

Notes from the Select Board
February 2021

Budget season is upon us and the Budget Committee, the Capital Improvement Projects Committee, all the Town department heads, and the Select Board are busy trying to prepare a fiscally responsible budget that adequately maintains services. It has never been easier to join any these public meetings. On the NEW Pownal website go to the community calendar and click on the meeting you wish to join. That click will send you to a Zoom meeting link that will give you access to the meeting. Because Pownal will not have a debate-friendly regular Town meetings, where ideas can be discussed and amendments offered, it is important to attend these budget crafting meetings to get in on the conversation. If you have any questions about the how's and where's of joining a Zoom meeting please call the Town Office.

The Ordinance Review Committee is about to take under advisement the Impact Fee Ordinance. Impact fees were created to mitigate the 'added call for services' that new development creates for the Town. Pownal has struggled with defining what those 'added calls for service' are, because the Town has historically seen sustained but slow development. The last two years have been noticeably different with a dramatic increase in building and sub-divisions applications.

All at once, the calls to this Select Board member are different.

1. I was hunting in my favorite spot and there was a family having a picnic there, with their unleashed dogs. And they weren't wearing orange.
2. Fat bikes are using snowmobile club trails without asking landowner permission. What if snowmobile clubs lose access because of other's misuse?
3. I can't walk down my road because the cars are speeding by. I won't let my kids ride bikes on the road because of the speeders.
4. I can't get through the Lawrence Road because of all the hikers parking on both sides of the street.
5. I got kicked out of my favorite fishing spot by the landowner. Can he do that?
6. I don't know my new neighbors!

As the Town grows, the traditional culture is impacted by changing voices and perspectives. Impact fees offer an opportunity to create solutions that might resolve pressures put on the once 'taken-for-granted' ways of life in Pownal. The uniqueness of Pownal is one reason people want to live here. Hence the dilemma of desirability, more people come, more pressure on the attraction of Pownal. The Impact Fee Ordinance discussion will concentrate on unravelling the intent of the Ordinance and resurrecting a logical strategy for utilizing the fees to build proactive responses to the problems of Town growth. Please join the Impact Fee discussion during the Ordinance Review Committee meetings.

Well, there's a lot going on in Pownal. Select Board meetings are public meetings and a great place to keep informed. Select Board members are available via phone or e-mail if you have problems or concerns.

Sincerely,
Jon Morris, Select Board Chair