

**Town of Sunderland Selectboard Meeting  
Monday February 12, 2024, 7:00 PM**

Members in Attendance:

Alex Bresnick  
Andrew McKeever  
Dixie Zens  
Marty Nadler  
Bruce Mattison

Others in Attendance:

Mia Smith  
Marc Johnston  
Susan Whitney  
Todd Lawrence  
Sean Livingston-Wildlife biologist for USFS  
Jessie Prunclar- Presale forest manager  
Martina Barnes- District Ranger for USFS

1. Call to Order by Dixie Zens at 7 pm.
2. Introduction of Board Members: Marty Nadler, Alex Bresnick, Andrew McKeever, and Bruce Mattison by Chair Dixie Zens. Secretary Mia Smith, Town Clerk Susan Whitney, Road Foreman Marc Johnston, Sean, Jess, Martina from USFS.
3. Approval of the minutes of January 22nd, Selectboard Meeting
  - Dixie Zens asks for motion to adopt 1/22/24 minutes:  
  
Mover: Marty Nadler  
2nd: Alex Bresnick  
Result: Passed
4. Public Comment- none.
5. Forest Service Update & ATV Winter Access on Kelly Stand Rd
  - Representing Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forest, based out of Manchester Ranger Center. Range is south of Rt 4 to Pownal.
  - District Ranger Martina Barnes

- USFS Town Meeting report highlights specific work in Sunderland, to be included in the Town of Sunderland report.
- Display map of town and forest, with timber sales highlighted. Discuss the South Fork timber sale.
- South Fork project is focusing on creating open habitat for animal species that rely on that type of ecosystem.
- Creating some permanent wildlife openings that will be managed regularly
- South Fork of the Roaring Branch will be managed for fish habitat and slowing water speed by dropping trees into stream (a natural occurrence that is mimicked by USFS to support ecosystems)
- Stocking fish in some ponds and river areas.
- Jessie Prunclar explains how projects are managed and implemented (~1000 acres/year managed), creating early successional habitats.
- Managing migratory and game bird habitat.
- Dixie Zens asks about contracted tree removal, specifically firewood designation areas for residents to take.
- Firewood permits available on road corridors for \$10/cord, 2 cord limit of marked trees.
- Jessie Prunclar explains that timber sales work by bid, first advertising then allowing companies to bid up from the standard price of wood.
- Bruce Mattison asks a question about the Cobble Area near Orvis, specifically about bear corridor.
- Sean Livingston responds that they haven't been able to get in touch with state bear biologists but explains that the area is a high priority habitat area for the state because of the extent of contiguous forest.
- Bruce Mattison asks about ATVs on Kelley Stand Road, are there plans to allow ATVs on forest service land in future?
- Martina Barnes responds that the only road within the region that they are allowed on is Old Stage Coach Road.
- Martina Barnes made the decision to close other roads because of impact on habitat (roads, waterways, etc).
- Until USFS makes forest plan revision, with public input and resource conditions on ground, they are managing legal use in a small area.
- Dixie Zens mentions residents on Kelley Stand Road, Martina Barnes responds that the USFS has no input because it is town land, unless residents leave the road and go onto USFS land.
- Dixie Zens asks if it would be possible to provide special permits to residents, USFS representatives say unless they are leaving the right of way, across USFS property, there should be no issue.

- Bruce Mattison asks if there are other states where ATVs are allowed through forest service land.
- Sean Livingston responds that out west there is access and more complete trail systems developed in their forest plan.

#### 6. Discuss Orvis Headquarters Move

- Dixie Zens discusses Orvis plan to sell office headquarters, glad that they are staying in Vermont after 20 years in that location.
- Alex Bresnick wonders who might be interested in a space like that.
- Dixie Zens says that Orvis thinks they'll sell it within 18-24 months, as long as they own it they will still be paying taxes.
- Andrew McKeever asks Susan Whitney how much Orvis pays in taxes.
- Susan Whitney responds that it varies each year but this year it was about \$145k.
- Andrew McKeever hopes that whoever buys it, the town will still receive tax revenue.
- Discussion about which kinds of organizations don't pay taxes (government entities or non-profits).

#### 7. Discuss the Community Visit to welcome the town's residents to solicit ideas for future plans for the Town of Sunderland.

- Andrew McKeever spoke to the facilitator from VT Council on Rural Development (VCRD) about a change of plan from 2025 to spring of 2024.
- VCRD okayed the move to 2025, and will push their visit until the fall of this year to discuss obligations and process leading up to events.

#### 8. Discuss the Sunderland Church possibilities.

- Town council (Merril Bent) believes that the deed seems to allow the town to buy the church, but there are limitations on how it can be used.
- BCRC suggests looking into grants to help rebuild/repairs.
- Dixie Zens says at this moment the town is not planning to purchase property, but they will be working with BCRC to help fix up the building.
- Marty Nadler mentions that a resident says if the church is made part of Village Center designation that they would be willing to contribute funds to restoration.
- Andrew McKeever says that an email from BCRC asks for signature for agreement of "Statement of Work" for the church.
- Dixie Zens asks for a motion to sign "Statement of work".

Mover: Andrew McKeever  
2nd: Marty Nadler  
Result: Passed

## 9. ARPA Funds

- Marty Nadler says ARPA committee is on recess until April, then meetings will be driven by surveys once they've been tabulated. The committee will then tabulate survey responses and share them with Selectboard.
- Marty Nadler and Alex Bresnick are both members of the ARPA committee, as well as their significant others. (8 members total: Alex Bresnick, Lenore Bresnick, Marty Nadler, Jeff Dexter, Todd Lawrence, Irene Nadler, Dave Pollock, Peter VanVleck).

## 10. Road Liaison Report

### – 1. Discuss grants from the State for Storm Water and Road repair Through BCRC

- Marc Johnston says they just signed a letter of intent for storm and road repair.
- Applying to VTRANS for paving grant and structures grant
- Have already received a bicycle lane grant, waiting on work to finish but the prices have changed so much since the grant was received, that they aren't sure how far the bike lane will go (ideally to Bacon Hollow Road). If grant money is short there are funds to finish the project by the town.
- VTRANS paving grant goes from just past the town garage to Bacon Hollow Rd.
- Excess weight permit to be signed.

Mover: Marty Nadler  
2nd: Andrew McKeever  
Result: Passed

- Highway mileage driven by town vehicles and tabulated, certificate to be sent to the state.

Mover: Bruce Mattison  
2nd: Andrew McKeever  
Result: Passed

- Bruce Mattison wonders if Kelley Stand Road is made less than a Class II road, will it be passable by ATVs.
- Marc Johnston says that it is considered a federal highway, so they pay for maintenance instead of FEMA.

- Dixie Zens announces a report about road and bridge standards and whether the town is meeting the standards. The town is in compliance with the standard. Asks for motion to sign certificate.

Mover: Alex Bresnick  
 2nd: Andrew McKeever  
 Result: Passed

- Susan Whitney explains an informational sheet explaining why the town isn't receiving revenue that they had from traffic tickets in the past. The response is that tickets remain the same, but less have been paid.

#### 11. Energy Committee

- Andrew McKeever says that there is a survey planned for town meeting, if that is allowed.
- Susan Whitney says that as long as the survey happens outside of the actual meeting, then it should be okay. That policy is that nothing can interfere with actual polling.
- Feb 28th next meeting, on zoom (link can be found on meeting agenda for energy committee)

#### 12. BCRC, SWIP

#### 13. Old Business-

##### – 1. Review “Welcome to Sunderland” Signage

- Andrew McKeever made a video on GNAT presenting the students who made signs, giving them certificates for participation and giftcard to the bookstore.
- All ideas will be incorporated into making a final design for a sign.
- Bruce Mattison asks about Sunderland Hill Rd properties getting their deeds back.
- Dixie Zens says he was in touch with town council and she was working on it.
- Susan Whitney says before April 1st ideally, because that is when the Grand List is frozen.

#### 14. New Business-

- Andrew McKeever says there is an update with Town Center Designation
- Phone call with state official and BCRC who said that they missed a step in the beginning of the process.

- Some observations were made by state official, that the area should have been more compact than what the town has proposed, shrunk from Ira Allen House to River House, Hill Farm and Cemetery.
- Once designation is made on a smaller area, the town can reapply to enlarge the area through an amendment.
- Andrew McKeever says that the board needs to redraft the letter, with the help of BCRC.
- Alex Bresnick asks if the area proposed was developed by BCRC in the first place. Recalls wanting to add in the cemetery and that was the only input that board had.
- Proposal for Sunderland Cemetery Project, board had given \$750 for mapping/grid for gravestones. Proposed work will be completed in the spring.
- VLCT has a reporting period for ARPA coming up, and just needs signatures added to motion.
- Andrew McKeever asks about final contract numbers for hybrid camera system. The details for parts are on the invoice. Signed for project to move forward.
- May 29-June 1, rally of motorcycles going through the covered bridge.
- April 8th solar eclipse, Saint Albans will have the longest duration! (~8 mins). Burlington is pretty close to the center of the path.

15. Review of Correspondence/Signing of Warrants-

16. Executive session, if needed.

17. Next Regular Business Meeting for the Sunderland Selectboard will be February 26, 2024. FOLLOWING MONDAY TOWN MEETING MARCH 4. VOTING TUESDAY MARCH 5!

18. Adjourn at 8:07pm.

Mover: Alex Bresnick  
 2nd: Andrew McKeever  
 Result: Passed