

East Montpelier Ancient Roads Committee June 2009 Final Report

The committee appointed pursuant to Act 178 of the 2006 General Assembly for the purpose of identifying ancient highway corridors has completed its work and hereby renders its report and recommendation.

Using funds from the grant of \$1,500 received by the town from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs in 2007, the committee examined a variety of maps from the 1800's as well as more recent orthographic and highway maps in the effort to narrow down the possible areas of interest. Large-scale copies of these maps were obtained and posted in the Town Office for public review. Nine possible ancient corridors were identified and input was requested from town residents regarding the potential public value of re-establishing public use of these corridors. Maps showing the location of these corridors were published in the 2007 Town Report. These were accompanied with a notice that absent any substantial public interest with regard to any particular right-of-way, on June 20, 2008, the committee intended to complete its work and would likely recommend that the Selectboard do a mass discontinuance of all possible town roads not identified on the 2008 official Vermont AOT Map for East Montpelier.

Vermont General Assembly Act 158 (2008) extended the date for identifying and mass discontinuing so-called ancient roads until July 1, 2010. With this extra time the committee chose to continue its evaluation during 2008 with the expectation of presenting a recommendation to the Selectboard by mid-2009. Though very little input was received from the publication in the 2007 Town Report publication, the committee decided to investigate two potential ancient roads that ran from the Sibley Road/Foster Road area to Lightning Ridge Road in Calais. For identification, the following names were used to identify these routes (Map 5 in the 2008 Town Report):

East Route – from the intersection of Sibley, Putnam and Foster Roads

West Route – from the intersection of Sibley and Sodom Pond Road

The landowners along the West Route were adverse to any further inclusion of this corridor in the public domain. A snowmobile corridor parallels the East Route so the local snowmobile club and the trails committee had an interest in that route. David Coburn conducted some research into the records of the early Town of Montpelier Selectboard records and was able to identify two incidents when they made changes in the locations of both roads. It was not possible, however, to determine when the original roads were laid out or when or if they were ever discontinued by the Town of East Montpelier Selectboard.

Recommendation:

Given the lack of general interest in all but two ancient corridors that were identified and the inability to document that the East and West Route are still in the public domain, it is the recommendation of this committee that the Selectboard do a mass discontinuance of all possible town roads not identified on the official Vermont Agency of Transportation Highway Map for East Montpelier.

Bruce Bjornlund, Lyn Blackwell, Dave Coburn, Pauline Coburn, Michael Duane, Nona Estrin, Karen Gramer, Dave Hudson, Bruce Johnson, Martin Miller, Lisa Rice, Sandy Woodbeck