

Road Reclassification Hearing

September 21, 2022

Selectboard Present: Greg Meulemans (chair), Andy Coyne (vice-chair), Tom Tolbert, Jessica Pollack and Kate Ullman

Public Present: Charlie Peck, John Beagan, Patrick McQuillan, Karen Ameden, Dave Marx, Heidi Pancake, Tim Morton (Forest, Parks & Recreation) and Paul Fraser

Greg called the hearing to order at 7:05 p.m. The hearing was recorded electronically and the audio recording is available from the Town Clerk.

Greg read the Notice of Hearing (see attached)

Greg swore in Charlie Peck, Karen Ameden, Tim Morton, Heidi Pancake, Dave Marx, and John Beagan, each affirmed that they would testify truthfully, effective throughout the meeting.

Charlie Peck is the designated representative from the Planning Commission. He introduced a copy of the Planning Commission's Report and Recommendation and a copy of a letter to the Selectboard from Rebecca Washburn of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR). He also stated that he had spoken with a representative of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which owns land that LT 11 passes through. TNC and the Peck family are concerned that, if LT 10 is blocked to motor vehicle use, off-road vehicles currently using LT 10 will attempt to drive over LT 11 because it shows up on available maps as connecting to West Windham Road with Turkey Mountain Road. Charlie reminded the Selectboard that the JPC recommendation includes a recommendation that the Selectboard authorize the penting of LT 11 and prohibit public motor vehicle use on that legal trail, and LT 25 in South Windham. This is a separate process and Charlie asked the board to address this issue as soon as possible.

Legal Trail 10 (LT 10) and segment of Turkey Mountain Road (TH 20)

Karen Ameden spoke for the Historical Foundation: they support keeping town trails and roads open for public access for many different reasons.

Tim Morton stated that represents Forest, Parks and Recreation (FPR). The State Park in Jamaica is in his jurisdiction. He introduced FPR's written comments concerning the proposed discontinuance of LT 10 and the segment of TH 20 that is entirely within state land. Their general guidance is to keep roads open for public access. He went on to say that LT 10 has been undermaintained and is unsafe because of erosion. This has caused damage to state land, but

FPR is not authorized to repair LT 10 because it is town property. He stated that if the trail was discontinued, they would allow public access for hiking. He stated that future use as a designated bicycle trail is likely to be permitted, if the erosion is successfully dealt with but FPR cannot guarantee this. He also stated that the class 3 road that provides access to the Park has been heavily damaged, is unsafe, and does not meet minimum state standards for class 3 roads. He requested that the town repair this road segment to minimum standards as soon as possible.

Heidi Pancake, a resident, and chairperson of Jamaica Area Mountain Bike Alliance (JAMBA), encouraged the town to keep public access, discontinuing would cause more fragmentation for bikers. She asked why not make it a pent road, to keep access?

Dave Marx of JAMBA, asked if there is anything the state can offer if the town decides not to discontinue?

Tim Morton replied with: expertise, layout, co-signing a grant application and they have provided culverts in the past.

John Beagan gave testimony of a neighbor that had ridden horses on LT 10. Last summer, the horse tripped on a rock, and she fell off and broke her leg. He stated that LT 10 is unsafe for horseback riding. He does hope bicycles would still be able to use the trail.

Blake Road (TH 27)

Blake Road is currently a class 3 highway and is in the parcel owned by the Green Mountain National Forest. It has not been plowed or maintained in years. If it is discontinued, public access for hiking would be permitted, but motor vehicle access might be regulated or prohibited.

Dave Marx asked why not reclassify it to class 4?

There is an expense with maintaining any road. The Green Mountain National Forest has the necessary personnel, experience, and funding to maintain roads and trails in the National Forest Land. The Planning Commission feels that we should try and save as many public trails as possible. If Blake Road is discontinued, it would be transferred from town ownership to the United States and would still have public access.

Hollow Road (TH 54)

Hollow Road is a short class 3 road segment extending off of the lower part of Dalewood. It is very overgrown. Why not make it into a legal trail, someone asked. The Planning Commission recommended discontinuing this as a public highway and designating the right-of-way as a legal trail.

Henderson Road (TH 42)

The Planning Commission has recommended that the section of Henderson Road from the Teacher Road intersection to the Craven Road intersection be reclassified from class 3 to class 4. This segment of the road has not been plowed for many years. There are no residents in this section of the road, it is currently rough but passable in the summer.

Terri spoke with Jim Deely, who owns on both sides of the road portion that would be reclassified, and he strongly supports reclassifying this section to class 4.

There were no decisions made, the Selectboard will discuss the proposed actions and make a decision in the future.

Hearing concluded at 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by Sara Wiswall

TOWN OF JAMAICA
NOTICE OF HEARING
RE: RECLASSIFICATION AND DISCONTINUANCE OF HIGHWAYS AND LEGAL
TRAIL IN JAMAICA, VERMONT

Pursuant to the provisions of 19 V.S.A. § 708(a), the Selectboard of the Town of Jamaica, Vermont, on its own motion, hereby gives notice, in accordance with 19 V.S.A. § 709, that said Selectboard will meet at the state parking lot at the end of the maintained portion of Turkey Mountain road at 9:30 a.m. on Sept. 21, 2022, conduct a site visit to the affected portion of Turkey Mountain road and Legal Trail 101, and then reconvene at the intersection of Henderson and Craven roads at 11:00 a.m. to conduct a site visit of the affected portion of Henderson road. Said Selectboard will then reconvene at the Town Office at 1 p.m., and conduct site visits to Hollow road and Blake road. Said Selectboard will then reconvene at the Town Office at 7 p.m. for the purpose of receiving testimony and hearing all persons interested in the matter of whether the Town of Jamaica shall reclassify or discontinue the following highways and legal trail.

Discontinue the segment of Turkey Mountain road (TH 20), a class 3 highway, lying entirely within lands owned by the state of Vermont (Jamaica State Park).

Discontinue all of Legal Trail #10 (LT 10), a legal trail lying entirely within lands owned by the state of Vermont (Hamilton Falls Natural Area).

Discontinue all of Blake road (TH 27), a class 3 highway, lying principally within lands owned by the United States (Green Mountain National Forest).

Discontinue as a public highway and designate as a Legal Trail all of Hollow road (TH 54), a class 3 highway.

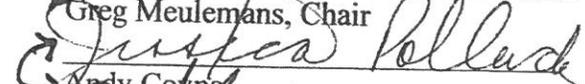
Reclassify the segment of Henderson road (TH 42) lying between the intersection of Teacher road (TH 39) and Craven road (TH 49), a class 3 highway, to class 4.

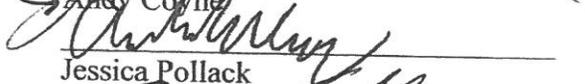
Persons desiring additional information about these proceedings, the location of the affected highways and trail, or specific times of site visits at a particular road may contact the Jamaica Town Clerk.

If, after examination of the premises and hearing any and all interested persons, the Selectboard determines that the public good, necessity and convenience of the inhabitants of the Town of Jamaica require that said highways and trail be reclassified or discontinued, it will be so ordered, and the Selectboard will determine, in accordance with the provisions of 19 V.S.A. § 712, the amount of damages, if any, to be paid to any person through whose land said highways pass.

Dated at Jamaica, Vermont, this 25 day of July, 2022.



Greg Meulemans, Chair


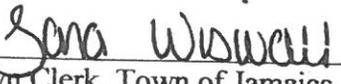
Andy Coyne


Jessica Pollack


Tom Tolbert


Kate Ullman

Attest: A True Record



Town Clerk, Town of Jamaica