

Public Hearing March 26, 2019

Selectmen in attendance: Lynn Sweet, Chairman, Scott Young, and Bryant Scot

Also in attendance: Fire Chief Scott Whitehouse, 911 Coordinator Judith Dupré, Road Agent Greg Messenger, Elizabeth Tufts, William Todd, Adam Black, Carol Reynolds Johnson, Ruth Swasey, Ethan Swasey, Andrew Kahora, Jack Lagasse, Lynn Lagasse, Eric Almanzan,

Selectman Sweet opened the Public Hearing at 6:03PM, stating that the notice of the Public Hearing had posted in the Strafford Community Calendar, Town Office, and the Strafford Post Office. Notices were sent by certified mail to property owners abutting "Whig Hill Road".

The purpose of the hearing was to discuss the renaming and numbering of the portion of Whig Hill Road, often referred to as "Old Whig Hill Road". For safety reasons and at the request of the Fire Chief, the Selectmen have chosen the new name for "Old Whig Hill Road" to be Hill Street. Several property owners objected to the name; thus a public hearing is being held to discuss the matter.

After the closing of the public hearing, the Town will send all property owners on that street notification letters stating their new address and the date that the new address will be recognized as their official address.

Fire Chief Scott Whitehouse spoke to the reasoning for the renaming. When a call to "Old Whig Hill Road" is made to dispatch, emergency personnel are inadvertently misdirected to Whig Hill Road because dispatch doesn't distinguish between Whig Hill Road and Old Whig Hill Road. Valuable, lifesaving minutes are lost in the delay as the emergency responders relocate; delay in response time due to this particular situation has been an ongoing problem. Chief Whitehouse believes that the 6 homes on that hill deserve the same service as the rest of Town, and they are not able to get it under the current circumstances.

Several suggestions were made, including road name signage displaying the house numbers located on "Old Whig Hill Road" and the use of the State system which employs GPS. The State system is not fully implemented and is not at this time, reliable.

Some discussion followed as to who, the State or the Town, has jurisdiction over the naming of roadways. Ms. Dupré read the RSA pertaining to street names and markers. It prohibits a road name that is confusingly similar to another road name. "Old Whig Hill Road" was never legally Old Whig Hill Road, we just thought it was.

Adam Black asked why "Old Whig Hill Rd" and the rest of Whig Hill aren't connected. Selectmen Young stated that opening "Old Whig Hill Rd" to the Whig Hill development was brought before the Town at Town Meeting and was voted down.

Mrs. Elizabeth Tufts stated her objection was to living on a "street" as opposed to a road. Her son pointed out that this will be the 5th time his mom will have to change her address.

Mr. Todd stated that "we" are not all that concerned with response time and does not see this name change as that which is "for our own good".

Ms. Sweet closed the hearing at 6:25PM, thanking all those in attendance for their input.