

Minutes of the Roxbury Selectmen's meeting Dec. 27, 2016

In attendance: Selectmen Gerry Davis, Tim O'Brien and Jim Rousmaniere; Treasurer David Jewett; former selectman Chip Drogue; representatives of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, including Reagan Bissonnette, Wendy Weisiger and Will Abbott.

The meeting opened at 7 p.m. Minutes from the meeting of Dec. 19 were approved.

Representatives of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests met with the selectmen and Chip Drogue to resume discussions regarding aspects of public use of the so-called Taves Preserve that had occurred earlier in the year. The discussion directly and indirectly concerns the language of a conservation easement on the land that the Society asserts prohibits the use of motorized vehicles on the property other than vehicles used by the Society for forestry work. The discussion, for which there is correspondence dating to 2007 and which was revived during 2016, turns largely on conflicting understandings of the status of a road on the property – the Society asserting that the road is a private road and the Town of the belief that it is a public Class VI Road. The immediate difference concerns the use of the road by a snowmobile club that has removed footbridges on the property and replaced them with wider bridges that can be used by snowmobiles. (A secondary concern raised by Ms. Bissonnette is that the snowmobile club, which was not represented at the meeting due to scheduling conflicts, has apparently carved a short trail that connects the Wheeler Brook road with property owned by a third party near Otter Brook without permission by the Society; Ms. Bissonnette reported that the snowmobile club, apparently responding to concerns previously expressed about that connector, now no longer identifies the connector trail on its web site.) Ms. Bissonnette asserted at the meeting that the Society is sufficiently firm in its belief that the road along Wheeler Brook is a private road that that it is prepared to argue that point through legal action. Mr. Drogue explained how the town arrived at its interpretation of the status of the road. It was agreed at the conclusion of the meeting that Ms. Bissonnette will send to the selectmen a copy of the conservation easement that reportedly prohibits use of the Taves property by motorized vehicles. Following the meeting, which lasted about one hour, Mr. Drogue said that he will forward to the selectmen copies of correspondence and other materials that relate to past discussions involving the Society, and also the Local Government Center, regarding the definition of the road along Wheeler Brook. The selectmen deferred further discussion of the matter until after receiving the cited materials from the Society and Mr. Drogue.

In a telephone call, Josh Hicks reported that he had composed and transmitted reports about the planning board and the town's welfare operations for the next Town Report. He also requested that other town departments be asked to send any plans regarding long-term capital spending to the planning board, which is updating its capital budget.

There was informal discussion regarding the timeline for town report and budget preparations leading up to the next formal Town Meeting, which according to the states rules will occur on March 14, 2017. It was informally agreed that deadlines relating to that meeting – including the drafting and completion of the Town Report, and also hearings and notices of hearings for the proposed budget – will be discussed at the next selectmen's meeting.

It was noted that the front-door access to Town Hall will be barred during the next several days as the main floor and stairs are scheduled to be sanded.

Selectman Davis prepared the manifest of bills to be paid; the manifest was signed by the selectmen.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Minutes approved by the selectmen