

# The Berlin Sun

THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2021

VOL. 30 NO. 31

BERLIN, N.H.

## Dummer Selectmen Seek Public Input on ATV's

William Carroll  
The Berlin Sun

DUMMER — The Dummer Board of Selectmen have scheduled a public hearing July 21 at 6 p.m. to discuss possible changes to the town's current all-terrain vehicle ordinance.

Select board member Dave Dubey said in an interview Tuesday night that the town has received several complaints from town residents over the past couple of years regarding excessive noise and dust from legal use of ATVs on town roads as well as complaints of ATVs being illegally used to trespass on residents' property and about ATVs speeding down public roads.

Select board member Chris Holt said the complaints from the community had really spiked in the past year and a half, specifically that ATVs were being used at all hours of the day and night.

Ouellette said he himself had witnessed ATVs speeding on public roads including vehicles racing down town streets, which he noted creates additional traffic issues.

In a prior email exchange with The Berlin Sun, Dubey explained that the town's ordinance came about approximately 10 years ago when the board was approached by several residents who wanted to legalize operation of ATVs on town roads. He noted that residents simply wanted to use their ATVs to travel to and from homes in the community.

In the same email exchange he said that ATV use has increased dramatically in the area in the hopes of attracting tourist dollars and that the current ordinance was not written in anticipation of this change.

Tuesday, Dubey said the goal of the public hearing is to get diverse input from all sides of the issue, including not only input from town residents, but also from ATV clubs, law-enforcement agencies and local businesses about the effect any change in the ordinance may have.

Dubey noted that on the pro-ATV side, several local ATV clubs have reached out to the town asking for potential alternate routes to help ameliorate the issues.

All of the board members noted that they were having some difficulties with certain law enforcement entities enforcing their ordinance.

Holt, for instance noted that the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department normally would not enforce the town's ordinance due to lack of staff, but noted that the Coos County Sheriff's Office has been helping the town in enforcing the current ordinance.

During the interview, Holt said that a more restrictive ordinance may result in an additional cost to the town which would then be passed on to taxpayers and that it was important that residents understand all of the ramifications of any modification to the ordinance. Dubey added that the town does not have available to fund additional enforcement activities.

Dubey also added that any change to the ordinance would result in stepping on someone's toes and he wanted residents to be aware of all of the potential consequences that could come from changes.

Ultimately, the board members said they wanted their residents to decide the issue. Dubey said the July 21 hearing will be the first public hearing on the matter and that based upon the comments received at that, hearing, the board will formulate a plan to proceed.

All three board members said the vast majority of complaints have come from residents on Blake Road, Hill Road and Plain Road, adding that the ordinance could be rewritten to be a more restrictive townwide ordinance or could be written to apply to specific roads, depending upon the input they get from residents.

The July 21 hearing will be held at Dummer Town Hall, located at 75 Hill Road.