

Stratford OHRV Citizens Committee (SOCC)

Meeting: Monday January 18, 2021, 6:30pm to 8:15pm

Location: Virtual – Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Troy Burns, Molly Carr, Bill Noons, Jamie Sayen, Maryanne St. Jean

Absent: Gregory Lamm

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## I. Topics

### A. Review of January 4, 2021 Meeting and Action Items

a. Public Comments & Spread Sheet: Maryanne reviewed the form that will be used to record public comments. There were no new emails to report. Bill mentioned that he was able to work with and resolve a matter with a landowner. Bill was also able to speak with a rider that was part of an ATV the group previously reported on Bog Road regarding the use of lightbars. Maryanne will update the spreadsheet with this information.

b. OHRV Road Signage: Bill updated the Committee that the signs ordered are in and ready for the designated spots come spring. The Committee offered to help with the installation.

c. Invitation to Scott Mason Executive Director, New Hampshire & Game: Jamie mentioned with the support of the Town officials that the SOCC could reach out to Scott for an invite to meet with the Select Board and SOCC. Bill explained that it would be better for the Town officials to initiate contact. Jamie will pass this information to the town office.

Update: The Select Board met on January 19 and plans to invite Scott Mason to meet with the Board and SOCC.

d. Revised OHRV Road Use Policy: Bill mentioned he has the revised policy sent from Selectmen, Harry Jurgens. He stated there are only a few changes and that he will email the revised policy to the Committee for review.

### B. Draft Report to Select Board on Enforcement Issues

a. Jamie explained he is preparing a report to the Select Board with the results of what the SOCC has learned regarding enforcement. Before he did so he wanted to review his notes with the Committee. Jamie's understanding is that there are two different types of OHRV enforcement for Stratford. One is the trail system in which enforcement is the responsibility of Fish & Game and the second is town roads which is the enforcement responsibility of the town. Bill disagreed with this understanding. He stated that the town roads are considered an extension of the trails and should be enforced by Fish & Game. Maryanne mentioned the RSA 215 that was brought to her attention by Fish & Game last summer that reads that a town that chooses to open its roads to OHRV use has the responsibility to provide its own enforcement. Jamie stated he would seek out clarification and hopes to obtain something in writing from Fish & Game.

Update: Captain Eastman of New Hampshire Fish & Game Enforcement informed Jamie on January 20 that the Town is responsible for enforcement on town roads. A copy of his email is below.

b. Bill and Troy stated that the Committee should not be focusing on enforcement matters because the Committee does not have authority to make any changes in this area. They stated that if someone riding an ATV is breaking the law, citizens of Stratford should call 911 and allow dispatch to decide the appropriate enforcement division to respond. Maryanne questioned this, as 911 is thought to be for emergency situations and not necessarily for an ATV speeding on a town road. Jamie reminded the Committee that SOCC had been established following the October 7, 2020 public hearing on OHRVs on Town Roads because several speakers had expressed a desire to work together with the town to address OHRV-related issues. He also stated that at our first meeting, Bill raised the issue of Enforcement as the number one concern of the North Country ATV Club. He agreed that the Committee does not have authority to make changes and reminded the Committee that the Select Board is supportive of our work and is paying close attention to our ideas and suggestions.

### C. Change of Direction.

a. Molly expressed a desire to work on areas where we can take action to promote positive change in Stratford. Jamie and Maryanne agreed on the need to address the economic needs of the town but stated that our original purpose had been focused on OHRV issues. We reviewed the positive effects opening communication has had to the community by raising awareness, opening channels of communication amongst the town officials, clubs, and its citizens.

b. The Committee discussed a change of direction. A chance to do something positive for the town. Some thoughts and ideas shared during the conversation were:

i. Broaden to a Stratford Citizens Committee. Allowing the Committee to open the circle, invite other members, encourage a greater community involvement and engagement.

ii. Revive some good times and diversity of events in Stratford.

A. Fantastic Friday's

B. Saturday night drive in movie

C. Music at the pavilion

iii. Troy mentioned that the 4<sup>th</sup> of July would be a great date to work towards a live music and good food event.

iv. Fun events for children

A. Encouraging the use of the baseball field

B. More outdoor activities for kids of all ages

c. Jamie suggested the Committee make a presentation at the Town Meeting this March. There was some concern about being able to participate as there are members unable to take the day off from work to attend the meeting.

#### D. Other Items

- a. The Committee learned that Greg Lamm resigned from the SOCC. He is an advocate for Community engagement, and it is our hope that he may join again with the broadening of the Committee's focus.
  
- b. The Committee agreed to take a break and use the time to develop a proposal to better utilize the Pavilion and other economic opportunities.

**\*\*Below is the text of Captain Eastman's email explaining NH F&G is not patrolling Town Roads\*\***

Jamie,

Thank you for your e-mail. Conservation Officers are sworn to patrol any area of the state both on private and public land. Officers can patrol the class 5 and 6 roadways that are controlled by the town for illegal motor vehicle and OHRV use. When a town opens their roadways for OHRV use, the responsibility for enforcement is mandated in RSA 215-A:15 to be that of the town. Conservation Officers can enforce the state laws on these roads but it is not Fish and Games obligation to do so. Any complaints on these open roads would be forwarded to the town and the obligation of the town to respond to them. Included is the portion of RSA 215-A:15 relative to the towns statutory responsibility:

**215-A:15 Regulations of Political Subdivisions. –**

**I. With bylaws or ordinances city or town councils and boards of selectmen may regulate the operation of OHRVs within city or town limits, providing they do not conflict with provisions of this chapter.**

**I-a. (a) Any municipality that enacts an ordinance or bylaw under paragraph I relating to this chapter shall be responsible for the enforcement of such ordinance or bylaw.**

Feel free to contact me with any other questions.

Thank you,

**Captain Michael G. Eastman**  
**NH Fish and Game Department**  
**Law Enforcement Division**