

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 4, 2024

At the Selectmen's Meeting held on Monday, March 4, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. the following Board members were in attendance: Shawn White, Abbey Querrard, John Tholl.

Chairman Tholl called the meeting to order at 6:30.

Abbey Querrard led the pledge of allegiance.

The following people were in attendance: Tina Wright, Town Clerk; Scott Burns; Maryann and James Dyckman, Jim McMahon.

Old Business:

New Business:

MaryAnn & James Dyckman – Re: Partridge Lane & McMahon Drive

MaryAnn and James Dyckman attended the meeting to discuss the poor condition of Partridge Lane and McMahon Drive. They live at 11 McMahon Drive. They have some big issues and problems. The Town crew did come by and grade the road today. It was nothing but a waste of time and money, and it needs to be regraded again. They understand that paving the road is completely out of the question. It is reasonable to request stones be put down to bind everything together, and they think that would help a great deal. On their property they have a lot on the corner of McMahon and Partridge and another on McMahon. There are two pipes coming onto the Partridge parcel and the pipes go under the road. Something desperately has to be done there. It is flooding their property out. The water just flows and it dumps there. They didn't put in any type of drainage ditch. As a result, the water takes the path of least resistance. It is creating a haven for mosquitos during mosquito season and also undermining the trees on that land so those trees can topple at any time. It is rendering that parcel useless. They could not sell that parcel because it is nothing but swamp. They feel the Town needs to come back and finish with putting additional materials down and putting in a drainage ditch. If they want to sell that, they couldn't because it is a swamp. They feel the Town should continue a ditch with pipe on their side and cover it over. They feel the water needs to be diverted on the other side of Partridge Lane to send that water into the pond. The job was never finished as far as they can see. The one on McMahon is the same thing. The property owners across the street their water comes through and dumps on their property. They have done a little research, and if you are going to drain on somebody's property you have to provide somewhere for it to go. They would like this issue to be addressed and taken care of. They did have Mr. Larson come out to address their concerns. They were not very happy. He told them the town would do nothing and recommended that they contact the tax collector and see if they could get that named as a wet zone so it would reduce their property taxes. He also suggested that they could plant willow

trees and the best one of all was that they could put in a retainage pond all at their expense. He was not interested in hearing anything they had for suggestions so she dropped it because she was so upset. They understand it is hard to get anything done this time of year. They currently have 12-inch ruts in the road and their car just fishtails. They don't want to end up off the road. When they called last week, they were told at that time they only had four men and were busy taking down trees. When they are done with that, they will come and put some stone down. They came today and put stone down, but they have no idea where they put it. Did not fill in any ruts. They are assuming he knew they were coming in tonight, and low and behold they came and graded their road today. They are not accusing anybody of anything. Something has to be done. This whole mess has made their property invaluable. No one is going to want to buy that parcel. The main parcel is being flooded from McMahon Drive. When you turn in off Partridge Lane, there is always a big puddle there—something has to be done about that and it makes the road muddy. Their car was fishtailing coming down tonight.

The Board must have some type of power to see what can be done. They don't want the road just graded with a band-aid. They want it done right and complete. John asked if they knew when the pipes were put in. She is assuming Partridge was at one time a paved road. Jim McMahon said it remained paved until the highway department came in many years ago and dumped gravel on top of the pavement. They would be happy to walk the property with them to see the swamp they have. Only way the town can drain water is to make sure the water has somewhere to go. She has got a flood coming through the pipes. Can the Board do anything to help them? They pay their full taxes. Everyone pays their full fair share of taxes. They get very little for their tax money—don't have children in the schools, getting roads and things fixed, they hit a brick wall every time they call. They know the police are there and they would come out. She never sees them. The Fire Department they had to call them once for the paramedics and ambulance then they got a bill for over \$700 for it. If there is a fire, they would have to bring in tank trucks. They have their own well water and their own sewer. They feel that this is something the Town can help them out with because it was the town's own doing over time.

Shawn White explained that if the Town does anything to the road and pipes to change how the water flows, the landowner on that side of the red house has to approve it. The pipes on the road would have been put in when the road was originally put in. Jim McMahon said as far as Partridge Lane, it was at one time part of Route 116. That is when the new road was built and that was a paved road with culverts already in there. Shawn said when a road is built and culverts put in, the Town has to go to the landowners and get easements to dump water on their land. Many, many years ago we don't know if that was done or not. Those culverts have been there for many, many years. Town would have to dig a larger ditch and get landowner permission. Shawn said we would also need to look at the elevation. Shawn said another problem is that McMahon Drive probably has not been ditched since 2010 or had any work or seen any gravel since that time. Shawn said that road is ultimately a driveway and the plows have difficulty turning around there.

Jim McMahon asked why is out of the question to pave Partridge Lane? Shawn said the cost to pave roads is astronomical. Shawn said the town has 10 miles of gravel roads and other sections are paved roads. We can't even afford to maintain the roads we have. There is quite a difference between gravel and paved. The town is not in the position to pave a gravel road. McMahon is now a gravel road. Old East Road, South Whitefield Road, Kimball Hill Road used to be paved and the town couldn't afford to pave those. Shawn said we have a lot of roads with no base on the road. The only way to fix those correctly is to take out 4-feet of material and put good material down, and about 1 mile of road would cost \$300,000. The Town can't afford to spend \$300,000 to \$400,000 to pave those roads that don't have as much traffic as some of the other roads. Jim said currently anyone who lives on those roads requires four wheel drive vehicles this time of year. Shawn said we have South Whitefield, Old East Road, and Hall Road that see almost 50x to 100x the amount of traffic that McMahon has. Put money in where there is more traffic. The town does not have the ability pave every gravel road in the town. The roads need to have a good base under them before they are paved. What would be the solution to their problem? Shawn said that McMahon Drive needs attention to the end of it. Need to find out the right of way. Trees on the side of the road need to be removed. Shawn is not disagreeing. That road does need maintenance, but it is not going to see pavement type of maintenance. Jim McMahon said it is a little contrary to the conversation he had with Mr. Larson a couple of years ago, where Mr. Larson told Jim there was going to be matching funds and the town was going to get matching money to pave roads. Jim said it is good to hear some honesty that it is not going to happen. Shawn said the Board appreciates their frustration. Shawn said this spring is terrible for every town around us. The town crew is doing what they can do, and they keep us informed. Shawn spoke with the foreman today of the highway department about them coming in tonight and their concerns. The day they were cutting trees was the day of the storm last week when many trees were down blocking roads and taking down electrical wires. Maryanne Dyckman said they don't care about those other gravel roads—they care about McMahon Drive and Partridge Lane. Maryanne Dyckman said that it seems on certain things the Town can find money to do, for example the Town found the money to take over a sewer system and maintenance of that sewer system on North Woods Drive. That was maintained and owned by the Homeowner's association then they came before the Board to ask the Town to take it over and the Board approved it. The Board said that is not accurate—there is an article on the town warrant for the voters to vote on whether they want to take this sewer system over.

Maryanne Dyckman said they would like to get something in writing from the Board on what they intend to do to help them with the road situation. Shawn said he will come out and look at it. He said we can't make any promises it can be done this year, but there may be some things they can do this year. Gravel roads need gravel, and need maintenance and McMahon Drive needs maintenance. Need to find out the right-of-way. Need to make sure the roads are ditched. All this has to be done correctly. Maryanne Dyckman said just be honest with them—they can handle honesty, but the minute they feel they are trying to pull the wool over their eyes, they don't appreciate that. They asked if nothing can be done with the drainage running off on their

property, what are their chances of having their taxes lowered because it is useless. Shawn suggested they may want to speak with the Tax Collector. They don't want it declared wetlands because they may need to sell it some day.

Jim McMahon said the right of way for end of McMahon drive—he owns on both sides of that. Jim is more concerned with Partridge Lane. The base was there and gravel was put on top of that base and pavement that was there. He doesn't understand technically what would be involved maybe the pavement that was there has gone away. Partridge Lane confuses him, and he has wondered about it for years. Shawn wishes we would pave every road in this town. The honest truth is it is not going to happen. Old East Road was a paved road so it is now a gravel road. We want to do it right, but can't afford it. The state goes out and puts a ½ inch of pavement and it is just a band aid. Shawn said he will come out within the next couple of weeks to look at it and see what can be. The Board can talk to see if we can at least get some gravel on McMahon and Partridge Lane and both those roads need to be ditched. Shawn will get together with Jim about the end of his road. Shawn said that the width of McMahon Drive is 20 feet, which really ties our hands on what can be done there. It is probably 16 feet wide from edge to edge. Does the town have authority to take more of it to make it be able to be maintained? When the town took it over, it should have been more than 20 feet. Shawn said the town would need to approach the property owners with a letter stating they would like to extend an easement and landowners would say yay or nay; trees need to be cut, drainage swales need to be done. Jim said he is fine to have that conversation. John Tholl said Shawn is not going to paint a rosy picture for them down the road if it is not realistic. Maryanne Dyckman said she feels she was sold a bill of goods by Mr. Larson and he did not tell her the truth. She was in a state of shock when he told her to plant willow trees and to put in a retainage pond. Shawn said the Board will see what we can do, but it is not going to happen overnight. Shawn will contact them to set up a time to meet.

Meet with Moderator Waystack & Tina Wright, Town Clerk, to review Town Meeting Warrant

This did not occur.

Approve February 26, 2024 Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Abbey Querrard to approve the February 26, 2024 Selectmen's Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Shawn White. All in favor, 3-0. Motion passes.

A motion was made by Shawn White to enter non-public session at 7:24 p.m. pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3, II (a)(b). The motion was seconded by Abbey Querrard. Roll call vote: Querrard: Yes; White: Yes; Tholl: Yes. Motion passes, 3-0. The board entered non-public session at 7:15 p.m.

The Board adjourned from non-public session at 7:50 p.m.

A motion was made by Shawn White and seconded by Abbey Querrard to seal the non-public session meeting minutes because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this Board. Roll call vote to seal the minutes: Tholl: Yes; Querrard: Yes; White: Yes. Motion passes, 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm