



Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Special Selectboard Meeting July 15, 2019

Selectboard Members present: Howard Hall, Teresa Smith, and Zachary Weaver

Invited Guests included: Laura DiPietro, Ryan Patch and Steven Cash from VT Agency of Agriculture, Water Quality Division; Kim Greenwood from VT DEC Environmental Compliance Division; VT State Senators Ruth Harding and Chris Bray; VT State Representatives Diane Lanpher and Matt Birong.

Also present were 40+ Panton residents and a dozen or more residents from surrounding towns including Ferrisburgh, Bridport, Vergennes and Leicester. Including but not limit to: Eben and Judd Markowski, John Viskup, Laurel Casey, James Maroney, Paulette Bogan, Bob Groff, Sean Willerford, Kevin Cosgrove, Hans Vorsteveld and Assistant Town Clerk, Linda Devino.

Howard Hall called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. He explained the purpose of the meeting was to be an informational meeting for all in attendance.

Laura DiPietro began explaining the process by which farms are permitted, inspected and regulated in regard to manure as well as chemical use on their fields and the control of run-off into our waterways. She explained the permitting process for granting exceptions to the normal rules and the fining process for breaking those rules. The team went on to discuss the regulations in place to protect and monitor wetlands and waterways and how the State continually monitors water quality in all of VT's waterways. They discussed both manure contaminants as well as chemical and manmade contaminants.

The floor was opened to the public. Many questions were posed.

The topics included:

ÉThe dollar amount of fines issued annually in Vermont.

ÉThe quality of standing waters and wetlands as well as rivers and streams.

ÉThe type of pollutants (i.e. cow manure, herbicides and other chemicals and human waste).

ÉHow does farm run-off compare to discharges from wastewater treatment facilities.

ÉWhy does the State allow the continued use of tile draining?

ÉHow climate change is and will continue to affect the quality of Lake Champlain.

ÉHow organic farming could help water quality.

ÉAnd the lack of regenerative farming practices in Vermont.

ÉAlso many people questioned if the state follows up when an infraction is reported.

The panel of professionals answered all the questions as thoroughly as they could. The State Representatives and Senators also explained what the VT legislature is doing to protect our waterways and wetlands. When the question of whether or not the Agency of Natural Resources follows up on reported environmental infractions was repeated, all parties again said yes. All reports are followed up on each and every time including those made anonymously. Kim Greenwood noted the -Hotlineønumber for reporting to the Department of Environmental Conservation is 802-828-1254. The Agency of Agriculture noted the number for reporting violations is 802-461-7160 and that there is also an online form at the Vermont.gov website for reporting. Diane Lanpher asked that anyone reporting a violation contact her office as well. She noted that all agencies of the State are working together and any help from the public is welcomed. The Selectboard said they will arrange for this contact information to be added to Pantone's website for the convenience of the Townspeople.

At 8:37pm Howard Hall thanked everyone for attending and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Devino
Assistant Town Clerk