

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
PUBLIC HEARING – CANDIA ROAD/ONE-WAY  
December 14, 2009  
MINUTES**

**7:00pm** Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Stephen R. Barry called the Meeting to Order.

Present: Stephen R. Barry, Chairman; R. Andrew Robertson, Vice Chairman; John Reagan, Walter C. Hooker and Alan E. O’Neal, Selectmen

Also Present: Planning Board Chairman, Frederick McGarry; Planning Board Vice Chairman, Kate Hartnett; Planning Board Member, Fran Menard; Highway Agent, Alex Cote; Chief of Police, Michael Greeley; Fire Chief, Mark Tibbetts

Chairman Barry convened the Public Hearing, read the Public Notice.

*The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Deerfield has scheduled a Public Hearing for Monday, December 14, 2009, at 7pm, at the G. B. White Building, Selectmen’s Conference Room, 8 Raymond Road, Deerfield NH 03037, to seek input on a proposed improvement to a portion of Candia Road (900 linear feet from approximately 67 Candia Road to the end near 91 Candia Road). This portion of Candia Road is a gravel road and designated as a Scenic Road. If approved, the proposal will change the status of that portion of Candia Road to one-way for a period of approximately November 15<sup>th</sup> to April 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.*

The places where the notices were posted, including the Town Website and The Forum, were announced along with the newspapers where the notice was published. Notices were sent to the abutters.

Because this project began with the Planning Board and was then passed on to the Board of Selectmen to hold the Public Hearing, Chairman Barry asked that Fred McGarry, Chairman of the Planning Board, give the opening remarks.

Mr. McGarry began by saying that, as mentioned in the notice, Candia Road is a Scenic Road and as such requires the Planning Board to have a Hearing in order for the Highway Agent to cut trees or remove stonewalls along the roadway. The Highway Agent proposed substantial improvements. Widening on the westerly side of the road, downhill side, which if done would result in removal of all but one tree in that 900 ft. area. Fill would be almost to the top of the stonewall on the westerly side and in some areas almost burying the stonewall.

The abutters and members of the Planning Board subsequently met and talked about alternatives. Highway Agent, Alex Cote, explained to the Planning Board that during the winter months snowplowing narrows the roadway to not much more than a lane and a half. The possibility of making the roadway a one-way came about.

The question of the estimated cost for the work was deferred to Alex Cote, Highway Agent. Mr. Cote said the cost was approximately \$10,000 to widen the road. There would be substantial savings in road reconstruction costs if the road was made a one-way road, from November to April, going towards Middle Road.

It is with the recommendation of the Planning Board and Highway Agent that brings this proposal to the residents. Chairman Barry opened the meeting for public comment.

Rob Mathews found this proposal worth a try as he was in favor of saving the large oak trees.

Harriet Cady asked how many households were affected coming off of the Route 107 side. Mr. Cote replied one or two households. Mrs. Cady asked for clarification on the one-way status if it was down the hill towards Middle Road. It was explained that Candia Road would be one-way towards Middle Road beginning after Peterson Road and stopping just before Middle Road. The intersection of Cole Road as it turns by the Mathews residence was not affected.

A resident voiced concern with safety issues. Chairman Barry stated that the roadway is not wide enough in the summer and in the winter very narrow which is the reason for widening Candia Road. Plowing could then be accomplished easily. The resident thought it might be easier for the people to just go another way. Rob Mathews added going down the hill is much easier than trying to plow uphill.

Lara Hardcastle didn't think the residents on Candia Road should be expected to go around and having the traffic coming to town take a different route could have an implication. She also thought that enforcement may be difficult and even not adhered to. Chairman Barry did not see the change affecting veteran residents as they typically stay away from Candia Road in the winter and during mud season. For the one or two residents at the Middle road end, they would come out of Candia Road and make a left hand turn towards Route 43.

Lara Hardcastle continued indicating that during the most severe winter weather the road remained a two-lane road and wondered what changed that caused the plowing to be a concern last year. Chairman Barry replied the Highway Agent said the road is too narrow to keep it plowed correctly and offered, for safety reasons, that the trees should be cut to allow the road to be widened. Because the Town voted Candia Road a Scenic Road, the Planning Board was involved in the process, held a Public Hearing and learned that perhaps the trees did not need to be cut and making the road a one-way in the winter would solve the problem.

Lara Hardcastle purchased the home on Candia Road and loves it there. The oak trees were there last year during the winter and the road remained passable. Chairman Barry did not agree with the word passable. Lara Hardwick offered another choice of words and called the road "challenging" in the winter months.

Chairman Barry reminded those present the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen found this situation to present a safety issue.

Peter Menard remarked there could be issues with people having to turn around and reverse directions coming off the Middle Road end of Candia Road.

A resident commented that, during the winter, travelers on Candia Road act with courtesy and there is never a problem with passing by a vehicle. Why go to one lane when there are no concerns with safety issues for those traveling the road on a regular basis?

Chairman Barry explained that when the Board of Selectmen is made aware of safety issues, by the Highway Agent, the Board is forced to look at the situation and do something to correct it. The Highway Agent and the Planning Board have worked on this for six months to see what could be done.

A resident spoke of the character of Candia Road/Middle Road and the appeal those roads have to the residents who live there.

There was some discussion of lowering the road which was not thought possible. A traffic study was mentioned but it was learned traffic counters cannot be used on gravel roads. The only other method for counting traffic would be to place a Police Cruiser on the road to count cars.

It was understood that if this was done then no other type of improvement would be needed to widen the road. Another resident could see the safety concerns. Chairman Barry added that sometimes larger trucks travel the road. Joel Hughes, Police Officer, spoke of what happens when the Police Department responds to a call. The road is used to respond quickly to the other side of Town but not during winter weather. If the choice is made to go that way, in the winter, the Officers are taking a chance. Going around adds time.

Lara Hardcastle asked if posting the road designated "for residents only" would be of any value. Chairman Barry explained the road is a town-maintained road and that could not be done.

Fran Menard, Planning Board Member, said the thoughts were about the residents, safety, and the ability to have residents and emergency vehicles able to travel the road as it is a public road.

Chairman Barry requested a show of hands of who favored the one-way. Five were in favor and one opposed.

Selectman O'Neal spoke about snow removal and the dangers of the road being skinny and dangerous for an on-coming vehicle. Mr. Cote informed everyone that part of the issue is the development of lots on a subdivision further down the road.

Selectman O'Neal questioned having people traveling down from Cole Road and having the one-way begin at Peterson Road. If someone did not want to continue, they would have to turn around and go back up the hill. There would also be an issue on the other end coming off Middle Road. Mr. Cote indicated there would be signs placed in the area but there was no specific plan. Chairman Barry asked Mr. Cote how soon, after the change was enacted, would the signs be in place. Mr. Cote replied the signs would be ordered once the decision is made.

Selectman O'Neal asked how the Police Department would enforce the change. Chairman Barry thought this could be accomplished by the Police Department making sure no one goes the wrong way.

Mr. Cote said the general consensus of the group was they didn't want to put anyone out more than they had to which led to the specific 900 feet of roadway chosen.

A resident questioned if the road would then just be plowed in one direction. Mr. Cote answered yes; it would be a one-lane road and plowed as such.

Rob Mathews wanted to know what would be in place for signage at the bottom of the hill. Chairman Barry envisioned a sign "one-way do not enter".

Selectman Hooker saw this as a way to mitigate the potential for accidents and having emergency vehicles not be able to get through in the winter months. With the topography the way it is, going down hill was favored and made it a quicker way for residents and emergency vehicles to get to the other side of Town instead of going around.

A resident could see many people turning around in the driveway of the residence on the Middle Road end of Candia Road. The posting of these signs would need to be done in such a way that it is clear it is a one-way. Vice Chairman Robertson pointed out there would have to be sufficient warning coming from the main roads to the Town roads to Candia Road. The road requires careful driving as it is gravel and narrow.

Selectman Hooker mentioned that one of the reasons for the decision to stop at 91 Candia Road is that there are many houses on Middle Road and for those residents to go around would be an inconvenience.

Peter Menard mentioned the Pat Cassier Conservation Easement as a possible turning point. Mr. Cote said there is not enough area to turn around at that location. Mr. McGarry said the Planning Board looked at the narrowest portion of the road in an attempt to inconvenience the fewest number of people possible.

Selectman O'Neal was concerned with vehicles constantly turning around in one resident's driveway.

Officer Joel Hughes saw enforcement of the one-way as a nightmare. The road is avoided in the winter months for the most part and while it is a good idea, and logical, he did not see how it could be implemented.

Maureen Mann spoke to giving dispensation to the first four or five houses off of Middle Road. Legally saying it is one-way after that would dictate that it has to be posted that the travelers would then be going the wrong way.

Residents discussed plowing the road downhill and thought it would work if no one comes the other way and that safety issues were created by plowing and vehicles passing by the plow truck. Plowing up the hill could get the truck stuck.

**7:33pm** Seeing no further comments, at this time, Chairman Barry closed the Public Hearing.

*Attendees:* 16 Residents