

Stamford ATV Sub Committee Meeting October 28. 2021

ATTENDANCE

Karen Kuranda, Natalie Yorke, Deb Burchard, Bruce Richardson, Thomas Nazzewski, Marta Miller, Tina Senecal, Dave Tatro, Jessica Tatro, Carol Fachini, Brandon Fields, Pam Tworig, Rob Buchard

ROBERT'S RULES

A condensed version of the Robert's Rules highlighted with items that would apply to the ATV Subcommittee. We should be respectful and stay within time limits. The point is that once the visitors have been heard for five minutes each, then it becomes the subcommittee that should just be speaking. We recognize that there was an unusual circumstance at the last meeting because of many people who came here specifically to answer questions. There was clarification that the motion that the Selectboard made was for this group to do research, gather the facts as they stand and then report back – not to make any kind of decision.

CALL TO ORDER

Jessica wanted to state in the previous minutes it said she did not give a detailed proposal from the Stamford Ridge Riders as requested. She said there was no proposal that was requested and would like that in the record. Karen: That is on the audio tape and so that is exactly why it is there because that is what was actually said.

Jessica: We should have our wish list and come to a happy medium. Pam: That is absolutely not what the Selectboard set up this committee to do - it is in the Selectboard minutes that they asked solely to research and come back to the board with information.

Rob: VASA is only saying you need a three-to-five year period for a trail up there to the National Forest.

Natalie: My understanding is that if the Selectboard signs an agreement with VASA and VASA starts using money to improve things or have a project for a trail that the Selectboard is signed on for that period of time whatever the value of the money that they spend is. So, if the Selectboard were to turn around and say a year later okay we had a trial period and don't like what is going on, now we are going to close the roads – the Selectboard would have to pay that money back or they are obligated to leave these trails open for that length of time. Nothing is free.

Carol: Yes, but they are not using our roads just that one piece of County Road to connect the trails. Natalie: Right. But when there is money involved, there is a commitment involved. Jessica: What Mike Smith is talking about is the three-to-five year connector to Sucker Pond Trail. I don't think that he is talking about the regular town roads. Correct? So, the regular town roads are town highway roads that belong to the town and so I think what Mike is talking about the three to-five year commitment is – and he kept saying that the length of the road. So, my interpretation is the length of the project so however long they are Sucker Pond trail that would be as long.

Rob: They would have to sign an agreement with the town for that road. They are looking for approval and they don't have to say they are doing all the upgrades it needs so they would have to sign off on the three-to-five years because they are doing a lot of work in there.

Marta: If you can discuss that with VASA because my understanding on reading forms on their website is that any trail project that they put money into there is a commitment that is made by the Selectboard for a period of time, and if the Selectboard yanks it out then they have to either pay it back or they are obligated to leave it.

Marta: I would like to make a motion to accept the minutes. Jessica: I would like to note that E-Jay Tatro's name is spelled wrong in the last attendance list. Marta: Vote to accept the minutes with this correction. Motion passed.

QUESTION ON WHAT VASA SPENT ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

Bruce: VASA spent \$8700 last year. I was curious where they allocate their spending in VASA.

Jessica: I can address this too. There are policy committees in VASA that I am on and we are supposed to have a law enforcement committee meeting this week and unfortunately that group was unable to meet. I was really hoping to be on that and to have some information about law enforcement but it has been rescheduled. Bruce: Are you taking over the Bennington County position on those committees?

Jessica: I know there has been a lot of issues with the Bennington sheriffs that they are trying to address. Bruce: Right but that actual person in that capacity – the position has been vacant. Marta: But the \$8700 for Bennington County sheriffs, they took the money back.

STAMFORD RIDGE RIDERS PROPOSAL UPDATE

Jessica: The first thing in terms of VASA, I would like to see is those three trails returned to ATV use. The second piece of that because there has been a lot of conversation about resident riders – so by looking through some of these ordinances, in order for the ATVs to be allowed on the road it doesn't have to be a VASA trail. There can just be an ATV ordinance where the Selectboard approves certain roads for people to ride on and so some of the ordinances I looked at even states in there that you can use these roads to get to and from VASA trails only. The other thing that I found in the minutes and I looked at the VTLCT is that they do offer a suggested ordinance. So, I spent some time and put together a wish list (Natalie – that is very generic). It is not anything legal. It would need to go to the Selectboard and go to a lawyer. One of the things that they can do too and this is just a suggestion, it that there are a bunch of fines listed in there on top of the speeding fines and penalties – racing, operating off hours, operating on private property, etc.

Jessica: I would like it stated that all class 3 and class 4 roads would be open for purposes of traveling to and from VASA trails. Dave: You are going to find that someone is going to be on a road that is not opened up and then say that it is not fair that they want their road open to ride on to get to the trails too. This is happening in Readsboro right now. I think that we should learn from what is going on there and maybe we can avoid a lot of problems they are having.

Carol: Yes, let's keep VASA out of this. Dave: Not all roads in town that are dirt roads are class 3, some are paved.

Marta: Just to clarify that you want all town roads open. Jessica: Yes, I said we want all class 3 and class 4 roads in town open to ATV use– not just certain class 3 and class 4 roads.

Carol: So, if you don't make VASA the piece of County Road connect to connect the whole thing – they are not going to give us the \$70,000 – for the Sucker Pond Trail. Marta: So, when you say they are not going to give us the \$70,000 do you mean from the National Forest service or VASA? Carol: Yes.

Marta: That is for the Sucker Pond Trail. Is this what this is going to cost?

Rob: We don't have to spend a penny. We can help out and volunteer but they they have everything ready to go right now. Connector leads through Pownal. Trying to get to the Stagecoach Trail.

Marta: Is would there be any option – part of what we keep running into again and again is how to enforce that. Rather than including County Road, is there any possibility to do a connector that comes from Risky Ranch but that keeps Klondike and County off. Rob: National Forest has started putting up signage.

Jessica: Traffic does affect people on County Road. Would you be opposed to residents riding up the road versus a VASA trail because you would not have it on a map.

Marta: I was under the impression it couldn't be just Stamford residents. Jessica: Yes, you could because you just wouldn't put it on the map. I understand I am asking way too much at this point.

CAROL FUCCHINI PROPOSED WISH LIST

Carol: The three roads should not be VASA trails. But I was hoping that we could make the County Road connector so we could still get the \$70,000 money from VASA.

Marta: We keep circling back to enforcement. Presumably, VASA has a code of conduct. But we have to be real. How do we keep other people out? Natalie: Wherever we end up in the end even if all the roads are closed, we still need signage. This is something for the Selectboard to think about. But if we just open these roads to just residents to connect to VASA trails (Carol said - yes, that is what I want), VASA will not give us money for this as it is not a VASA trail. We will still need signage and I don't know if the town is going to want to spend money on this or if National Forest would maybe give us some funds?

Brandon: I still don't think you can make it residents only because right from the start I had asked a VLCT lawyer if can differentiate and the answer was no. Not an option – only can decide is on town roads or not. Relevant law is 23 VSA section 3506. Natalie: That is true to some extent but there have been some precedents. I spoke to a different attorney in that office and they said this is true but other towns have done it differently and no one has challenged it. A town still has the right to say NO we don't want anyone but a licensed driver, we don't want anyone under 18.

Pam: Let's just say we do this and we have several roads in town that are only open to Stamford residents and the Stamford residents have their stickers. So, then someone from Clarksburg comes into town and gets stopped – what are they going to charge them with? What kind of ticket would he get? If there is no law, the law enforcement officer cannot charge them with something. This all goes back to there is no law enforcement and there is no way to manage ATVs on the roads. I think we all agree that people are going to break the rules – just is it 20, 50, 100, 500 – how many ATVs are going to be on the roads and breaking the rules.

Dave: You are going to need to hire a sheriff to stop this. Carol: Our budget in town can't afford this. I think they can monitor it themselves and take care of it.

Carol: Wish list continued. I just need a little piece of County Road to connect to VASA roads so we won't lose the money. Natalie: So, when you say we won't lose the money, who are you talking about? Carol: If we don't connect the trails, we are going to lose this money. The entire project relies on this. So, I propose this be VASA. As far as deadline, it is not going to last long. Nothing is going to happen without this connector.

Dave: If the town is going to allow that, make Stamford Pond Trail a legal trail and don't dump any money into it. No reason for the town to be responsible for maintenance and such. Just a thought. No markers for the town line down there.

Pam: Talking about that parking that they want to build on County Road. According to the National Forest plan, they cannot build a parking lot, but there it is on the map. Bruce: To clarify, on the original maps they had it located near where the Appalachian Trail is and then they said it was too small, and then there was another filing after that that places it on the west side of the Stamford Trail intersection. Questions are how big will the parking lot be? Pam: So that parking lot is pretty important to the town of Stamford because if we are trying to control the number of people coming into town and wrecking our roads, then installing a big multiuse parking lot on the top of County Road is a huge point. Marta: Right now, the VASA laws are that riding on a road that is not legal is open to get a ticket. This is a state law. You have to expect to get a ticket.

BRANDON FIELDS PROPOSED WISH LIST

Brandon: Honestly, I could care less which way this committee goes. I would like to be able to ride legally but I don't think much is going to change and everything will stay the same. No giant groups of people in town if not VASA.

Marta: Last weekend was a crazy bunch of riders at 1 AM. Also, Readsboro trails closed October 15 and they are still out there.

ROB BUCHARD PROPOSED WISH LIST

Rob: Wish list – portion of County Road open. Carol: Yes, that is the big wish list.

DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ENTIRE SCOPE OF PROPOSED ATV USE IN TOWN

Carol: Can we settle things so at least we don't lose that funding? Brandon: We are not going to get anywhere. This is a total waste of time. Dave: Just come up with a proposal, whatever the list – start small and then go from there.

Marta: The Selectboard has asked us to come up with this information and we don't have that.

Dave: Concerns: the parking lot – this is a big one – if it is the size of Heartwellville, then it is an issue with traffic and there are stream crossings on County Road in rough shape that would need to be repaired. Marta: We did not know what the private property was going to be.

Jessica: Again, this is none of your business. My statement still stands – what goes on between VASA and the club and private property owners – the purpose of this meeting is to worry about what goes on in the town and it is my

opinion that it is not going to change and what happens between private property owners, the club and VASA is private and I am not going to discuss that here.

Pam: We are trying to gauge the scope of this project and if you are going to be cagey about your plans why should the Selectboard trust you. Natalie: Anything on your property that is open, you can do what you want on private property but if it connects to open road then it becomes town business and would need town approval. Dave: It would be nice to know the entire scope of the project with full disclosure of your plans. Pam: You just don't want to divulge your plans, correct?

Jessica: No, we will not discuss that here.

Marta: Am I correct to say that the whole reason that we are here is that we want get from a connector to VASA trails rather than trailering five miles up the road to ride? Carol: We want to connect to a trail. We are going to discuss a parking lot. Rob: Martina Barnes is waiting for our town to sign off on this. Pam: So, what you just said is that Martina Barnes is waiting for our Selectboard to decide so they can come down and site for a parking lot, whether it is multiuse or not. The National Forest does not pay taxes and riders are going to destroy our roads.

Dave: It is going to cause much more wear. Pam: Can we agree that they are making a parking lot and the increased parking lot on County Road is going to cost the town money?

ADJOURN AT 7:27 PM