



12956 24th Avenue SW, Pillager, MN 56473

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Public Meeting Minutes – Baxter Snowmobile Club Trail

Thursday November 2nd, 2023

Note: This meeting was recorded and will be kept in electronic records with the minutes.

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call: Chair Booth called the Public Meeting to order at 6:00 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was said. Those present at the meeting were Supervisors Greg Booth, Arlene Schmit, Keith Card, Greg Bennett, Bob Johnson, and Clerk Jenna Ruggles. Residents present included Ute Zeis, Amanda Jensen, Gene Pietz, Mike & Pam Hoy, and Sheree Evenson also in attendance were snowmobile club members Dan Vogt, Brad Jensen, Pat Shea, John Laufersweiler, Kay Imsande, Howard Donsond, Rob Schreiber, Julie & Brent Boedigheimer, and Mark Kavanaugh.

Purpose of Meeting is to discuss and take comments on the proposed trail that the Baxter Snowmobile Club would like to have on 33rd Avenue SW/Pilsbury State Forest Rd to re-connect the Hwy 210 trail to the Pilsbury State Forest Trail.

Chair Booth read the Public Notice and Clerk Ruggles entered it into the record of proceeding.

Chair Booth welcomed the public then read the written comment from Ute Zeis.

After that Chair Booth allowed Dan Vogt time to explain why they are asking for this trail which included several ways that the Club will work to help keep snowmobilers on the trail and respectful of surrounding properties. Some of the items include putting up signs, adding ropes to block off areas, keeping the trail accessible/groomed, adding cameras if needed after issues, and posting speed limits. The Club carries insurance for riders who get injured on the trail which is also matched by the State. Trails help support tourism and keep riders from trespassing. Dan also let everyone know that there is no metal on the groomer and that they take consideration and caution around driveways. They would like to keep the riders off the road as much as possible and they do understand that the ditch is narrow. They have a groomer that is small enough to handle the narrow ditch. Dan also stated that about 95% of the riders will respect the trails system and follow rules, the other 5% will be the ones that are present even if there isn't a trail to ride on. He also stated that trespassing is not just a winter snowmobile thing, you will see that 5% in other months of the year as well – maybe on ATVs and that having a trail helps the out of towners know where to go instead of trying to find a path and possibly trespassing. Dan also noted that riders are legally allowed by the state to ride in any ditch in Minnesota.

Discussion included the following questions and concerns from residents.

- Ute: Says her drain field is close to the road and she is worried about riders on that. That there are several disrespectful riders.
- Jensen: Says there is little to no ditch on 33rd and the 210 intersection is already dangerous without the added traffic of snowmobiles.
- Hoy: 33rd is a busy road with sharp curves and lots of trees in the right-away.
- Pietz: There are lots of accidents, no ditch, too many trees, and riders abused the last trail that went through Lee's property which is why they are looking for a new trail connection now.



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- Evenson: There were several trespassers last year and the shoulders of road are not wide enough, fences were hit last year and will be again, the trail would disrupt the peace and quiet of the neighborhood and wreck the tar road.

There were 2 written letters of support which the Club brought with them, Chair Booth read them and put them into record – one from Kim Gibbs (KC's Saloon) and one from Mayor Sparrow (City of Pillager). Mark Kavanaugh, let the Board know that the Crow Wing Co trail system and the State trail system groups were in favor of this connecting trail.

The Board comments were mixed, there were several questions regarding insurance, groomer size, protecting neighbors' properties, signs for riders, and questions on the presence of snowmobilers last year. Supervisor Bennett let the Board know that he had an extensive conversation with a DNR representative who says that they are also in favor of this trail. He also feels that riders are going to use the road regardless of if the trail is there or not and he would like to see it be a maintained trail with signage and speed limits to make it safer for all versus not. Chair Booth would like to see how the trail works and try it for a year or 2 and see how the Club handles all the concerns. Supervisor Schmit is concerned that more riders be present with a trail than if there wasn't a trail in place and that the ditches are too narrow on this road. Supervisor Johnson wants the resident's concerns considered and accounted for during the trail planning process. Supervisor Card also feels that riders are going to use the road if there is a trail or not and that having a trail would provide more safety and regulation versus not.

After all Board questions were answered, Supervisor Bennett **moved to approve the request to utilize 33rd Ave SW/Pilsbury State Forest Rd as a connecting snowmobile trail for the Baxter Snowmobile Club**, seconded by Supervisor Card and the motion was amended by Supervisor Johnson to include **approval of the trail with conditions that the club work with the residents on concerns mentioned in previous discussions**, seconded again by Supervisor Card and the amendment was voted and passed with all in favor except Supervisor Schmit and then the original motion was voted on and passed with Supervisors Bennett, Card, and Johnson in favor and Supervisor Booth and Schmit not in favor.

Adjournment: Supervisor Bennett **moved to adjourn**, seconded by Supervisor Card and the motion carried with the meeting adjourning at 7:12 pm.

**Note: The attached map is not precise.*

Minutes submitted by,

Jenna Ruggles, Clerk

Greg Booth, Chair

These minutes were approved as amended on November 16, 2023 by Supervisor Card, seconded by Supervisor Bennett and the motion carried with Supervisors Booth, Bennett, Card, Schmit, and Johnson.

Date: 11.16.2023