

Minutes of the West Fairlee Selectboard Meeting at Beebe Road on October 5, 2010

Present from the Selectboard: Bonnie Cray, Jim Brigham, David Butch Moore, Nate Pero, Sharon Petersen

Visitors: Mary Brigham, Mark Harper, Peter Stever, Stephen Jerome, Cpl. Chin - Orange County Sheriff's Department, Andy Petersen, John Blake, Jonathan Blake.

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm at the Beebe Road location by Bonnie Cray.

Cray introduced Jerome from the Vermont Local Roads Program to the landowners, Harper and Stever, and opened the floor for discussions.

Harper stated that the present culvert was allowing a high amount of silt to pass through which was filling his pond. He felt that several much smaller culverts would restrict the flow somewhat, reducing the amount of silt entering his pond. He also stated that another option would be for the town to build a weir (a containment pool which allows the water to swirl around and deposit silt) prior to entering the culvert.

Jerome stated that there was absolutely no way that the state would approve or allow a weir to be constructed. He further stated that the present culvert was in fact installed correctly and was working as it should. He also stated that the dam was restricting the natural flow of water and would, over time, need to be drained and dredged to correct the silt problem. This was a common problem with many private ponds with dams in Vermont.

Harper asked if Jerome had an engineering degree in hydrology to which he responded he did not.

Stever stated that he was concerned that the culvert would eventually rust out and need to be replaced with the high cost having to be shouldered by his children when they took over the farm, if the road was turned over to the landowners.

Jerome asked how Beebe Road ever became a class 3 road as it seemingly doesn't meet the qualifications of a public road. Stever stated that it used to also serve as a road for another farm that no longer exists and Cray stated that she seemed to remember that it was at one time a roadway for other houses that are no longer there.

Stever stated that an old wooden bridge was there but was replaced by two small culverts which the town replaced with the 8 foot culvert over seven years ago.

Harper inquired as to if there was any record of the town getting a permit to install the culvert. Cray responded that she could not locate any permit and Jerome stated that the town would not need to obtain a permit to replace an existing culvert with another culvert.

Harper inquired as to if a hydrology study was done before the culvert was placed there and Cray responded that she didn't know.

Stever stated that he would prefer that Beebe Road be reclassified as a class 4 road so that he wouldn't be faced with the high cost of maintaining the culvert. He also stated that he wasn't concerned about the road crew not plowing the road in the winter.

Cray stated that the Selectboard would discuss the road classification and come to a decision at a later date. Jerome stated that the selectboard needs to look at what benefit this road is to the town and if there is a reason to continue maintaining it, or would it benefit the town to discontinue the road.

Pero asked how property values would be affected if Beebe Road was reclassified as a class 4 road. Andy Petersen responded that the appraisers would normally discount the taxable value of the affected properties to compensate for the town not having to maintain the road, other than culverts and bridges.

Cray asked if there were any further questions to be answered or needed discussions.

At 12:18 pm Sharon Petersen made a motion to adjourn and Brigham seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Brigham