

**Stowe Selectboard, Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting  
Monday August 8, 2022**

Present:

Selectboard Members: William Adams, Jo Sabel Courtney, Nick Donza, Paco Aumand

In Person attendees: Paul Sakash, Danny Dougherty, Catherine Gott, Harry Shepard

There were 11 participant on Zoom

**Call to Order**

Chair Billy Adams called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

**Approve the Agenda**

On a motion by Ms. Jo Sabel Courtney, seconded by Mr. Nick Donza, the Board approved the agenda, with the addition of one permit in the Liquor Consent Items.

**Consent Agenda**

1. 7/25/22 Selectboard Minutes
2. Excess Cash Earned Interest Bid Award
3. Water/Sewer Allocation: 630 Sylvan Park Road
4. Special Event Application: British Invasion
5. Liquor Consent Items

On a motion by Mr. Paco Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board approved the Consent Agenda with the one additional permit in the Liquor Consent Items.

**Motor Vehicle Ordinance Amendments: High Farms Road, Pinnacle Road and Upper Pinnacle Road**

Chair Adams opened the Public Hearing at 5:32pm.

The Town of Stowe has received a request from a resident on High Farms Road, a dead-end Class 3 Town Highway with a current speed limit of 35MPH to lower the speed limit. Public Works conducted an engineering study on this road, which included a speed study. The conclusion of this study was that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed for that road was 27.1 MPH, and MUTCD guidelines indicate that the speed limit should be within 5MPH of the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile. The engineering study supports lowering the speed limit on High Farms Road to 25MPH.

The Town of Stowe has also received a request for reduction of the speed limit on Pinnacle Road and Upper Pinnacle Road, both roads are dead-end Class 3 roads currently posted for 35MPH. An engineering study including a speed study was conducted for these roads, which found an 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 34.2MPH. However it was noted that the section of road where the speed study was conducted was a straight away, but that this road includes several hairpin turns and steep slopes which make it unsafe to navigate at 35MPH in its entirety.

There was no public comment.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Mr. Donza, the Board closed the Public Hearing.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board amended the Traffic and Vehicle Ordinance to reflect the recommended changes to posted speed limits on High Farms, Pinnacle and Upper Pinnacle Roads.

### **Bears (Dumpsters, Education and Regulations)**

The Town of Stowe is a mountain community with prime bear habitat. Recently there has been an increase in human/bear interactions, including a motor vehicle accident on Mountain Road. Ms. Brenna Galdenzi, President of Protect Our Wildlife, has requested time before the Selectboard to discuss the issues facing the Town and what the municipality may be able to do to reduce human/bear conflicts. Ms. Galdenzi stated that she didn't believe there was an increase in the number of bears, but rather a changing of patterns in which bears are more frequently feeding from dumpsters and other unsecured trash, and bird feeders. She stated that the solution is to make these food options less available to encourage bears to go back to finding natural sources of food. Catherine Gott, a Stowe Resident, presented a slideshow that depicted area dumpsters that have been accessed by bears. She highlighted the need for truly bear-proof dumpsters, which are all metal with latches, and the need to use them properly. At the moment, it appears that only one dumpster provider in our area offers truly bear-proof dumpsters. Options such as bars across the dumpster, plywood, boards with nails, etc. are helpful but not as robust at keeping bears out. It was noted that this a community-wide problem that each business and homeowner needs to be responsible in helping.

Traffic concerns on Mountain Road were also discussed, noting that Harlow Hill is a wildlife corridor and perhaps the speed limit should be lowered from 50mph to 40mph. It was noted this is a State Highway and the Town could make that request, but it would be up to the State. Ms. Galdenzi stated that she believed the number of animal/car incidents in that area is higher than indicated by the State.

The Board discussed the ongoing Be Bear Aware campaign that the Conservation Commission has been promoting in recent years for public education. It was also suggested that an organization such as the State Fish and Wildlife Department or BearWise could be brought in to speak in the community on how to mitigate human/bear conflicts.

There was discussion of having an ordinance requiring bear-proof dumpsters and trash containers, however it was noted this would have to be applied town-wide both in residential and businesses, and that the enforcement of such an ordinance would be beyond the Town's ability with current staffing. It was felt that focusing on education was the best way to approach it at this time. Other ideas discussed included discouraging clearing natural feeding grounds for bears, and potentially looking at planting more bear-friendly food sources.

Ms. Galdenzi and others suggested that the Town should help subsidize the cost of bear-proof containers for those who cannot afford them, however at this time the Town does not have the financial capacity to take this on. The Town currently does not have bear-proof dumpsters and trash containers at all of its facilities due to costs, but continues to focus on transitioning to bear proof dumpsters as contracts expire and public receptacles as the municipal budget permits. It was noted that the Town should take the lead on bear proofing trash.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board directed staff not to breach any contracts, but to develop a capital project to purchase municipal bear-proof receptacles.

### **Highway Garage Roof Replacement Project – Bid Award**

In March voters approved an FY'23 Capital Project of replacing the Highway Garage Roof due to leaks. The project was budgeted for \$75,000, based on pre-COVID estimates. Bids were received for the work and came in at \$117,600 and \$130,825. These increased costs are largely due to inflationary costs of supplies, labor, etc., as well as insulation system upgrades associated with VT Energy Code requirements. As part of the bidding process, the Town also included an “add-alternate” to remove all existing insulation and install entirely new insulation to meet Vermont Energy Codes. The original bid was to remove 1” of insulation that was known to be rotted and include an additional 3” of insulation for a total of 7” of insulation to meet current standards. Upon further inspection, it is likely that all of the existing insulation has been saturated and deteriorated, justifying the add-alternate. Public Works Director Harry Shepard indicated that the new roof would have a life expectancy of 20 years, and that the Highway Garage is primarily structurally sound.

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board awarded the bid for the Highway Garage Roof to Evergreen Roofing, authorize the Town Manager to sign the agreement and appropriate an additional \$105,000 from General Fund Capital Reserves.

### **Manager’s Report**

Mr. Safford provided the Board with a Public Notice that was sent to all Town of Stowe Water customers via US Mail as required by VTDEC. The notice is in response to the new health advisory levels issued by the EPO on 6/15/225 for 4 PFAS chemicals. Stowe Water is compliant with all State and Federal Drinking Water standards, which the notice states. The notice also advises that the new EPA Health Advisory Levels, which includes PFOA, has been detected at 3.3 parts per trillion (ppt), in our Village Green Water Supply, well below the current VTDEC regulatory standard of 20 ppt but above the new EPA level of 0.004 parts per trillion. Current laboratory technology does detect less than 2 ppt.

There being no further business, Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 7:50pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Sweetser.