

**Selectboard Public Hearing
June 10th, 2024 DRAFT**

In-Person Attendees: Kevin Gish, Chair; Lee Simek, Resident; Scott Henkels, Vice Chair; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant

Remote Attendees: Betsey Ritter, Resident, Grant Ritter, Resident; Sarah Pfeiffer, Clerk

Public Hearing – Aldrich Farm Road

Kevin Gish called the hearing to order at 6:35PM.

Kevin Gish noted that tonight is a hearing, and this is a quasi-judicial hearing. Kevin noted that if there are any conflicts of interest on the Selectboard, it would be important to state those and recuse oneself from the decisions.

Additionally, Kevin noted there can be no ex-parte communications between the Selectboard and petitioners.

Kevin Gish indicated that all landowner or petitioner questions should be directed to Selectboard Assistant.

Kevin noted that this is a process that none of the Selectboard members have been through.

Kevin Gish asked for clarity as to what the petitioners are requesting.

Lee Simek noted that she is hoping the road would be plowed and maintained by the Town.

Kevin Gish asked if any of the participants had read the Highway Policy.

Nicola Shipman provided the Class 3 and Class 4 definitions.

Scott Henkels noted that in the Highway Policy that the Town is not responsible for plowing Class 4 highways.

Lee Simek said she felt that the Town Highway would be a Class 3 road.

Betsy Ritter noted that the rainstorms do cause issues with the road conditions, particularly at the end of the road near the intersection of Route 132 and road material is deposited on one of the properties.

Betsy Ritter maintains a right of way through the VAST network from Downer Forest to Aldrich Farm Road.

Betsey Ritter said they maintain the “Wood” road.

Kevin Gish asked if Aldrich Farm Road is part of the VAST Trail.

Lee Simek and Betsey Ritter noted that the road is not part of the VAST Trail, but rather the private property owners allow for snowmobile travel through their property.

Grant Ritter noted that whether they asked for a Class 3 or Class 4 road would depend on the cost of bringing the road up to Class 3 standard might be too expensive.

Lee Simek noted that the property owners have increased culverts since the road was originally built.

Nicola Shipman confirmed that Muir Road and Cowslip Road are Class 3 roads.

Kevin Gish asked about the water issues at the end of Aldrich Farm Road.

Lee Simek said she did not understand the reason the road would be washing out at the end.

Betsey Ritter noted that the water issues affect Sari Galanes' property and that she is concerned road material is running down the road. Betsey stated the ditches and culverts do not seem to be able to manage the volume of water.

Grant Ritter said the road needs to be raised and improved as well as culverts need to be improved.

Scott Henkels said he was not sure how many properties are served by Aldrich Farm Road currently.

Betsey Ritter noted that five properties exist, but only four are developed. There are five full time residents and three children, two are part time and one is full time. There are no children currently taking the school bus.

Kevin Gish asked if this were to become a Town road, there would need to be a turnaround big enough for a school bus and a grader, for example.

Kevin Gish asked if the road had been surveyed.

Lee Simek believes there is a survey for the road.

Nicola Shipman noted that the road is built into property surveys and deed descriptions.

Scott Henkels noted that the parcels on Aldrich Farm Road show the centerline of the road as a property boundary.

Kevin Gish asked if the landowners understood that the Town Highway right-of-way would need to be 50ft and the road would need to be 16ft with two feet of shoulder on either side.

Kevin Gish asked if there were any records of how the road was built.

Lee Simek responded that she only has what was given in the deed.

Kevin noted it would be helpful to understand how the road was built, and core samples would help determine the road structure.

Kevin Gish asked if there could be an understanding of the grade of the roads, as Class 3 roads should not have a grade greater than 10%, and the Town would rather see the road corrected to see the appropriate grade.

Kevin Gish asked if there are any bridges.

Lee Simek said there are no bridges.

Kevin Gish noted that if this were to become a town road, then each private driveway would be joining a Town Road and there would be requirements for those curb cuts and would need to meet the Town Highway policy for access.

Kevin Gish asked if there would be any steep drops, and if there would be the need for any guard rails.

Betsey asked if there is any opportunity for the Town to receive any funding to do upgrades. She is wondering if there is any grant funding for this kind of project.

Kevin Gish said there is grant funding available for Class 3 roads but only for those roads that are already under the umbrella of the Town.

Kevin Gish asked if there is an agreement for maintaining the road.

The property owners do not have a formal written agreement for road maintenance.

Lee Simek noted there is no underground power line that she knows of.

Kevin Gish asked the total length of the road.

Betsey Ritter noted that the road is about 0.4 miles long and her driveway is not part of the road.

Kevin Gish asked if the property owners would be willing to get bids to understand the costs of bringing the road to town highway standard.

Betsey Ritter exited the meeting at 7:26PM.

Kevin Gish made a motion to adjourn the public hearing until the site visit on June 11th at 7:30PM meeting at the intersection of Route 132 and Aldrich Farm Road. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

