

# TOWN OF ST. GERMAIN

OFFICE OF THE TOWN CHAIRMAN

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## MINUTES ATV/UTV CLUB'S REQUEST TO USE TOWN ROADS AND TOWN PROPERTY FOR THE USE OF ATV/UTV'S: OCTOBER 16, 2015

**Town Board Members Present:** Tom Christensen, Marv Anderson, Alan Albee, John Vojta, Jim Swenson, Marion Janssen, Town Treasurer, Tom Martens, Town Clerk. There was also a large crowd of residents, property owners, business people and out of town guests present.

Mr. Christensen opened the public hearing at 6:35 P.M. He opened the floor to comments.

**Mary Platner** asked how many homeowners had ATV's. She asked if the proposed ATV trails would interfere with the bike and hike trails. Ms. Platner was concerned about the safety issues of opening Shields Road. Shields Road is a very windy road. She said that she is not opposed to a route through town, but did not think that all of the roads needed to be opened. Ms. Platner thought that the town board should do what some of the other towns have done and survey the taxpayers.

**Bill Schmidt**, a homeowner on Antes Road, said that there were 10 or 11 ATV's in his area. He added that opening the town roads would bring more business to the area.

**Jeff Heeler** stated that his family owned a resort on the north shore of Lost Lake. His dad had told him that there was a time when there was a proposal to ban waterskiing. And, even farther back, people were concerned about the use of outboard motors on the lakes.

**Ken Dahnke** thought that the question should be put to the residents by either a survey or referendum election question.

**Antes Road resident** thought that an ATV route through town would be beneficial to the town.

**Heather Davidson** stated that she received numerous calls at her resort throughout the summer about the use of ATV's in town.

**Bill Shoemaker**, a resident on Lost Creek, said that the people in town should be heard. There should either be a survey or referendum question.

**Fred Radtke** asked for either a referendum or for a question to be sent along with the tax bills so that the people can voice their opinions. He also asked how the town board could have a public hearing without informing the public of what the proposal was about ahead of time.

**Carolyn Ritter** also thought that there should be a referendum or question. She was not in favor of having a vote at a meeting. She thought that not enough people can give input. Ms. Ritter also had safety concerns about opening Shields Road and South Bay Road. She asked if the ATV/UTV's needed to have lights, if there would be hours for use, and if children could use the machines.

**Resident from Plum Creek Ave.** stated that he thought that the ATV's would go off the designated roads onto roads that are not designated as routes.

**Sue Monday** stated that snowmobiles use South Bay Road now. They don't obey the regulations. What kind of regulations are there for ATV's. How are they going to be enforced.

**Resident from Plum Creek Ave.** thought that it was wrong for a small group to decide whether or not the town roads should be opened.

**Alan Breck**, a resident from Dixon Road, said that the results of a referendum should be binding on the town board.

**Ken Dieter**, a resident from Antes Road, said that the ATV's would help the economy to grow. They would be an asset to the town. The ATV Club could repair damage done to the gravel town roads.

**Tim Ribsick** asked who was going to police the routes. Vilas County Deputy Randy Schneider said that the sheriff department and the DNR would police the trails. The signage needs to be appropriate so that the riders know where they can and cannot ride. The ATV's need to stay on the blacktop. Mr. Ribsick also asked if there would be a lot of dust.

**Kathy Schmidt** said that she supported ATV's.

**Mike Lambrecht** thought that if there was going to be a survey that it should only be sent to the voting residents. He thought that ATV's didn't need to be on all of the town roads. He said that they belong in town and that the town board should not keep pushing it off.

\_\_\_\_\_ stated that she didn't remember there ever being a vote on the bike trail.

\_\_\_\_\_ stated that there are more ATV's registered in the State of Wisconsin than there are snowmobiles. They have a right to be used.

**Bruce Weber** stated that most of the people present were here because this is a recreation based community. ATV's would be another amenity for the town. Before snowmobiles, the town would pretty much shut down during the winter months. ATV's would bring business during the shoulder seasons. Mr. Weber added that Mercer is thriving. By allowing ATV's in St. Germain, the future will only get better. Things will improve.

**Gary Heeler** said that if there had been a referendum back in the 60's, snowmobiling would probably have been shot down. We don't need a referendum now. Mr. Heeler said that where

he lives in the southern part of the state, all of the town roads are open to ATV's and that there have not been any incidents.

**Resident from Plum Creek** said that there is a snowmobile trail near his home. Snowmobiles are running later into the night. Will there be a curfew for ATV's. Officer Schneider stated that there seemed to be very little ATV activity at night.

**Officer Schneider** stated that there is a resident access law for snowmobiles which allows snowmobilers to use any town road to access a trail. There is no access law for ATV's. Most of the complaints that he receives are concerning ATV's that are in the wrong place. Officer Schneider also said that there have been no accidents on designated routes in the county. As of this year, 12-15 year olds need to be accompanied by an adult. Anyone born after January 1, 1988 needs to take the certification safety class. Officer Schneider thought that the average of the ATV users in the county was 45 and older. He has had three incidents of underage users. Any person under 18 years of age needs to wear a helmet. All UTV users need to use seatbelts. The speed limit is the speed limit that is posted on the town road. If the road is not posted, the speed limit is 55 mph. Officer Schneider has had two noise complaints. The decibel level is around 96. Motorcycles are also supposed to be quiet, but everyone knows that they are not.

**Marv Anderson** asked what the difference was in an ATV and UTV. It is the size and weight.

**Bruce Weber** stated that he purchased a UTV locally and that is how the economy works.

**Ron Rhodes** stated that it would be one more thing that the northwoods has to offer. It would be another way of having something to do.

**Max Humbaugh** stated that Forest County is very busy. He is in favor of ATV's.

**Larry Reiner**, president of the Nokomis ATV Club, stated that he has had no complaints. Lincoln County has opened its county roads to ATV/UTV use.

**Tom Christensen** said that as far as the safety issues are concerned, if he gets hurt while snowmobiling, it is on him. He knows that there is a chance of being hurt every time that he goes out. He thought that it boiled down to brains and thumbs.

**Rusty Williams** stated that he thought that the greatest danger was from deer.

With no other questions or comments, Mr. Christensen adjourned that public hearing at 7:48 P.M.

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Town Clerk

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Chairman

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Supervisor

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