

Draft Minutes:
Town of New Haven, VT
Town Lands Committee
7:00 pm July 20, 2017

In Attendance: Committee members, Paul Audy, Tim Bouton, Bev Landon, Susan Smiley, Taborri Bruhl, Benj Putnam, Cindy Hill (town attorney)

Visitors: Jim Walsh, Hilary Andersen, Kate VanDine, Polly Darnell

1. Call to order: 7:02pm
2. Additions to agenda: None
3. Adoption of Minutes:

6/15/2017 meeting minutes – Motion to adopt by Taborri Bruhl^{2nd} by Bev Landon. Draft was amended to remove Cindy Hill from those present and correction in paragraph 5 to read “There are no surveys of these surrounding properties and pertinent town records have been lost.” Motion passed.

7/17/2017 site visit minutes- Motion to adopt by Benj Putnam, 2nd by Taborri Bruhl. Correction on #3 “(downstream)” added at end of last sentence. Motion passed.

4. Review of River Road Park Site Visits/discussion of recommendations
 - River Rd/Munger St. parcel- Much discussion about the usefulness of the small parcel and whether the town should do anything with it. As part of the discussion, neighbors expressed concerns about increased inappropriate uses in the area (graffiti, drug use, underage drinking, parking on private property, etc.)
Suggestions:
 - Give to the abutting landowner to return to original configuration
 - Develop a public access to the river
 - Put a conservation easement on the property so it cannot be developed
 - Change zoning to reflect no development in floodplain, floodway, or river corridor
 - Retain for future needs for River Rd. widening or other

If the town decides to disinvest itself of any properties, it would likely go through a public process, either a public sale/bid or authorization via town vote.

The committee decided to make no recommendations on this property at this time but recommended that the neighboring property owners approach the selectboard about how to handle the parking/graffiti/illegal activities issues.

- Tax Sale/O'Mara parcel – Discussion about whether the town should keep this property or divest. Motion to recommend the selectboard do nothing and continue to hold the property for any possible future uses. Motion included a recommendation that the selectboard look into removal of the junk cars to clean up the river bank if practicable. Motion made by Taborri, 2nd by Benj. All in favor.
- Riverside Cemetery – No question that the town retain this property. Discussion focused on the condition of the fence and monuments and whether inscriptions on the stones had been recorded. The cemetery is listed in the New Haven book and is available on the internet. Motion that the committee recommend maintaining the fence, that the selectboard explore having the stones professionally cleaned to historic preservation standards and that the historical society might have an interest in recording the inscriptions. Motion made by Taborri, 2nd by Benj. Motion passed.
- Dugway/Sumner Parcel – Discussion considered blocking the gravel off and letting it revert naturally vs. keep it the way it is as a pull off. Fishermen use it now for access and being open increases the site lines for drivers. Motion to recommend the town maintain the pull-off at its current size without any further fill in the floodplain. Motion by Benj, 2nd by Bev. Motion passed
- Demers Park – Discussion continued from June meeting with a listing of suggestions:
 - Remove backstop
 - Keep boulders where they are
 - Pressure wash picnic tables
 - Add signs (pack in – pack out, and dawn to dusk)
 - Improve the aesthetics of the current gravel parking (possibly additional gravel but well placed, rather than dumped)
 - Clear invasive species from River Rd down the hill to improve visibility from the road
 - No changes recommended to the access road (Discussed changing culvert to allow better drainage for ball field but where the runoff would go is problematic)

Motion was made by Tim and 2nd by Taborri to make these recommendations, Motion passed.

During the discussions, a few items came up that would seem to apply across all town properties and will be further fleshed out in future meetings:

- Common signage for all town properties as appropriate (similar to Library sign on front of office)
 - Adoption of a parks ordinance to establish permitted public uses.
 - Adoption of a policy that would encourage private maintenance/mowing without risking adverse possession.
5. Town Green/Memorial Park background discussion: Bev requests that the committee continue deferring this because there is still no clear ownership boundaries.
 6. Choose next property for review: Next parcels will be the combination of the King, Tebbits, and Sleeper lots around the town office and town hall on North St. and the Town shed/Larrow parcels at the town shed and fire station on Main St.
 7. Other: Boundary meeting for parcels listed in Minutes above, August 14, 5pm. Site Visit. August 12, 9am, gathering at Town Office. Town Lands Committee meeting, August 17, 7pm, Town Office.
 8. Adjourn: 9:03