

Glastonbury Landowners For Positive Change

The mission of the GLFPC is to foster a landowner's association, of the people, by the people, and for the people of Glastonbury, create a harmonious and inclusive community, and enhance property values.

This Summary/Interpretation of the GLA August 4, 2016 Road & Weed Committee meeting is offered as a volunteer service by the GLFPC.

Your suggestions are welcome, should there be oversights or errors.

Key Points

- Six of the eleven-member committee attended this meeting. The low attendance raises the question of whether the meeting should have been convened without a quorum.
- Committee co-chair Ed Dobrowski believes GLA should immediately purchase a brand new snowplow truck for use in South Glastonbury (SG). Also, a straight plow and sander would need to be purchased separately, increasing the total estimated cost to a minimum of \$40,000, Dobrowski speculated.
- Because the meeting involved more conversation than decisions, no motions or official actions were taken.

Summary and Interpretation

GLA's Road and Weed Committee met on Thursday, August 4, 2016, in the kitchen at Liberty Hall in North Glastonbury (NG). Attending board committee members were Co-chairmen Ed Dobrowski and Paul Ranttalo along with Richard Johnson, Newman Brozovsky, Gerald Dubiel, and Charlotte Mizzi. Five of the eleven board committee members were not there. Three landowners were in the audience. Mizzi took the minutes.

GLFPC Note: *For the purpose of convening an official board meeting, GLA defines a quorum as more than half of the 12-member board. With this precedent, it will be most interesting to see if official minutes are kept of this committee meeting that was convened without a quorum.*

After agreeing to chair the meeting, Dobrowski deviated from the planned agenda and, instead, emphatically proposed that the GLA purchase a brand new snowplow truck for exclusive use in South Glastonbury. During the previous Road and Weed Committee meeting, a panel of four had been appointed to begin research about the *possibility* of a second community snowplow truck. Fellow committee members were surprised when they discovered that Dobrowski had already gotten the wheels in motion. The co-chair enthusiastically gave the audience a verbal tour of the vehicle. The brand new, white truck weighs one ton, is a heavy-duty vehicle with a

standard cab, and sports 4-wheel drive, a backup camera, cool air conditioning, and zero miles. He exclaimed the cost of \$30,000 was a great deal, at least \$6,000 off, and should be purchased immediately! With the approximate addition of \$10,000 for a straight plow and a new sander box, the total cost was speculated to be a minimum of \$40,000. To fund this purchase, Dobrowski proposed that GLA take out a bank loan, use the \$14,000 remaining in unallocated savings, and the \$13,000 of unused road money. Mizzi noted that GLA has a good record of doing business with the Bank of the Rockies where the Board's secretary is employed.

GLFPC Note: Why pay for interest on a bank loan while giving away a huge sum of money in interest reduction at the same time? The GLA Board has been consistently attempting to convince landowners to approve a change to Covenant 11.06. If the vote passes, the current interest rate will be lowered from 18% down to 12%. If this vote is approved, landowners will lose a minimum of \$40,000 (the real amount remains unknown). There are as many as 75 landowners who are in arrears, some dating back twenty (20) years. The interest reduction will also be applied retroactively.

Not everyone was swayed by Dobrowski's zealous presentation. Some thought that GLA's seasonal plowing needs are insufficient to justify the many high expenses associated with a *brand new* vehicle and its rapid depreciation. Others expressed that it would be better to find enough money for a road grader, which could also function as a snowplow, even if it were about double the price. Either machine would have to be outfitted with a plow and sander, increasing the cost by *at least* another \$10,000. Ranttalo even offered to run the grader for free and quipped that Dobrowski only wants a new truck because he wants to drive it. With a GLA road grader, Ranttalo thought that our roads could be graded more frequently, up to four times a year. He spoke of looking into buying a V-plow, too. However, others said the maintenance costs associated with owning a road grader are outrageous and that it would be difficult to find well-qualified and experienced operators. Then, Brozovsky stated, "I never buy anything new!"

GLFPC NOTE: Unfazed by the price tag and the high cost of registering and insuring a new truck, the co-chair showed little concern about these expenditures. Never mind the additional cost for a new plow and sander, as well as paying for interest on a bank loan. He simply wanted it and thought the members of the committee would assuredly vote for it on the spot.

Mizzi suggested Dobrowski get input from the Finance Committee before bringing anything to the board. Her advice was given little weight. Most attendees, however, insisted the Road and Weed Committee conduct business in a much more professional manner. Under pressure, Dobrowski finally agreed to create a written proposal for purchasing the new truck. Landowners also insisted that Ranttalo write a detailed proposal for the purchase of a road grader.

Despite the ongoing raucous conversation among the committee members, plans for roadside mowing were discussed. Without any motion, it was agreed that NG landowner Joanna Dawson would receive a written work order for this year's roadside mowing, restricted to areas where snow drifts. Ranttalo will "stick with her" to show Dawson where to specifically cut. Dawson will

also be hired to clear the culverts. With key questions from the audience, it was casually agreed that Dawson needed to sign a statement that any damage to her equipment would be her own responsibility as an independent contractor. Ranttalo estimates the cost will be about \$1,300.

A few months ago, landowners informed this committee that the guardrail on the dangerous curve on Hercules in SG was sinking and in need of immediate repair. There is still no confirmed plan to fix this precarious situation. A landowner had to also remind this committee about the need for a guardrail on Gemini in NG, where four consecutive bad accidents have occurred. Ranttalo quickly brushed aside this serious topic, by claiming, "It was the fault of the drivers! They were driving too fast!" Nonetheless, Dobrowski agreed to find the names of guardrail specialists in the region, and a landowner volunteered to call for quotes.

New speed limit signs will be eventually positioned on Arcturus Road in SG. However, the installation had to be delayed because the secretary was remiss in ordering the posts. There was talk of renting a poulder on a backhoe from a nearby GLA member at a cost of \$200/day. The six new 25-mph signs will be installed by volunteers, but due to much bantering among the committee, it was not possible to know by whom.

Discussion followed regarding winter preparations. Topics were:

- Assignment of snowplowing coordinators
- Additional snow fencing purchase
- Buying and storage of sand
- Clearly marked road maps of Glastonbury for snowplow drivers
- List of snowplowing subcontractors

Even though Dobrowski offered to store sand under a tarp at his place, non-stop overtalk and laughter made it challenging to know what the committee had decided. It appeared that some committee members were surprised to learn it is necessary to get landowner permission if GLA puts snow fencing on any private property. No decisions or appointments were made as to whom would serve as the snowplow coordinator this year for NG and HS (High South). Dobrowski agreed to coordinate snow removal for Low South.

The issue of fall grading was revisited. Shall we rehire Adkins for SG and Lembcke for NG? Though some found issue with the quality of the spring grading done by these contractors, others wanted to wait to assess the roads. At such time it will be determined if both contractors will be rehired. Of serious concern are the extensive washboard areas on most of our gravel roads.

A landowner then raised the question why HS had been shorted gravel by as much as 27 loads. Dobrowski insisted that there was no shortage of gravel for HS from this year's spring deliveries. He also voiced that there was no money left for fall gravel in HS, either. Continuing, this landowner asked about the HS roadbed, having heard of numerous complaints of punctured tires from countless protruding shards, the absence of drainage ditches and more

problematic factors. Again, Dobrowski insisted that Adkins had smoothed the entire distance of the roadbed in HS.

As he had done a few months earlier at another committee meeting, Dobrowski distributed a handout showing a ten-year overview of snow removal costs. His mother, Clare Parker, had calculated this report. He tried citing it as proof that HS already received more than its fair share of GLA road money. Little attention was given to the handout.

While Dobrowski continuously punctuated the meeting by insisting the truck purchase be voted on right then and there, landowners kept the meeting moving along by frequently asking whether or not any particular agenda item discussion had reached completion.

The meeting adjourned about 8:45 pm.

[Glastonbury Landowners For Positive Change](#)