

Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
August 27, 2007

Present:

Sue Clough, Chair
Mark Kaplan, Selectman
Larry Ballin, Selectman
Jessie Levine, Town Administrator

Also Present:

Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Residents of Gravel Roads
Philip Stake, Argus Champion

Prior to the meeting, all present were given a Gravel Road Report which showed the priority level for paving, the length of the road, the number of homes, the required road width per the proposed Subdivision Regulations, the estimated cost to bring the road to paving quality, the estimated cost to pave, and the year the road was built. The packet also included two articles regarding gravel roads, including the summary of a report from the Minnesota Department of Transportation called "When is it time to pave a gravel road?"

Chair Clough called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Gravel Roads: Chair Clough explained that the purpose of this evening's meeting was to revisit the subject of paving gravel roads and to receive input from the public. She asked Richard Lee to open by describing the handout. Mr. Lee reviewed the 2007 Gravel Road Report, which he and Ms. Levine had revised since it was first created in 2003. He advised everyone that the estimates do not include the costs for engineering, major drainage repairs, right-of-way purchases, and changing of the roads' path for safer travel.

Chair Clough asked Mr. Lee to share how he had come up with the priority levels for the gravel roads. Mr. Lee explained that they had taken into account safety and the total cost of maintenance and repair. He added that they had come up with three levels of priority: low, medium, and high.

Chair Clough referred everyone to an article published by the University of Minnesota that highlighted the process and impact of paving gravel roads. Mr. Lee added that the article that was handed out is a shortened version of the original article and if anyone would like the full version it is available.

Chair Clough advised everyone in attendance that the total minimum estimate of paving all gravel roads in New London came to \$3+ million. She added that this estimate again does not include costs for engineering, right-of-way purchases, and changes made to the roads' path for safer travel. Ms. Levine stated that the estimate is the minimum cost of the project for each road.

Chair Clough then opened the floor to the other members of the board. Mr. Kaplan reviewed the four philosophical questions that Ms. Levine had provided for the board's consideration:

1. If we pave an existing gravel road, do we bring it up to the standards required by the subdivision regulations, or do we pave the road to the width that exists today?

2. Should public outcry (i.e., squeaky wheel) outweigh safety and maintenance considerations, or vice versa? If we pave any gravel roads, do we pave to our high priorities or to the high priorities of vocal residents?
3. Should the Selectmen take into account promises made by previous Boards of Selectmen?
4. In the absence of a high priority recommendation from the Public Works Department, should all requests be asked to petition Town Meeting and go through the budget process and public hearing?

Chair Clough used the first question to open discussion with those present: if we pave the existing gravel road, do we bring it up to the standards required by today's subdivision regulations, or do we pave the road to the width that exists today?

Edward Raswyck stated that he objects to Pine Hill Road being called a gravel road. There is no gravel on it at all; Pine Hill Road is a dusty, dirty road. If it is dry for a period of time we get dust, if it rains we get potholes and mud. Chair Clough looked to Mr. Lee for the legal definition of a gravel road. Mr. Lee stated that Mr. Raswyck lives on a gravel road. There are about 2.5 inches of ¾-inch manufactured gravel, with probably some winter sand mixed in, but the road was constructed out of bank-run gravel, crushed gravel, and manufactured gravel.

Mr. Ballin asked if all the gravel roads in New London have the manufactured gravel. Mr. Lee said that yes, all the gravel roads in New London either have ½-inch crushed gravel or ¾-inch manufactured gravel. Mr. Ballin asked if all the products were a stone product. Mr. Lee said that the Town no longer uses bank-run gravel -- everything is crushed gravel.

Jeff Dailey asked how the Town measures the width. For instance, Pine Hill Road was graded today and every time it gets graded it seems that it becomes wider. Mr. Lee referred to the subdivision regulations which break town roads into four categories: service roads, local roads, collector roads, and arterial roads. The categories are set by the number of homes that are on the road. For a 22-foot road, if it were paved, there would be 18 feet of travel surface and a 2-foot gravel shoulder on either side. On a gravel road, residents may see the road become wider at various spots throughout the year, as we grade material towards the ditches. The Town grades the width anywhere from 18 to 20-feet wide and we pull in the edges during the grading. So the width does fluctuate through out the year. Mr. Dailey asked if there would be 18-feet of pavement through the cul-de-sac as well. Mr. Lee said the cul-de-sac would be 18 feet of pavement with no shoulders. With the new regulations he would probably have to widen the road to create some shoulders.

Chair Clough asked those in attendance about their feelings regarding the possibility of widening their road for pavement. Ms. Levine reminded everyone that not all roads would have to be widened, depending on existing conditions; some may even be narrowed and some would require no change in the width.

Howard Harwell asked how much it would impact the tax rate to do all of the roads at once. Ms. Levine stated that the Town's annual budget is around \$6 million, so this project would have to be a bond if it were paid for all at once. The impact of a \$3.5 million bond over 30 years would be 23 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, every year for the life of the bond. Mr. Hartwell then asked how paving the road would impact the assessment of his home. Ms. Levine stated that the Town has seen no correlation between the market value of a home on a gravel road compared to that of a home on a paved road.

Scott Beebe asked what product was on Sargent Road. Mr. Lee stated that Sargent Road has ¾-inch manufactured gravel. Mr. Beebe asked if the blue stuff was gravel. Mr. Lee stated that the blue tinted gravel is ¾-inch manufactured gravel.

Mr. Beebe asked if Mr. Lee would agree that all of the roads in town had this type of gravel. Mr. Lee disagreed and said that some roads have the ¾-inch manufactured gravel and some have 1½-inch crushed gravel.

Michael Todd asked if the Town still treats the roads with calcium chloride. Mr. Lee stated that the Town now treats the roads with magnesium chloride and puts out about 22 tons of it per year on the 41 gravel roads. The magnesium chloride is less corrosive and less detrimental to the environment compared to calcium chloride, but unfortunately it does not hold the moisture as well as calcium chloride.

Jim Chabot asked Mr. Lee what the cost of the magnesium chloride is to the Town. Mr. Lee stated that the 22 tons cost roughly \$8,000. Mr. Chabot asked if Mr. Lee and Ms. Levine had taken the environmental impact into consideration when creating the priority levels for the gravel roads. Mr. Lee said that they had taken that into consideration. Mr. Chabot then asked if the safety aspect included auto traffic or access for emergency vehicles. Mr. Lee said that yes, both had been taken into consideration, as well as the grade of the road, the curvature, and the amount of homes on the road.

Mrs. Harwell asked what triggered tonight's discussion at this time. Chair Clough stated that the Board of Selectmen had received many requests to have roads paved, and the board decided to have an open conversation with all of the residents who live on gravel roads.

Sue Nadeau introduced herself and asked what the difference is to maintain a dirt road rather than a paved road. Mr. Lee stated that he and Ms. Levine had not broken down those numbers yet, but in a recent article it was said that a gravel road with 200 vehicles per day costs the same to maintain as a paved road. Mrs. Nadeau then said that when she moved in she was told that her road would be paved when half of the subdivision was built. I understand that the current Board of Selectmen does not have to uphold the previous decisions, but how will the board decide on which to pave? Mr. Kaplan stated that was the point of this evening's meeting.

Ms. Levine stated that it would be ideal if the Town had on its priority list a road that all of the resident's want paved and then the board would agree that it makes sense. That's not always the case. There are some residents on our high priority roads, like Old Main Street, who would like to keep the road gravel. There are also residents on our low priority roads who are among the more vocal in having their road paved.

Paul Nadeau stated that Quail Run was built in 1976 and he believes that it was built to meet the paving standards as it had to be built twice. He added that he feels the Town has gone backwards in respect to his road. Fred Peterson stated that he did a straw poll survey on Quail Run, and found that 10 out of 12 were in favor of paving Quail Run while the other two did not care whether or not it got paved. The road is very steep and in the spring time the water runoff washes out the road and brings that material into Lyon Brook. Chair Clough stated that that may be the reason why Quail Run was listed as a medium priority.

Robby Hudson asked if the Town were to pave Pine Hill Road, and then potholes formed, would they have to wait for a long time to get them fixed. She noted that Pine Hill is a dead end road with not much traffic. It seemed like it took a long time for the Town to repave the storm damage to Burpee Hill Road. Mr. Lee stated that Burpee Hill Road took so long due to the fact that the Town had to deal with FEMA to get reimbursed for the damage, and they had to negotiate the amount of paving that FEMA would reimburse. Mrs. Hudson asked if the Town were to pave the road, would it last as long as gravel. Mr. Lee stated that paved roads get potholes and wheel ruts, and if the road has a good base he should be able to get 15 good years out of the road before any major improvements were needed.

Mrs. Hudson stated that it is easy to bring in the grader and fix the gravel, but a paved road is much harder to fix. Mr. Lee stated that it cost \$20,000 to shim one mile of paved road. Mrs. Hudson asked if traffic moves faster on a paved road versus on a gravel road. Mr. Ballin said that was a safe assumption, and that some people who lived on gravel roads preferred the slower traffic.

Lynn Beach asked if any vehicle volume studies had been done on any of these roads. Mr. Lee said that no, they had used the Planning Board's calculations for subdivisions. Mrs. Beach said that her tax assessment went up when they had their driveway paved; why wouldn't the assessment go up if the road were paved? Mrs. Levine stated that it is a state requirement to pick up the value of the driveway itself, which is \$2000.

Joan Trabucchi asked if Pine Hill Road would need to be widened. Mr. Lee said that Pine Hill Road would not need to be widened, but other work would need to happen before the road could be paved. The utilities are buried either in the wheel tracks or in the ditch line and would have to be moved or buried deeper. If the Town goes to pave the road and tells the utility companies that they want the lines out of the street, it will be a Town expense.

Chair Clough noted that the discussion had gravitated to one road in particular, and directed the discussion back to the general questions. She told all that were present that the Board of Selectmen will be holding another meeting for residential input, specific to Pine Hill Road, Laurel Lane, and Hemlock Lane, on Monday, September 10 at 8:00 a.m. She again reviewed the Gravel Road Report and the various priority levels.

Bob Trabucchi asked if the board were to make a decision would it be binding for the future boards. Mr. Kaplan stated the only way to make the decision binding is to take the matter to Town Meeting. Mr. Ballin elaborated that the Board of Selectmen cannot make a decision tonight, but when and if they do it will have to go through the budget process and Town Meeting.

Glen Hudson stated that he believes everyone in the room has a vested interest on this topic. He continued to say that a vote in this room would not show the public interest and the roads are public so the safety and expense to the entire town should be taken into consideration.

Mr. Dailey asked why the Town now requires roads to be paved before the Town will take them over. Chair Clough stated that decision was reached due to the number of people in the town who wanted their gravel road paved, so the Board of Selectmen felt it should be the responsibility of the developer to get the road paved. Mr. Lee stated that the subdivision regulations state that the road must be maintained for one year before the Town will consider taking it over. Chair Clough said that over the years, some developers promised buyers that the road would be paved by the Town at some future point, which put the Town in this present situation. Mr. Ballin added that the decision was implemented to make the developer finish their product. The Town will not take over the road until it meets the Town standards. Ms. Levine agreed, adding that when the Board of Selectmen held the public hearing to take over Queenswood Road, a resident asked when the road would be paved.

Fred Coombs stated that the Town has developed considerably, especially around the lake. It is hard to have an interested buyer and then tell them they will have to float some of the money to pave the road. Chair Clough said that in different cases the Planning Board would look at the size of the development and ask the developer to create a plan for the pavement, which can be done in increments.

Susan Devlin said that the Gravel Road Report shows that Quarry Road should be 16 feet wide, and asked what kind of shoulders would be created. Mr. Lee stated that the Town would have 16 feet of pavement with 2 feet of shoulders on either side.

Lynn Harwell asked if road paving would change the load limit in the spring. Mr. Lee said no, the load limit is the same for all roads.

Mrs. Nadeau said that five years ago she came into the Town Office and asked about a 10-year plan that she had heard about. When she did so the women in the office stated that our road was two years down the road, and that was five years ago. Mr. Lee said that he has worked for the Town for over 30 years and has never heard of such a plan. Mrs. Nadeau did not identify the source of that statement.

Betty Lutsky stated that she had read the same thing in a newspaper article that stated that Autumnwood was a high priority; now it is low. Ms. Levine referred to a letter that Mr. Lee had written to the Board of Selectmen in 2003 that highlighted three groups of roads, and both Autumnwood and Quail Run were in the first group of roads. That memo was never adopted by the Board of Selectmen

Mr. Chabot asked if a long-term plan appropriate for this situation. He highlighted the natural treasures which the Town is blessed with. He also added that the State Limnologist is in favor of paving roads for the protection of lakes and ponds. Mr. Lee said that is something that has happened recently in the past 7-8 years. That is one of the reasons why the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board adopted the ordinance to have the roads paved before the Town takes them over.

Michael Todd said that most of the residents on Old Main Street do not want the road paved. He highlighted areas where the Town could help to improve the safety of the road, such as signs stating that saddle horses are being ridden and changing the placement of the stop signs and no-thru trucking signs.

Betsy Rogoff said that she resides on Forest Acres Road. She is afraid that if the Town were to pave the road it would become heavily traveled at higher speeds, since it is a through road, and the safety of children and the many walkers would be put at risk. She would like to leave Forest Acres Road gravel.

Chair Clough thanked everyone present for their input, and noted that the Board of Selectmen would continue to consider the subject.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to approve the Citizen's Advisory Committee minutes of July 28, 2007. With no discussion the motion was approved unanimously.

The board decided to postpone the approval of the August 13 minutes until the September 10 meeting.

Requests to Serve Alcohol: The Board was presented with two requests to serve alcohol: one from the Tracy Library Staff for the Library Volunteer Party and the second for the Garden Club Party both of which will be held at the Tracy Memorial Library. Mr. Ballin made a motion to approve both requests; seconded by Mr. Kaplan. The requests were approved unanimously.

Citizen's Advisory Committee: Ms. Levine advised the board that the next Citizen's Advisory Committee will be September 8. Ken McWilliams will be present to highlight the Master Plan. Chair Clough suggested moving the meeting to September 15 as she and Mr. Ballin will not be available for the September 8 meeting. The group agreed to try to reschedule the meeting to September 15; if Mr. McWilliams is unavailable the meeting will be cancelled and rescheduled for October.

Wastewater Meeting: Ms. Levine advised the board that the next meeting of the New London Board of Selectmen and Sunapee Water & Sewer Commissioners is scheduled for September 27 at 5:30 p.m. at the Sunapee Town Offices. She and Mr. Lee will be working on a flow proposal, which may or may not be ready for the meeting. We will also discuss the capital improvements to the Sunapee Wastewater Plant and we would like to start the budget discussion with them. Mr. Kaplan stated he believed it was good idea to make them aware that New London is ready to work collaboratively.

Chair Clough asked if the Town was making the quarterly payments as they came in. Ms. Levine replied stating that yes, the Town is paying the quarterly payments.

Reverse Emergency Notification: Ms. Levine stated that she is working on the reverse emergency notification program (she does not want to call it Reverse 911 as that is the actual name of a vendor). Ms. Levine reminded the board that six towns have decided to join New London to get a group bid: New London, Sunapee, Newbury, Wilmot, Sutton, and Springfield. The company that the six towns are working through is MCCT out of Belmont, which are putting out a beta product for municipalities and schools. The product is really a database that is housed at their facility in Belmont. Each town would own their own database to start; we are hoping we will be able to get the E911 which is the phone database that Verizon gives to the State and then the State will give it to the Town.

Ms. Levine continued to say that in an emergency the Town will either go online or call the database and create a message that can be sent to phone lines or can be dialed into.

The product from Reverse 911 would have cost the six towns \$60,000 to start plus annual subscription costs, and that cost came with only eight phone lines, which means only eight calls could go out at one time. In contrast, MCCT leases various bandwidths and uses multiple lines to get out the message as soon as possible. The start-up cost with MCCT is under \$6,000 for New London. If the Town would like to have an 800 number for residents to call and get information we will have to add \$200, plus the cost per minute

Chair Clough asked if the schools were included. Ms. Levine stated that the Town would cover the schools' start-up fees, but they would be responsible for the operating costs of using the service (i.e., the cost per minute for making calls). Colby-Sawyer College has already started discussion with MCCT.

Mr. Ballin asked what scenario the Town could have used this for in the past ten years. Ms. Levine said that if the Town were to have another sewer spill it could use this program to advise all of the residents in the area to not drink their water. Mr. Ballin then asked who would call the 800 phone number. Ms. Levine said the 800 number could help to relieve the phone calls that the Town Office and Dispatch receive in any given situation.

Mr. Kaplan asked how this would help with the cabins around the lake that do not have telephones. Ms. Levine said that the information would be on the Town website and anywhere else that the Town could put it. The program will not reach 100% of the population, but it will help to reach most of the Town's population.

Lagoon Property: Ms. Levine referred the board to a letter from the Department of Environmental Services regarding the sewer lagoon property. The State has determined that the best way to manage the property would be to remove the sludge and let it dry. It could then be trucked off the property, which can then be used for other purposes, such as recreation.

Ms. Levine said that the State advises that drying the sludge on site or moving it to a landfill that is operational would be the best way to approach the project. It is believed that most of the work can be completed by the Town without hiring a contractor.

Chair Clough asked if Ms. Levine had an estimate for the project. Ms. Levine said that she did not yet have an estimate, nor will she until a plan has been developed.

Parks Memorial: Ms. Levine reminded the board that the Elkins Beach area will be dedicated to the memory of the Parks on September 29 at 10 AM. Mr. Ballin asked Ms. Levine to make sure that Chad Denning was aware of the event.

Committee Reports:

- Planning Board – Mr. Ballin shared with the board that the Snow subdivision on Bog Road is on track for final approval. He added that the Ewing subdivision on Balsam Acres is in the final steps of approval and the public hearing for the new site plan and subdivision regulations will be held together.
- Budget Committee – Mr. Kaplan shared that the Budget Committee seemed to be against the idea of changing the fiscal year, but they wanted some more research on the topic. It was a hard topic for many of the members to understand.
- CIP – Mr. Ballin said that the CIP had reduced many of the program appropriations like the police cruiser program and the fire truck program.
- Personnel Subcommittee – Mr. Ballin reported that the Personnel Subcommittee has come to the conclusion that they need to make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, not set the policy. The committee is also looking at the benefit packages of other municipalities and businesses in the private sector.

Building Permits

- John & Ruth Clough, 306 Whitney Brook Road (Tax Map: 039; Lot: 007-000), permit to move the laundry room, install new stairs, and add a bathroom and bedroom. – Approved (Permit #07-017)
- Sarah McCarin & Marguerite Francis, 605 Wilmot Center Road (Tax Map: 053; Lot: 001-000), permit to add a loft apartment to a pre-existing home. – Approved (Permit #07-057)
- Marc & Patricia Clement, 723 Pleasant Street (Tax Map: 048; Lot: 004-000), permit to add a dormer onto the back of the home. – Approved (Permit #07-097)
- Ken & Kari Minesinger, 121 Forest Acres Road (Tax Map: 105; Lot: 012-000), permit to construct a two-car garage. – Approved (Permit #07-099)
- Donald & Susan Wargo, 39 Seamans Road (Tax Map: 085; Lot: 065-000), permit to construct a screened porch. – Approved (Permit #07-098)
- David Heald Trust, Peter Winship, Agent, 488 Lakeshore Drive (Tax Map: 037, Lot: 012-000), permit to install a retaining wall and erosion control. – Approved (Permit #07-101)

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- Margot S. Ferris, 124 Knights Hill Road (Tax Map: 083, Lot: 002-000), permit to pour a new foundation, connect to the water main, construct a 100 square foot addition to the kitchen, install a gas heating system with forced hot water, renew existing plumbing, add a two-car garage under the structure and reshape the footings at the existing two-car garage. – Approved (Permit #07-090)
- Tracy Memorial Library, 304 Main Street (Tax Map: 084, Lot: 054-000), permit to replace the existing flat roof section as well as the pitched roof above the entry way and installation of new boilers and air conditioning as well as light interior refacing on the ceiling over the circulation desk. - Approved (Permit #07-100)

Sign Permits

- Application for a Temporary Sign Permit for the Ultra-Violette Scholarship Golf Tournament to be erected and taken down on September 6 on the Lake Sunapee Country Club property. – DENIED due to not meeting the size limitations for the zone district.

Other Items for Signature

- Warrant to the Town Clerk and Tax Collector to proceed in the civil forfeiture process for unlicensed dogs. – Approved
- Application for use of the Sydney L. Crook Conference Room by Adventures in Learning for various dates in January, February, and March. – Approved
- Application to use Whipple Memorial Town Hall from David Cleveland on September 9, 2007, for auditions. – Approved

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Kelsie M. Lee
Recording Secretary