

OHRV Committee Meeting Minutes June 27th, 2023, 6:00 pm
Henniker Grange Building

- Members Present:
 - Chairman Jim Morse, Kris Blomback, Chief Matt French, Scott Dias, Leo Aucoin, Lori Hubbard, Beth Patenaude, Paul Sheppard, Ross Bennett, Kathy Anderson
- Members Absent:
 - Robert Pagano
- Recording Secretary:
 - Kathy Anderson
- Guests:
 - Keith & Nancy DeMoura (Western Ave, Henniker), Greg Marsh (Dodge Hill Rd, Henniker), Kirke Olson (Dodge Hill Rd, Henniker), Will Hubbard (Colleague Pond Rd, Henniker), Gannon Snow (Pine St, Contoocook), James Peters (Deering Rd, Deering), John & Darlene Grant (Longwoods Rd, Deering), Robert Warner (Sky Farm Rd, Deering), Joan O'Connor (Echo Lane, Henniker), Tom Patenaude (Pine Hill Rd, Henniker), Kenneth Murphy (Lincoln Circle, Hillsboro), Arty Mallett (Dodge Hill Rd, Henniker), Diane Kendall (Town Administrator, Antrim), Bill Marko (Evergreen Circle, Henniker), Mark & Ellen Chase Lucard (233 Ray Rd, Henniker), Dan & Lisa Philbrick (Dodge Hill Rd, Henniker), Ken Richard (Peasley Rd, Henniker), Riche Colcombe (Jones Rd, Hillsboro), Lynn & Eric Weiss (Harrisville), Elizabeth Butters (Dodge Hill Rd, Henniker), Tom Daly (Stratford), Cher Hammond (Dodge Hill Rd, Henniker)

I. Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairman Morse

- Pledge of Allegiance and Attendance

II. Public Comment

- Leo Aucoin (619 Gulf Rd) – would like to close road due to ATV noise. Feels there is an alternate trail to get from Craney to Flanders. Would like dirt part of Bear Hill closed, feels it's dangerous due to washboard issue and blind corner. Numerous motor vehicle accidents over the years. As Highway Superintendent, his opinion due to sun, it dries out, and not enough moisture to hold road together
- Chairman Morse asked Leo Aucoin if he would join the OHRV Committee at the front table. Leo declined, saying he would rather sit with the public, because he was there as a public member, not the OHRV Committee.
- Kirke Olson (1419 Dodge Hill Rd) – been at this address since 1993 when house was built; would like Dodge Hill Rd closed to ATV's. Screen porch is 100' from road
- Dan Philbrick (1451 Dodge Hill Rd) – been at this address since 1998. Would like Dodge Hill Rd closed to ATV's. Significant dust, especially on weekends. He sees a lot of speeding, but appreciates police efforts to monitor
- Leo Aucoin (619 Gulf Rd) – many minors on Gulf Rd, thinks about 50% on road are minors
- Elizabeth Butters (1456 Dodge Hill Rd) – has seen 8-10 year olds on ATV's on road
- Riche Colcombe (Hillsboro) – comment that cars and trucks cause a lot of dust
- Elizabeth Buttes (1456 Dodge Hill Rd) – she sees groups of ATV's, and feels they kick up a lot of dust
- Tom Daly(Stratford) – he is locally in Henniker frequently. Underage ride throughout the state of NH, and show a safety course card. Let's get the to the point, what is bringing out

all the residents tonight. Think about where the problem is coming from; think about the root cause vs closing roads

- Robert Warner (Deering) – owns a logging business; ATV's do much less dust than logging trucks. Are there options to pay more money to somehow fund more policing?
- Dan Philbrick (1451 Dodge Hill Rd) – I'm not against ATV's; It's a challenge on roads with dust. ATV's are designed for offroad use. I can hear them coming from Long Pond Rd
- Leo Aucoin (619 Gulf Rd) – does not think dust is the issue; feels it's a noise issue. He called Kevin Bronson from Fish & Game, and Kevin said he was policing roads. Leo feels tires are aggressive and tears up gravel. Said he calls police to say someone is racing around. It's very annoying
- Tom Daly (Stratford) – discussed Laconia and how the annual **motorcycle week** event helps the economy
- Dan Philbrick (1451 Dodge Hill Rd) – can hear ATV's coming 1 mile away... it's noise.
- Kirke Olson (1419 Dodge Hill Rd) – OHRV's use Dodge Hill Rd for trail to Bound Tree system. The owner closed T1 due to land deteriorating.
- Ellen Chase (233 Ray Rd) – maybe we need to all consider sharing resources and roads. A friend list in Colorado, and resources are shared with walking, OHRV vehicles and others. Does not feel Henniker is a good comparison to Laconia. Laconia is an event for 1-1.5 weeks. She feels she lives in a very pleasant scenic neighborhood
- Keith Demoura (Western Ave) – President of Contoocook Valley ATV Riders club. We want to work with residents. T1 was closed by the Kennedy's, the property wasn't deteriorating. ATV's bring money to local businesses. I have 8 signed statements from businesses, who are in support of ATV's driving to their businesses. There are options. One is to open more roads, so there is less traffic on roads such as Dodge Hill Rd
- Lisa Philbrick (1451 Dodge Hill Rd) – quality of living & life since 2000 is not good. 8:15 in the morning I can hear them coming from far away and they are in groups
- Darlene Grant (Deering) – I ride to Henniker on ATV's with friends and family. We purchase gas, we go to Daniel's to eat. Riding ATV's is a hobby and wonderful recreation.
- Joan O'Connor (Echo Lane) – live close to Hemlock Corner Rd, and it feels ATV's are playing games. Why don't we negotiate with land owners to move trails off roads? Feels there is inattentiveness, speed and noise.
- Kenneth Murphy (Hillsboro) – it's not correct to say knobby tires are the issue. Pickup trucks do most of the damage, not a short wheelbase like ATV's
- Elizabeth Butters (1456 Dodge Hill Rd) – motorcycles and trucks are on all roads in the country. ATV's are on limited roads. I have not problem with a few ATV's, but feel numbers have increased
- Cher Hammond-Olson (1419 Dodge Hill Rd) – feels like she lives on a race track and it's dusty. She called the police due to two riders were being intimidating
- Jody Whelton (1376 Dodge Hill Rd) – she is not on the road, so dust is not an issue. However she hears them
- John Grant (Deering) – has been riding for 45+ years. Would like to see more trails. Large land owners could work with club to make access to trails, to alleviate noise. Trees cut down noise, so this is an option all should consider

III. Approval of Minutes

- Scott Dias made motion to approve the minutes for October 25, 2022; Beth Patenaude seconded. All in favour

IV. Safety

- Chief French reviewed the statistics

<u>Year</u>	<u>Complaints</u>	<u>Stops</u>	<u>Incident/Crash</u>
2023	9	6	0
2022	10	3	0
2021	8	9	0
2020	27	76	1
2019	9	23	2
2018	6	8	0

- 2023 Complaint Locations
 - Pre-Season – Dodge Hill x2, Flanders, Patch Road (Warning issued to juvenile)
 - After May 23 – Dodge Hill, Browns Way, Western Ave, Gulf Road
- 2023 OHRV Stops – Dodge Hill, Dudley Pond
- 3 OHRV directed patrols
- Chief put in for OHRV grant again, and granted \$3000 from Fish & Game this year
- Police Concerns
 - none
- Resident's and OHRV Committee Concerns
 - Leo Aucoin (619 Gulf Rd) – when there is a stop, how is it logged? Concern about stop on Gulf Rd. Chief French explained and the incident in question was Dudley Pond
 - Ross Bennett – commented the complaint stats seem low; he thinks they are understated. Thinks Dodge Hill Rd complaints are higher. Chief French logs if the law is broken; not if there is noise or dust
 - Chief French said OHRV complaints go to Merrimack County dispatch
 - Scott Dias – commented 2020 stats were 'hot'; last 3 years status are good and low. Ask how are stops? Chief French noted they are educational, including educating parents; Explained his two kids went through OHRV safety and he understands the importance as a parent
 - Chief French – Henniker is one of the few towns in the state that don't allow under 16 years of age drivers on Henniker town roads
 - Ross Bennett – maybe committee should take on keeping track of complaints
 - Kris Blomback – the Selectboard set up the OHRV committee in 2017. There is no 'one size fits all'. It's a multi layer approach. There is educational and legal facets. It's important to work with the OHRV committee to mitigate issues
 - Lori Hubbard – she said we seem to always hear complaints, we never hear the positive and good stuff. Has membership increased? If yes, that could increase riders and possibly complaints in town
 - Paul Sheppard – asked Chief French if his team has noise measuring devices. Chief French acknowledged but said decibels of ATV's is low and the law is ATV exhaust can't be modified.

- Beth Patenaude – asked Chief French out of the 6 stops, do you keep track of residency. Chief French explained perfect world with good cell coverage, would make information more accessible
- Chairman Morse asked Kris Blomback if town could have Hank develop complaint area on the town web site; Town Administrator Diane Kendall said there is a complaint site for concerns. Ross Bennett made a motion to get an email address to send concerns or something on a web page. Diane Kendall feels using the form on the website is good, and complaints go to her.
- Chief French noted to Ross Bennett that noise/dust issues go to the OHRV committee and speed/reckless issues are a police matter; Diane Kendall said if the web site is used, it will help to educate folks about enforcement vs complaints
 - Enforcement should be a call to dispatch
 - Complaints should be directed to the web form
- OHRV Committee has educational material we would like on the web site; send material to Diane Kendall and she will review and have added to the web site
- Chief Morse asked if all were in favor to send material to Diane Kendall, and use existing area on web site for complaints. All are in favour, none opposed
- Lori Hubbard – suggested someone work on wording of education material, with input from Chief French
- Riche Colcombe – educate use of 911 vs non-emergency
- Joan O'Connor – can people call anonymously regarding complaints; Chief French confirmed calls can be done anonymously; Diane Kendall noted residents can write a letter too, and don't put their name on it
- Cher Hammond – by her house, should be 10 mph; she called Henniker PD, and they got back to her 1.5 hours later. She was educated to call Merrimack County dispatch, at 603-428-3212
- Scott Dias – noted there is a lot of public comment. The Henniker police and Fish & Game all do their best to support and help. He suggests we all talk about solutions
- Leo Aucoin – noted roads are getting beat up
- Paul Sheppard – asked if President of ATV club could work on signage, about road(s) being in jeopardy of being closed
- Keith DeMoura – club members do patrol; we have handouts to educate riders and discuss what's on the handouts for reinforcement; Keith noted the club gave maps and RSA lists to the Henniker PD to help the police; Keith to update handout to say "for more information call 603-428-3213, or go to site _____" (give URL to town site); NOTE: 428-3213 is for complaints such as dust/noise, not for legal/law issues such as speeding and reckless driving
- Ellen Chase – would like verbiage on handouts to be changed to note 'some residential areas are in jeopardy of being closed', **versus 'residents are trying to close' 'our roads are in jeopardy, residents are trying to close ATV access to class 5 & 6 roads'**; is there metadata of dollars to businesses vs tax payers, so there are hard numbers to make decisions
- Dan Philbrick – at what point do we make a decision; when is it too much
- Keith Demoura – May 23rd through November 4th, roads are open; he reiterated if more roads are opened, there should be less hot spots; explained the Contoocook Valley ATV Riders club used a digital speed sign on Dodge Hill Rd; The businesses who provided letters supporting all roads to remain open include Mobile gas,

Daniels restaurant, Daniels upstairs, Harvester, Henniker Pharmacy, Western Ave Pizza, Livingston's, High Tide, Tooky Mills, Rymes Fuel

- Ross Bennett – regarding economic benefit, ~~we are not qualified to say these businesses are quantifiable~~ **businesses are not able to quantify**
- Scot Dias – speaking on behalf of the Henniker Chamber of Commerce, it's a pretty deep dive to do an economic study development; look at people buying houses in Henniker on the trails to ride; we can see ATV's at gas station and at restaurants
- Lori Hubbard – do the Contoocook Valley ATV riders trails to go to Hillsboro? Keith DeMoura confirmation 'yes' they do
- Kirke Olson – he said a solution is to work with land owners; back to Jodie's land or Joe Clements; reroute T1 (but it's Bound Tree ATV system); land owners could help solve the Dodge Hill Rd issue
- Elizabeth Butters – asked if there is an issue with dispatch complaints; she called 3 times herself
- Scott Dias – asked Keith DeMoura, Dodge Hill Rd and Hemlock Corner Loop – by-pass by coming down Hemlock Corner; how far back does Butter's go; Elizabeth said she does not want her land used for ATV trails.
- Chairman Morse – the Contoocook Valley ATV club will explore options
- Dan Philbrick – asked if trails can be limited to Hopkinton/Henniker/Hillsboro residents only. Chairman Morse explained 'no', because there is state funding
- Beth Patenaude – noted ~~the club would also lose the State Bureau of Trails \$2 million liability coverage if the trails are restricted to certain residents, and not open to the general public~~ **only trails and roads open to the public for OHRV use are covered by the State of NH Bureau of Trails Landowner Liability Insurance policy with coverage of 2 million dollars. This policy is held by the State of NH and there is no cost to the Town or Landowner.**
- Ross Bennett – noted Liberty Hill Rd is restricted to residents only; addressed Keith DeMoura and asked why expanding Hillsboro to Bennington. Parking is tough. Keith DeMoura explained Pat's Peak generously allows parking; Ross is concerned about connecting to other towns; he reinforced the primary concern is residents vs opening more trails

V. Roads

- Road Agent Concerns
 - Leo Aucoin said just standard wear and tear

VI. Public Comments

- Keith DeMoura noted the ATV club has cameras on Dodge Hill Rd
- Hooksett rest area has OHRV books; can we put books at town businesses? Noted there is a digital PDF version on line. Keith DeMoura noted we tried books and pamphlets before, and we found them as litter on the ground. Keith noted the club has a small 3"x5" handout that is given to riders, and put on vehicles in ATV parking areas
- Lori Hubbard – noted there are outliers who don't obey the laws; she has seen an increase Police and Fish & Game presence; hear some ATV's, but it's temporary in the summer; numbers have reduced in the front/back of her house
- Lisa Philbrick – Dodge Hill Rd needs a speed limit sign; Road Agent Leo Aucoin said it's all set; she does not want to see more parking, since it nurtures more riders; she would like to find a compromise

- Keith DeMoura – corrected previous comment that ATV parking areas are not increasing
- Joan O'Connor – asked if anyone has talked to town of Errol
- Chief French – made a motion to adjourn. He noted he was 'hotter than a pig in a blanket'
- Leo Aucoin interrupted and demanded the committee address his concerns regarding Gulf Rd. Leo was adamant to know what is going to be done
- Chairman Morse addressed Leo Aucoin and said "so you just want Gulf Rd by your house closed to ATV's". Leo Aucoin replied "yes".
- Ross Bennett – made a motion to "close Gulf Rd from Flanders Rd to Quaker St, with the condition that the selectboard grant permission to homeowners on Gulf Rd to obtain permission to ride their ATV/UTV from their home to gain access to the closest trail"
- Paul Sheppard seconded
- Discussion – Scott Dias asked if Gulf Rd is closed by Leo's, can homeowners legally get permission from Selectmen? Chief French said 'yes'. Scott said OK, if closed, but with clause that homeowners can get OK to ride from their home
- Beth Patenaude – asked if we could close a portion of Gulf Rd, from the intersection of Quaker St to Butter Rd, therefore allowing riders to come down Butter Rd to the intersection of Gulf Rd, to proceed to Flanders Rd; Leo Aucoin was adamant he wanted to close all of Gulf Rd
- Chairman Morse asked for OHRV Committee members to vote on Ross's motion: 5 'yes' (Bennett, Dias, Sheppard, Anderson, French), 3 'no' (Hubbard, Patenaude, Morse); Note: Selectboard Member Blomback had to leave at 7:00 pm, prior to vote); Chairman Morse will send letter to Selectboard to close Gulf Rd, per Committee vote
 - Note: when OHRV Committee member Leo Aucoin was asked if he is going to vote, public member Riche Colcombe protested with a point of order that he should be recusing himself, as he clearly stated he was present and speaking as a member of the public. Leo and the Committee agreed to Ms Colcombe point of order
- Keith DeMoura – will put 'prohibited' signs on Bear Hill Rd (on the Henniker side, at the intersection of Cote Hill Rd and Bear Hill Rd, so riders don't go down Bear Hill Rd
- Lori Hubbard – make a motion to have the Contoocook Valley ATV Riders club look for a bypass on Dodge Hill Rd

VII. Schedule Next Meeting

- Tuesday October 24th, at 6:00 pm at the Community Center

VIII. Adjourn

- Scott Dias motion to adjourn, Chief French seconded, motion passed (9-0-0)
- Adjourned 7:54 pm