

TOWN OF TAMWORTH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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Selectmen's Meeting 3:00 pm
Town Offices

Wednesday, June 28, 2017

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Hidden, Selectmen Gray and Poirier, Senator Jeb Bradley, Representatives Mark McConkey, Ed Butler and Jerry Knirk, Councilor Kinney, DRED Division of Parks and Recreation Director Phillip Bryce, DRED Commissioner Jeff Rose, David Krausse, Town Administrator Darlene McWhirter, Governmentoversite.com Videographer and 26 members of the public.

Chairman Hidden opened the meeting at 3:03pm welcoming members of DRED, state representatives and the members of the public.

Public comment began with Gail Marrone stating as a resident for over 32 years she and her family has enjoyed the use of White Lake and does not want to lose that privilege. Residents Pat Lange, Lloyd Hadden stated the same. Becky Mason commented that the residents always had access to White Lake through Irene's Way. She further commented that to ask elderly boaters to park in the lot and walk their boats to the access point is unfair. Residents of Tamworth have been accessing White Lake through Irene's Way since at least 1943. Kevin Philibret is concerned that the lake has been designated a Big Lake from a Great Pond. The residents are concerned they are losing access and a ruling needs to be made on the ownership of Irene's Way and access to White Lake.

Chairman Hidden stated that the position of the Board is that the town's want to maintain access by Irene' Way to White Lake which has been done for many years. We do feel that the town has sufficient evidence that clearly shows that Irene's Way is a town owned road.

DRED Commissioner, Jeff Rose agrees that White Lake is a great asset to the state. DRED takes the job of maintaining all the parks throughout the state very seriously.

Director Bryce reiterated a number of points that were made at the last meeting. The uses of the park that are supported by the park are car top boat launches, fishing and access to hiking trails. There has never been a mention of putting a permanent gate up at Irene' Way during the day. The issues of concern for the park staff are dumping/trash, partying/noise, fireworks, and possible drug use/dealing. Other concerns such as swimming in non-designated areas, boat moorings and lesser concerns are unauthorized use of the day-use park beach/facilities and parking vehicles close to the lake. To address these concerns the park proposed:

- Install a gate at intersection of Depot Road. The gate will open daily from 8 am to 8 pm, May 1 to October 30. The gate would remain open 24/7 November 1 to April 30. The park is looking for ways to increase parking.
- Visitors accessing the park using Irene's Way and using the day-use facilities shall pay the day-use admission fee.
- When Depot Road gate is closed the public can access the lake through the main entrance and park in a designated area.

Our intension was not to shut off public access. Our intention is to provide public access and determine the times to provide public access and times to charge fees to do it. Mr. Bryce also stated that he and the Attorney General's office have confirmed that the state does own Irene's Way as a class III recreational road.

Senator Bradley thanked everyone for being here and having a frank discussion regarding the concerns between the Tamworth Board and DRED. No doubt the historic uses of Irene's Way need to be preserved. Senator Bradley feels with good common sense and real solutions to the concerns of DRED as a group we could make it work. For at least 2 years give it a try, do not build a gate or add a new parking lot at this time.

Representative Jerry Knirk acquired information from legislative research of HB251 from 1943 regarding who owns Irene's Way, but he also feels as Senator Bradley that is not the issue. The issue is to play nice in the sand box. Representative Butler also agrees to the traditional use of Irene's Way, but allow the state to control the space as much as possible. Councilor Kinney would like to support traditional use, but must be concerned about safety. Representative McConkey has been in agreement with Senator Bradley from the beginning to take 2 years to work with the town and DRED on a solution to the use of Irene's Way.

Chairman Hidden does want to come to a compromise. Both parties have started to dig their heels in; we should put the issue of gates, etc on hold. The board and the town's people now have a better understanding of where DRED is coming from. Tamworth is in the process of rebuilding its Police Department and will be in a better position to help in that respect. Selectman Gray spoke to the historical use of the part by residents. He does feel that Irene's Way is a town road and who owns the road controls the access at the lake. That is concerning to Selectman Gray.

Senator Bradley suggests the new chief and the administrator of the park to work out protocol of issues in the park; such as drugs, noise, illegal moorings etc. NH DRED has concerns of vehicles parking too close to the water & restructuring the parking area near the lake. With a little volunteer effort near the brook maybe a walkway or additional parking can be created to enhance the area.

Chairman Hidden would like to see cooperative effort and continued communications to see if the procedures put in place are working properly. Do not wait until there is an issue. There was much discussion on how to maintain order and safety at the lake.

Selectman Poirier was police chief for 16 years and always wanted a gate put up. There is a lot of criminal activity in the park at night. Selectman Poirier is in agreement with Senator Bradley, but is sympathetic to the parks concerns.

Director Bryce will draft a Memorandum of Agreement for review by the board. Resident Becky Mason asked that these rules be created and enforced with consistency.

At 4:15pm Chairman Hidden recessed the meeting about access to White Lake.

At 4:20pm Chairman Hidden reopened the meeting to discuss Tamworth Road.

Present: Chairman Hidden, Selectmen Gray and Poirier, Representative McConkey, Butler & Knirk, Councilor Kinney, NH DOT Asst Commission Bill Cass, Mike O'Donnell, Bureau of Traffic, District 3 Alan Hanscom, Town Administrator McWhirter, Videographer and 5 members of the public.

A brief discussion regarding concerns on Tamworth Road to reduce the speed limit, the need for a true 4 way stop at the monument, work on Butlers bridge and possibly adding walking paths.

Representative McConkey mentioned that if the town wants to take over the 1 mile section of Cleveland Hill Road that is currently owned by the state, that would need to be discussed at town meeting. Mr. McConkey also mentioned grants and programs to get projects done in town.

They briefly discussed funding sources through grants.

At 5:00pm members of the meeting moved to Tamworth Road to view the concerned areas.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene McWhirter
Town Administrator

Approved by the Board of Selectmen

James S. Hidden

Steven G. Gray

Daniel J. Poirier