

**ABANDONED AND DISCONTINUED MEETING MINUTES**  
**Subcommittee Group 1 Public Use of Public Easements**

**June 4, 2024**  
**Remote Meeting**

**In attendance:** Jim Katsiaficas, Roberta Manter, Catherine Nadeau, and Karla Black,

**Absent:**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jim Katsiaficas at approximately 1:00 pm.

Jim opened the meeting discussing the best way to break down the scope of public use allowed on a public easement over an abandoned or discontinued road, the need or justification for each type of use, the impact of the public use on abutting property owners and ways to reduce the negative impacts on abutting property owners.

The subcommittee discussed the following types of public access for those who don't have deeded access on abandoned or discontinued roads.

- 1) Residential
- 2) Industrial use, Woodlot access, Quarries.
- 3) Recreational, Hikers, cross country skiers, ATV, Snowmobiles, Mountain bikes, Motorized bikes, ebike, horse backing riding. Hikers, wandering public
- 4) Criminals, drug related transactions, drunk drivers, dumping trash illegally.

Jim and Roberta discussed history and issues surrounding the types of public access on abandoned and discontinued roads.

Catherine stated that private road or private way doesn't have the same definition or requirements.

Jim said that is true when talking about an ordinance and depends on the town.

Jim moved on to talking about the impacts that access has caused on abandoned and discontinued roads.

Jim, Roberta, Catherine and Karla discussed the impacts and issues caused by access on Public Easements for residential use, Industrial use, Recreation use wear and tear, destruction on roads and illegal activity.

The Subcommittee moved on to discuss how to solve the issues.

Jim, Roberta, Karla and Catherine discussed ideas such as bonds for heavy equipment on Public easements, documentation of the trails and how to find information on the recreation trails, making sure law enforcement knows what roads they can enforce the law on and liability protection for landowners.

Karla stated that it seems that Legislature is moving towards making public easement only available to motor vehicles or foot traffic. The rest of access should be granted to ATV or snowmobiles by the landowners on the affected road. She suggested it be made retroactively.

Jim thought it could be an unconstitutional taking so how about prospectively. However, Jim thought we might run into resistance from snowmobiles and ATV access.

Karla thought if it is left up to the landowner on the Public easement it wouldn't be an issue because it would bring in the clubs and might help the road conditions.

Roberta raised the idea that Public easements should include Motor Vehicle access for landowners only and everyone else would have foot access only. (Delivery trucks would have the right as they are invited by the owner to make deliveries).

Jim to work with Heather to have a draft chart on Public access types, Issues, and solutions.

Roberta will put together a slide show to show the impact of various uses on the roads.

Commission meeting ended at approximately 2:20 p.m.