Class 4 Road and a Legal Trail; Kevin read excerpts from the Vermont AOT "Orange Book"
- Questions asked at the site visit were reiterated regarding last Town maintenance performed, landowner's liability, Town's maintenance responsibility, landowners allowed to perform upgrades/maintenance on their own, motorized vehicle access, and installation of a gate
- It was again mentioned that there are several different properties adjoining John Lot Road and that at least two owners rely on road for access to their property
- Roger Mann reiterated that the Mann's have given the Machia's a private right-of-way beyond the John Lot Road termination to access their camp
- Roger Mann stated the road should be good to leave as is (Class 4) or the Town should abandon road altogether. Roger also asked how this road benefits the Town
- Ted Palmer asked why John Lot Road exists as a public access right-of-way at all
- Mike Becoratt asked if he could perform upgrades to access his property
- David Mann asked for a definition of Ancient Roads; Kevin read excerpts from the Vermont AOT "Orange Book"

Guest comments for Basin Road:

- Questions asked at the site visit were reiterated regarding last Town maintenance performed, landowner's liability, Town's maintenance responsibility, landowners allowed to perform upgrades/maintenance on their own, motorized vehicle access, Basin Bridge maintenance

- Barbara Becoratt asked if curb cuts/driveway permits are required for Class 4 roads
- State Aid Highway payments on Class 4 roads or trails, grant eligibility
- Sean Manahan and others asked why to change the Class 4 section to a trail, Class 4 roads are eligible for some grant funding
- Roger Mann suggested the State should be interested in leaving entire length of Basin Road a Class 4 for access to forest firefighters
- How can the Town recoup damages caused by overweight vehicles on any of its roads
- The SB members gave an MRGP requirements overview and briefly discussed the impacts of said requirements on the Class 3 and Class 4 sections of Basin Road
- Jeff Langmaid suggested a clear definition of maintenance requirements of Basin Road as a Class 4 road be recorded and an addendum from Town to “pledge” a certain level of maintenance to property owners
- David and Roger Mann suggested that Class 4 roads that allow owners access to property should remain the same and abandoned if not needed for access by property owners
- Roger Mann asked if a road is abandoned would the Town’s attorney create Rights-of-Way for the adjoining property owners

Motion by Kevin to adjourn at 7:28 PM; second by Earl; motion carried