

Wallingford Selectboard Mears Meadow Trail Site Visit and Public Hearing
Minutes
June 14, 2017

Selectboard Members Present at the Site Visit: Bill Brooks, Gary Fredette, Rose Regula, Mark Tessier, and Nelson Tift.

Board members met at Mears Meadow Trail on June 14, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. to view property lines and a proposed starting point for discontinuance of Mears Meadow Trail on the Dean McGee property.

Following the site visit, the Selectboard and members of the public gathered at Wallingford Town Hall for a hearing, which began at 6:40 p.m.

Selectboard Members Present at the Public Hearing: Bill Brooks, Gary Fredette, Rose Regula, Mark Tessier, and Nelson Tift.

Others Present: Sandi Switzer, Dean McGee, Jeanette Wolff, Jerry Wolff, Mary Blake, Daniel Blake, Janet Kennedy-Farmer, Derek Farmer and C.J. Abatiell via speakerphone.

Chairman Brooks called the public hearing to order and read the Discontinuance Notice. He then swore-in all witnesses intending to offer testimony.

Chairman Brooks opened the floor to Mr. McGee to present his discontinuance request. Mr. McGee explained Mears Meadow Trail enters his property and ends on his property and does not access any other trails. He asked the town to discontinue the portion of the trail on his land. He said he could not control members of the public who veer off the trail and onto his property.

B. Brooks read Mr. McGee's letter requesting discontinuance of the trail at a point 2164 feet from Bear Mountain Road where it enters the McGee property.

Jeanette Wolff said she had no objection as long as she has access and a right-of-way to her property adjacent to the McGee land. She said it was her understanding the location indicated by Mr. McGee to install a gate was beyond her property.

Daniel Blake noted the general public does not utilize Mears Meadow Trail. He said only abutting and nearby landowners access the trail.

Mary Blake said she has never seen anyone other than nearby landowners use the trail.

Mr. Blake said it was a recreational road used by neighbors in a respectful manner. He noted he used the trail to access the Abatiell property on occasion and he indicated he operated a four wheel drive on the trail from time to time.

Janet Kennedy-Farmer said her and her husband, Derek Farmer, were gatekeepers of Mears Meadow Trail and never had any issues with public use of the trail. She noted Mears Meadow had historical significance and was once part of the Long Trail. She suggested Mr. McGee could install No Trespass signs on his property while keeping the trail open.

Derek Farmer said his family lived on property off Mears Meadow Trail year round and utilized the trail often. He said he had never heard of any issues with public use of the trail.

C.J. Abatiell joined the conversation via speakerphone. He suggested putting a gate at the bottom of Mears Meadow Trail and providing keys to all abutting landowners. He noted the access to his property was off Abatiell Road and therefore discontinuing the trail would not impact him. He suggested discontinuing the trail would only affect neighbors since he doubted the general public was even aware of its existence.

Dean McGee noted the trail ends inside his property without any indication to citizens as to the boundaries. He said it was his intent to protect his land for future generations of his family.

After further discussion, the hearing was closed at 7:45 p.m.

The board entered deliberative session at 7:46 p.m. The deliberative session was recessed at 8:22 p.m. with the intention of reconvening at a future date.

Date Approved:

Sandi Switzer, Town Administrator