

FEBRUARY 10, 2020

Public Hearing for NH DOT Lane Diet – OHRV Travel Minutes

6:00 p.m., Medallion Opera House

The Public Hearing was called to order at 6:01 pm by Chairman Waddell.

148 people were in attendance. Chairman Waddell introduced Chris Gamache, NH Trails Bureau, who then explained the State's proposal for OHRV traffic up Route 16 to the property owned by Chip Bean, where the Eastern Depot Restaurant is now located. A map was shown detailing how OHRV traffic would travel through the underpass to the Pike property and then access to the rail trail from there. Chairman Waddell then introduced Caleb Dobbins, NH DOT Highway Maintenance Engineer, who explained the State's proposed Lane Diet as displayed on the plan. Mr. Dobbins stated that the Town of Gorham would have to request the Lane Diet take place. John Scarinza discussed proposals that had been considered to date. Chairman Waddell then stated that he thought the P&L Parking Lot was the best location for the proposal, he proceeded to read a letter from local businessman, Bob Chapman, and then asked for comments from the audience.

Comments:

- Jerry Marcou: would like to see Route 2 parking area closed.
- Chris Gamache: Route 2 access should be allowed up to Moose Brook Motel.
- Paul S. Cyr, Jr.: Felt the new proposal would unite the community and be good for business. He also thought that access should be allowed up to the Moose Brook Motel.
- Carol Frechette: Asked how long the turning lane would be by the intersection?
Caleb Dobbins: Responded that the length has yet to be determined.
- Deidre Blair: Asked that Chairman Waddell not ask for comments as being "Pro or Con" as some people are neither for or against; she is for OHRVs and the economic boost they bring, but against what the neighbors have to put up with as far as noise and dust.

Chairman Waddell then polled those in attendance as to whether or not they thought the NH DOT lane diet proposal and the NH Bureau of Trails proposal were good ideas. The response was overwhelmingly in the affirmative.

- Frank Edmondson: Stated that the parking lot is a good idea and that parking should also be sought at Shaw's and that access should be granted to the trails for those that live on Jintown Road.
- Diane Bouthot: Asked what the Zoning District is above the traffic light?
Mike Waddell: Zoning for Rt 16 North above the trestle is Commercial B and zoning for Rt 16 South below the trestle is Commercial A.
- Paul Robitaille: Commended the Board of Selectmen for the proposal, but felt that there may be other traffic issues. He wished the board "good luck".
- Wayne Bosquet: Stated he has lived in the area two years now and that the trail access is through his property. He is glad that the State is focusing on a solution and will then work on the other issues.
- Ron Croteau (Berlin resident): Asked if there would be one single corridor for ATVs?
Caleb Dobbins: Responded that that would be different than other roads in the State. OHRVs are treated as motorized vehicles and would use the same lane.

Chairman Waddell informed the attendees that the Board of Selectmen will be the board to deal with all OHRV (motorized) matters. He also stated that a Trails Committee for Non-Motorized trails will be formed and that their primary responsibilities will be:

- a. Promoting the ATC Trail Town Designation;

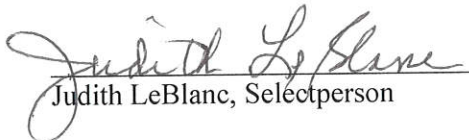
- b. Developing a Recreation Plan for bikes on the road and mountain bikes/fat-tire bikes in the woods.
- c. Walking trail improvements in Town to include trailheads.
- Mike Pelchat: Is happy that OHRV traffic will be diverted away from Lancaster Road. He felt that access by Shaw's to Smitty's Trail should be explored. It was noted that Bob Chapman now owns the former Currier Trucking property.
- Abigail Evankow: Asked if any abutters had been sent notices? Chairman Waddell responded that a Public Hearing Notice was published in the newspaper and posted at required locations per legal hearing notice requirements and that Certified Letters had not been sent to the abutters.
- Henry Sanschagrin: Stated that he was concerned for the safety of people turning into the underpass and said that a fatality had occurred there in the past.
- Jim Tees, landowner: Stated that the property adjacent to Absolute Sports would not allow OHRV traffic.
- Evan Thurlow, Northeast Snowmobile & ATV Rentals, Fryeburg, ME resident: Stated that he felt this proposal was a great improvement for trail access and that he feels that OHRV use will continue to grow. It is a good first step.
- Paul Cormier, Randolph resident: Stated that there should be consideration for bathroom facilities next to the parking lot.
- Paul S. Cyr, Jr.: Stated that to his knowledge, no fatalities with ATVs have occurred as yet. He also commented that good signage would be key.
- Caleb Dobbins: Stated that the dual-use lane as proposed will be much safer than what we have now in the downtown area.

Chairman Waddell then adjourned the Public Hearing at 6:52 pm.

Minutes submitted by Denise Vallee

Date Approved: March 9, 2020


Michael L. Waddell, Chairman


Judith LeBlanc, Selectperson


Adam White, Selectman