

ATV/UTV Informational Meeting  
February 23, 2019

Clint called the meeting to order at 2:44PM

Attending: T. J. Tanner; Brenda Tanner; Bob Tanner; Nate Diebolt; Letissia Diebolt; Jim Masure; Carol Brouha; Glen Stine; Tom Featheringham; Danny Hole; Cheryl Garcia; Jeannie Powers; Adam Carleton; Maurice Guertin; Lesa Johnson; David Johnson; Richard Johnson; John Melle; Carrie Melle; Melanie Miller Hansen; Debra Jackson; Rick Jackson; Karen Degrennia; Darrell Degreenia; Sheldon Bunnell; Scott Spencer; Mark Hall; Lucien Belanger; Lisa Norris; Jeffrey N. Norris; Jeffery A. Norris; Danielle Fortin; Denis Royer; Joe Solinsky; Dianna Simpson; Tim Simpson; Paul Brouha; Shawn Waldron; Clint Gray; Danny Hale (VASA); Mary Gray

History: Back in October 2018 the Select Board asked for volunteers from the community to look at the ATV/UTV Ordinance for the town. The committee had various towns both having roads open and those having roads closed. Gathered information on the economic impacts, residents/non-residence opinions; what was working and not working; why, if they opened or did not open their roads/trails what were the reasons. The law enforcement agencies were invited to see how they handle ATV's on roads and trails; what impact they felt was occurring. They invited Danny Hale VASA Executive Director to get information from him on the VASA and what is anything he could offer the committee on opening or closing roads/trails. The committee did find that Danny Hale, VASA was not in favor of opening all the roads in any towns.

The Select Board wanted recommendations to the Ordinances either updating; closing roads/trails or opening roads/trails. The committee was to bring all recommendations to the Select Board for their authority to open or close roads or change the current ordinance or not change since the Select Board are the only ones that can open/close roads/trails in the town.

The committee found out that the current Ordinance may have been done legally or not, and following state statutes, etc. Clint wanted to make sure that it was understood, that the committee can only recommend, the Select Board are the only ones that can decide of opening or closing roads.

If people are interested in reviewing the Ordinances, they can be obtained at the Town Clerk's office.

This committee is willing to take on this assignment through the next year and what they will do is work on the ordinance and looking at various aspects of the town to make it better and with the least interference and will work with land owners. This committee will be coming to you to help this committee with ideas.

Danny Hale from VASA: stated they have an MOU with Fish & Wildlife and Sheriff's departments. Can provide funding to the towns. He wants to answer questions from the audience.

Carol Brouha: If there were a washout how quickly could the public be notified? Dany stated: It is no different than a motor vehicle with no more liability. Someone from the community will let VASA know and with social media that is the fastest tool to get the word out that the trails are closed.

Danny said, this is about the community of Sutton to gain access to the trail system, if they want it. Sheffield and Wheelock are connected to the Orleans county trails.

Newark is looking at an Ordinance for ATV's. Sutton should not be looking at the east side of town since Wetmore and Burke are closed to ATV's. Newark maybe looking at opening so if someone wanted to go to Island Pond they would be able to do so, presently there is not network of trails to do this.

Orleans County is almost all open.

Melony Hanson- She has concerns that the snowmobilers have torn down her fences and her livestock gets out, where is the liability when a trail goes through the property. Danny stated that the land owner is not liable unless they somehow caused the incident or charges a fee to go through their property. She asked what happens if they render first aid assistance. The good Samaritan law would prevail.

Danny said that when VASA gets involved, it will only get better.

Danny went to the legislature last year that would have helped with issues and to toughen up the rules, but the legislature did not pass this. Danny plans on working again next year on this.

Danny said that VASA provides a free home study course. ASI is the only hands on course now. Children from the ages of 12 to 18 years of age must have a certificate from VASA. Helmets are required.

Deb Jackson: why compare VAST to, VASA still needing insurance etc.? On private property VASA trails coexist with VAST. The local clubs work with local landowners.

Glen Stine: enforcement just on their trails or the town. VASA doesn't pay for general law enforcement VASA provides resources for the community for VASA enforcement. VASA says The town clerk's office will receive complaints of incidents, times, places and description information, this is handed to the sheriff. Glen said there is a problem with kids speeding by. He would put out a camera to catch them. Danny said, any information that you can obtain would help in enforcement.

Pent roads cannot be locked.

VASA produce a trail map every year for the riders. ATV's are very gray area for rules. All VASA does is getting from a center of a town to a VASA trails West. The Select Board will determine open or closed roads/trails in a town. VASA does not encourage opening all road in any town, but that is up the Select Board.

1. In order to get any type of funding from VASA, the road/trail must be on a VASA map. Law enforcement requires a red plate and insurance.

Jim Masure. Center of town intersection is bad for vehicles, he can't imagine having ATV's in that area.

VASA states that the town of Sutton should to come up with a reasonable solution keeping in mind safety for all.

Jim Masure. This could be a heated discussion. Last year there was a special town meeting vote that ended up not being open to ATV's. That night about midnight, someone was doing donuts around his mailbox he felt because he was voicing his opinion this was retaliation. The committee stated that they do not condone any behavior of this nature.

Danny from VASA stated this committee is taking the right approach for recommending ATV trail/roads open and VASA is here for support.

Dennis Royer, do you notice a decline in problems when an area is open?. Yes, law enforcement is only an education tool. People learn there are no solid rules now. If the roads/trails were opened, there is more involvement with VASA and law enforcement.

Jim Masure: people in towns like the quiet and you set up a trail that goes by them. There is only one way is to allow the use. This is about Sutton residents leaving Sutton. If it's bad, then stop it. Clint said that if there is a problem the people can bring it to the committee.

Maurice Guertin: He was dead against ATV's until VASA showed up there are more people that goes by his house that he pays no attention to and doesn't notice it. It is the one person that goes by 60 miles an hour, he is against. He has changed his mind and thinks that it will only get better. He should have called the town clerk and he should have followed them home to talk to the adult to deal with this and explain the severity especially since they are not wearing helmets. Danny said, he used to have helmets in his truck and when he saw a youth without, he would give him one for safety.

Letter here from Garrett Keizer was read.

Shawn, the goal is to recommend ATV access and build a tentative trail with the least impact. Mark Hall, Jeanne Powers and Adam Carleton are working on the roads/map trail connection.

Sheldon Bunnell: There was a map that was looked at last Wednesday night. Mark said there were some flaws in the map. Question: have you figured out how many people have ATV's just on the top of their head. Shawn doesn't have an ATV they are doing all this work on trails, let the committee know if someone has ATV's for next year. Sheldon said he lives on the east side and can't connect to any trails legally.

Tom Featheringham: Complaints went down by 90 % when Barton opened their roads. Tom feels the letter he sent to the Select Board was explanation enough. Tom mentioned gating a pent road and Clint said that pent roads are not to be locked.

Dennis Royer: intersection at the center of town the only way to get to the east side is through this section.

Jim Masure: people that abide by the rules will get by safely, but the ones that don't abide by the rules will get hurt.

Clint thanks everyone for coming.

Meeting adjourned at 4:25PM

Submitted  
Mary Gray