

Town of Castine  
**PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**

PV  
CP  
GM

DATE: Monday, March 28, 2022

TIME: 4:30PM

PLACE: Emerson Hall

PRESENT: Colin Powell, Chair; Gordon MacArthur & Peter Vogell (Zoom), Selectboard members; Shawn Blodgett, Town Manager; and Susan Macomber, Town Clerk.

PUBLIC: Estimated 35 members of the public including 8 members attending via Zoom and David Avery of the Castine Patriot.

Colin Powell opened the meeting at 4:32PM and introduced the topic of discussion: 1) to discuss proposed amendments to the Traffic Ordinance regarding Sidewalk Snow Removal.

Shawn Blodgett, Town Manager addressed:

Shawn reviewed background on the topic, including information that was gathered in previous years on the subject getting updated costs, equipment needed, staff/employee to perform the work (logistics and costs) and/or subcontracting for the work to be performed.

Information was also gathered on liabilities to the Town. The Town is not liable if someone slips, falls, etc. Some other communities have property owners responsible as part of an Ordinance which is an option to consider and brought us to this Public Hearing.

The Selectboard appointed an Ad-Hoc Committee to address options for costs and logistics for clearing sidewalks during the winter and take inventory on Castine's sidewalks including the existing shape they are in.

Discussion.

Marc Pelletier, Ad-Hoc Sidewalk Committee member, reviewed what the Ad-Hoc Committee has been working on. They have 10 members; 6 living on-neck, 4 off-neck; 8 property owners and 2 renters. The Committee worked on a survey and distributed to the community which consisted of the following options:

- 1) Town take care of clearing sidewalks
- 2) A subcontractor is hired to clear sidewalks
- 3) Abutting property owners are required to clear sidewalks by Ordinance
- 4) Do nothing, leave as it is

Kelly Gualtieri (property owner on Main St) and Brock Muir (property owner on corner of Pleasant/Perkins St) asked why all sidewalks are not included.

Discussion.

Some sidewalks are in poor condition and beyond repair.

Plowing on lower Main St often makes it difficult or near impossible for snow to be removed from sidewalks due to the plow push back.

Johanna Barrett, Ad-Hoc Committee member, said that the prioritizing of the sidewalk outline is per the Committee. She said she did further research and talked to other close towns, i.e., Bucksport. Johanna said she is not in favor of the Ordinance proposal as it is written.

Alicia Anstead (lives on Perkins St) commented that no one ever walks the sidewalks near their home, they only walk in the street. She also said that in their location there is no where to put the shoveled snow and some property owners are incapable to perform such tasks or cannot afford to hire someone to do it for them.

Shawn reminded that different Towns have different needs, therefore, equipment needed, and costs will not be the same. There are "no apples-to-apples comparison", i.e., Castine sidewalk sizes vary within Castine itself (some sidewalks are 4ft, some are 3ft, etc). Shawn said the Town is constantly looking at ways to make the community safer.

It was pointed out and believed by several after speaking to a lawyer, that property owners indeed can be sued and held liable if someone was to have an incident on a snow cleared sidewalk if the Town makes it a requirement upon them. So that is something to think about when considering this option.

Peter Davis (property owner on Perkins St) added that the Town putting liens on property if they do not comply with the Ordinance requiring property owners to clear sidewalks is like applying a capital punishment and is wrong in his opinion.

Lastly, Shawn said when he was researching equipment, costs, and logistics for Town to do the snow removal off sidewalks, he found that likely the piece of equipment best for Castine would be a Ventrac SSV, costs approximately \$43,000+; with an average of 10 snowstorms per season; 60 hrs per season for Town employees to do the clearing at 1 pass per storm.

At end of discussion, Gordon MacArthur made motion to adjourn the Public Hearing.

Second by Colin Powell. Approved 2-0.

Public Hearing adjourned at 5:30PM.

Minutes by Susan Macomber, Town Clerk.