

PUBLIC HEARING ON ROAD ISSUES

July 24, 2008

Present: Stan Judge, Lucy Evans, Heidi Behling, Jo Carpenter

Public: Roland Simard, Clemence Simard, John Cosgriff, Ben Werner, Betty Werner, Roger Gagnon, Debra Gagnon, Tim Buxton, John Carpenter, Tom Hayes, Ken Simonoko, Dave Carlisle

Chairperson Stan Judge opened the Public Hearing at 7:09 PM. Stan explained that tonight's hearing was scheduled to hear concerns about issues with town roads, especially related to trucks and commercial traffic in all residential neighborhoods. He said the Board will use this information to decide if they want to adopt any new ordinances for town roads.

Lucy Evans stated that the Board wants to hear both sides because the Board does not want to hinder landowners' use of their property.

Ben Werner thanked the Board for their efforts in dissuading Pike Industries from using North Road as a route to their Gilead gravel pit. Ben said they should make the same effort to bar through truck traffic on the town portion of North Road or at least limit the number of trucks per day that can use the road. He said that he does not necessarily object to some truck traffic but he does object to a large volume of trucks per day. He said that he also thinks that the Board should consider the weights of trucks because this road is not built for heavy vehicles.

Ben said he understands that the Board can bond roads for heavy vehicles but how much does the town require.

Ken Simonoko said that he generally asks for a \$10,000 bond.

Ben commented that this may not be enough if the road is badly damaged.

Ben also suggested that the Board pursue dropping the speed limit on the town's portion of North Road to 25 mph.

Roger Gagnon commented that in his experience it is the weight of the trucks that is really damaging to New Hampshire roads. He said many log trucks heading to Rumford and Jay are loaded over the weight limit.

Betty Werner said that she feels that the Board needs to consider safety. She said it is difficult for large trucks to meet each other on North Road because of the width of the road with no shoulder area. She said this impacts the safety of bikers and walkers.

Tim Buxton said that he and his wife love North Road the way it is and would hate to see it widened in response to these types of concerns.

John Carpenter said that he agreed with the way the Board has handled the Pike case because the road could not support the volume of trucks for that length of time. He asked the Board

to be careful with writing an ordinance because it may push the Board to a place that it really does not want to go. He said that he is not sure that limiting through trucks is the best solution.

Betty Werner said if trucks started at 6:00 AM and continued all day, it would really bother her. She said it would be better if they were spaced out. She said that the town should not do everything for commercial interests.

John Cosgriff said he is sending around a clipboard asking people to share what is special about North Road to them. He said he will share this with the Conservation Commission. He also commented that he would like hours of operation to also be considered.

Stan said that what the Board is considering will affect other roads and neighborhoods in town. He said that it is important to look at the town as a whole and be prepared to prevent problems on any road. He also pointed out that ordinances can be changed or rescinded.

Stan said that in the Pike case it was a big issue that the town had no say. He said if the gravel pit were in Shelburne then it would have to go before the Planning Board from Site Plan Review and citizen would have input.

Roland Simard asked what the status is with Pike Industries.

Stan said that Pike has confirmed that they will not be using North Road in Shelburne except to move some equipment to and from the pit.

Roland said that he was not opposed to the trucks. It was the volume of trucks.

Stan said that the Board does not want to preclude commercial activities, timer, agriculture, etc.

Roland asked if commercial ventures could apply for a permit. He commented that he went through site plan review to teach his art classes and traffic volume was considered. He said he did not mind this process.

Ben Werner commented that when he bought his farm in 1968 there was no neighborhood – there was only Philbrook Farm Inn, Bob McLain and his house.

Tim Buxton said he hopes that any ordinance proposed will be consistent with the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Heidi Behling asked John Carpenter what he sees as something that “no through trucks” might impact. John commented that when we pass a law we are setting up people to break the law. John said that he is also concerned about how this might affect Gilead and asked if the Board had spoken to Gilead about this. The Board said that they had not.

Stan said this is about a feeling for neighborhoods and wants any ordinance to be able to apply to any place in town.

Ben Werner commented that any type of operation such as Pike Industries' would devalue property.

Roland Simard said that Pike's trucks would have run at a rate of 1 every 7 minutes for 10 years.

Ben and Wendy Mayerson's letter was read. They expressed concern about heavy trucks and truck traffic on local roads. They expressed concern about lack of adherence to speed limits, especially on Meadow Road and Route 2 and they expressed several concerns about Route 2 - white lines needs repainting; intersections with North Road, Village Road and Meadow Road are dangerous and speeding.

Tom Hayes commented that all logging trucks on the roads today are overweight. He said North Road is being broken up by logging trucks.

Ken said that he reviews the roads before a logging operation starts. He sets the bond amount and takes money if there is damage but he said the road is not in good shape to begin with,

Stan commented on Select Board's efforts to have some of these problems addressed through the ten year transportation plan. He said these projects have been removed from the plan because the State is short of money and usually address the issues in the southern part of the state first. He also urged citizens to attend yearly meetings held in Berlin to bring some of these concerns to NH DOT and Councilor Ray Burton. He said more voices may be heard. Stan said we have to keep making the state aware of the problems in the North Country.

John Carpenter said that when the work on Route 2 in Maine is complete he thinks there will be pressure on New Hampshire to upgrade their portion of Route 2.

Tom Hayes said that he feels that \$10,000 bond for North Road is not enough for these heavy logging trucks. He also said that he thinks we need to stop the trucks in the spring. He said they avoid posted roads by going out through Gilead.

Debbie Gagnon commented that everyone should great concern over the road issues. She said that she wants people to know about the motocross track in their backyard and the noise that they have been dealing with for 3 years and now they have trailers too. She said the noise only met the town ordinance when the tests were staged. She said that this could happen in other people's backyards too and she wants people to know about it.

The Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:55 PM.