

Nancy Kramer

From: Stuart Richards <srichards@globalrescue.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 15, 2016 1:55 PM
To: Nancy Kramer
Subject: Wasted Tax Money - The Road to Nowhere

Nancy,

I'd appreciate your sending the letter below to the Selectboard for consideration at their next meeting. Please confirm receipt and indicate which meeting it will be presented at.

Many thanks,

Stuart

Dear Selectboard Members,

At the Selectboard meeting on 6/8/16 almost a month and two Selectboard visits after my first inquiry on 5/11/16, I made a further attempt to get answers to why Town Highway 88 (Old Bridge Road) had been paved, how much it cost and who was responsible? I was treated to a classic case of bureaucratic run around and mumbo jumbo. It was apparent having taken almost a month to offer any response at all that those who should be concerned about wasting tax payer money were not concerned. Phil Dechert, the newly resigned temporary Town Manager and current Director of Planning and Zoning said he had investigated my questions but he forgot his notes at home and he hadn't bothered to respond to me in writing. Yes he's the same guy who got a \$20,000 raise for....well you'll have to explain that one to me. And yes he's the same guy that was responsible for 3 visits to the Vermont Supreme Court to spend the Town's money defending the indefensible and the Town lost all 3 times over 12 years of litigation.

Dechert said \$13,000 was the cost of the whole road and that half the cost went for the unused portion (around 570'). Interesting that Blaktop, the contractor, said the approximate cost for paving 500 feet of road would be around \$10,000 just for paving if no base or sub base was required for this road that hadn't been paved in 20 years. So why was the road paved? Couldn't Town trucks find their way down a gravel road? Moreover the portion of the road that serves no-one except the Town's snow plow trucks is 570' +/- and the portion that services 3 houses is 340'+/- and is 18' wide. At 400' of the 570' there is an unpaved turnaround that Town trucks could use. It seems there was no reason to pave that additional 170'. But there's ever more reasons not to have paved the entire 570'

The layout of the road is easy to understand. I oftentimes stop to stretch there off my bicycle. Old Bridge Road runs westerly off Route 5 just before 132 and it makes a T after the 3 houses that are on it. The newly paved part is the right hand part of the T and is approximately 570' long. The left hand part of the T goes to a Vermont boat landing where there is a 65' X 80' parking and turnaround area. Dechert said that the paving was requested by the Road Commissioner, Andy Hodgdon and approved by the Selectboard of the time. When I left word for Andy Hodgdon he didn't have the courtesy to return the call. Apparently he didn't want to talk about this issue. Phil Dechert said at the meeting that the Town's snow plow trucks had to

use the newly paved portion of the road, the right hand portion of the T, because they couldn't turn around on the left hand portion of the T going to the boat landing because there were cars parked there. This explanation is devoid of common sense. First if there truly were a parking problem which is highly doubtful, signs restricting wintertime parking could be posted. The notion that one house (the other two houses have full time residents) with students could produce a parking or turn around issue in an area so large is ridiculous. Second the boat parking area is large and it could accommodate many cars without interfering with trucks turning around. I'm there quite often in the summer and I've never seen more than 3 cars parked in this very large space. Third, why didn't the Town just throw the portion of the road up that no-one used and have the trucks use a gravel road? Fourth and most important: There isn't even a need to go down to the boat landing turnaround. All the trucks need to do is take a left at the T, put their trucks in reverse, back into the right hand portion of the T and come forward toward Route 5 on the traveled portion of the 340' of paved road. I've heard stupid explanations before but this takes the cake!

At no time did I hear anyone say, they made a mistake and we'll be more careful in the future. Instead what I heard was absurd and illogical. There seems to be a presumption that this waste of money occurred a while back and it's water over the dam and anyhow it's small potatoes. It is true that regardless of whether the amount spent was \$10,000 or some other amount it's small in relation to the entire budget. But the attitude of Dechert, Steve Flanders, the silence of Andy Hodgdon and others is insulting and makes one think they just don't care. You have to wonder whether that attitude carries over to other issues in our Town budget. But then why get all excited? Why bother to follow up? It's just money.... OUR MONEY.

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