

TOWN OF STAMFORD
PUBLIC HEARING
August 1, 2024
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Michael G. Denault, Kurt Gamari and John Dunn.
Doug Wright was not present.

Visitors: Debra Burchard, Martina Barnes from the Green Mountain National Forest, Laura Champagne, Marta Miller, Thomas Nazzewski, and Sheila Pecor.
Lori A. Shepard, Administrative Assistant.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and opened with the pledge of allegiance. She noted that the site visit was held at 4:45 p.m. earlier this evening. The Selectboard is considering whether it is in the best interests of the town to declassify a portion of County Road from Class 4 status to a legal trail. The portion of County Road under consideration is the approximate 0.3 mile section beginning at the intersection of the National Forest Trail no. 301 (Sucker Pond Trail) and County Road, to the Pownal, Vermont town line.

Mike Denault does not feel it is a good idea. Martina Barnes states that the National Forest's interpretation of the law is that although the Selectboard has full authority over roads, they do not have the same authority over the use of trails. She recommended that the town should seek legal counsel for advice on the matter. Changing the status of this section of County Road to a legal trail would relieve the town of any liability for maintenance and upkeep of the road, while still retaining the town's right-of-way. Mike Denault does not want to lose any of the board's authority over the use of the road once it becomes a trail. The road is very rocky with high embankments on each side and has not been maintained, even minimally, in years. Martina Barnes said the Sucker Pond Trail is in need of work and they also need to have the Town of Bennington agree to allow public use of the trail on their side before it can become a connector trail. Mike Denault confirmed, if they keep it classified as a road, it could still become a connector trail for ATVs since the board has granted permission to ride ATVs on all Class 4 roads. Non-VASA vehicles such as jeeps and dirt bikes could also use the road if it is left as is.

The board thought they would wait to discuss the matter with Dave Tatro, the Road Commissioner, and agreed to take no action at this time.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn the public hearing. SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Kurt Gamari
Clerk

KG/las