

Franklin Land Committee Meeting
FELCO Room, Franklin, VT
Sept 27, 2012

Attendees: Polly Gadbois, Hugh Gates, Cynthia Gates, Kimberly Gates Maynard, MeriLee Perkins, Paul Gates, Doug Clark, Sue Clark, Gregg Bouchard, Eric Beaugard, Dan Clark, Angie Clark, Mark barnum, Bob Irish, Priscilla Gates, Brooks Sturtevant, John Ho, and Gregg Bouchard.

Polly Gadbois called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm at the FELCO Room. Polly stated that the Land Committee was given the charge from the Selectboard to make suggestions and funding for uses of the town land located to the North of the town shop. Polly listed previous ideas from the committee when they met __ years ago.

Hugh Gates gave a history of the land: 5 acres were purchased from Richard Westcott by the Franklin Rescue and gifted to the town with no restrictions but an intent for a location for a new Fire & Rescue building. Richard Westcott sold an additional 3 ½ acres to Dick Wright Ford. At the 2005 Town Meeting, there was an article for the town of Franklin to purchase the remaining land. Debate was ceased before Hugh had been allowed the opportunity to speak about the ROW issues and that there were legal issues with using Homestead Drive. Those legal issues went to court when the Town of Franklin proceeded with a Park & Ride. The driveway is a shared private ROW with Franklin Telephone Co, Hugh & Cynthia Gates, Franklin Homestead Inc., Vinny Vinci, Kris Fullington, Hull Family, and the Town of Franklin. Originally, Franklin Telephone purchased 1 acre of land from Mae Gates in the 1970's. Later, the Town purchased 1 acre. It had been a verbal agreement to use the shared driveway. When FHI was planned, a formal agreement for a shared driveway was created. The agreement was updated and agreed to by all parties when the Carriage House was built. In 2008, the Town applied for a grant for a Park & Ride and then sent letters to all the parties of the shared driveway (Homestead Drive). Franklin Telephone objected and the ROW issue went to court.

Polly clarified that the 5 acres has no restrictions in the deed. Rescue membership was declining and the end of the Rescue service was in sight. Rescue paid \$60,000 for the land. Richard Westcott was paid a total of \$170,000 for all 3 sections of the land he sold. The additional acres have a restriction to stay in town, school, Fire & Rescue possession as long as Richard Westcott is alive.

Polly had been contacted by the Selectboard in July to call a land committee meeting. She stated that the ROW issues were the Selectboard issues.

Hugh had vision of a hot tub and swimming pool. He had proposed a land swap with the town. In 2006 when the town garage burned, he again approached the Selectboard and was denied. The new town garage was built on the existing town lot. The sand pile was moved onto the Westcot property without a change of use permit. The Selectboard had been petitioned for a special meeting but declined based on advice of the Secretary of State.

The town septic system study was mentioned and Polly stated that the Westcot land has some perkable areas.

The Tri-Town Recreation Committee survey was mentioned. The #1 item was a swimming pool. Hugh suggested a new survey for Franklin residents. The Planning Commission had completed a survey 25 years ago and the top items were a small town atmosphere, Friends and Family, Scenic, Recreational and Job. It was stated that the survey doesn't give commitment just guidance.

There were concerns with the ROW issues. It was suggested that a list of 5-6 items be created for the Selectboard to approach signatures of the driveways for concerns. Another comment was for the town to give the parking lot to FHI to remove the restrictions from the Homestead Drive. Franklin Telephone commented that wouldn't resolve the ROW issues. Other ROW's offered from Lake Road were mentioned.

A general discussion included suggestions for a map of soil conditions and boundaries should be created. Other items mentioned included recreational fields, skateboarding park, baseball, tennis, RV-hook-up, pavilion should be promoting scientist and teachers, renewable energy. Attendees also asked what other towns had done similar projects. There were concerns about duplicating projects with the Lake Carmi State Park, Franklin Central School and the Tri-Town Rec. There were also concerns about electric services, zoning, wetlands and ROW. The need for Professional landscaping & engineering design were mentioned. Polly would like to schedule a walk-around.

Polly will leave maps at the town clerks office. Bob Irish will check on topos and subdivision. The next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 24th.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully,

Kimberly Gates