Town of East Haddam
Public Hearing
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
Thursday, June 4, 2026 at 7:00pm

Attending: Todd Gelston, First Selectman
Thomas Sevigny, Selectman
Don Angersola, Interim Director of Public Works
Jeremy Gustafson, Town Attorney;
Linda Zemienieski, Executive Manager
Approximately 30 Members of the Public

Purpose of the Public Hearing:
The purpose of the meeting is to obtain public input and review and discuss the potential ordinance language regarding adding a potential Article III Private Roads to Chapter 285 Streets and Sidewalks Ordinance.

Summary of Proceedings
Todd Gelston opened the public hearing, explained the purpose of the meeting, reviewed the proposed private road ordinance, and invited public comments. The stated objective of the ordinance is to ensure private roads are maintained in a condition suitable for winter plowing and emergency access.

Public Comments and Discussion
- Stephen Cohen (Sipple Hill Association): Thanked the Town for its work on the ordinance. Requested an appeals/review process for road-condition determinations and advance written notice before a road is removed from eligibility for limited maintenance.

- Stanley Kaczmarczyk (Sunny Heights Road): Described severe potholes, drainage issues, and road deterioration. Asked what assistance the Town would provide and expressed concerns about fairness given taxes paid by residents.

- Sabrina Summit (Moodus Estates, Woodland Road): Questioned the legal basis for requiring residents to maintain roads where deeds do not reference an association or ownership of the roads. Requested legal precedent and clarification regarding responsibility for road maintenance.

- Ira McCollum (Moodus Estates): Provided historical background regarding the former association and noted difficulties establishing responsibility for road maintenance.

- Glenn Koster (Grand View Road, Moodus Estates): Questioned why the roads are considered private, noted the lack of an effective mechanism for residents to perform road work, and stated the Town is better positioned to coordinate maintenance.

- Marybeth Mordecai (1 Lake View Road, Sipple Hill Estates): Asked why the issue became urgent, noted a long history of Town plowing, and questioned changing long-standing practices. Supported continued cooperation between the Town and residents.

- Carole McCollum (Sunny Heights Road, Moodus Estates): Described residents' efforts to repair roads and emphasized the need for Town coordination. Suggested assessments or other funding mechanisms to ensure roads are maintained and remain accessible for emergency services.

- Martha Cohen (Lake View Road, Sipple Hill): Supported an appeals process and advance notice provisions. Emphasized the need for a plan to help neighborhoods maintain roads and remain eligible for plowing.

- Vicky Anderson: Noted that the Town used to maintain the roads and questioned what happened to that process.

- Pat Lacey: Added that some of the private roads were maintained by an association resident who is a former town employee on his own time and with his own equipment. The resident is no longer able to perform those services.

Additional comments from Moodus Estates residents focused on affordability, lack of a functioning association, difficulties compelling participation from property owners, and concerns regarding legal liability and enforcement.

Jeremy Gustafson, Town Attorney explained that associations may take several legal forms and recommended residents consult private real-estate counsel regarding deeds, easements, and association structure. Clarified that Town counsel represents the Town's interests.

Key Themes Raised

- Need for an appeals or dispute-resolution process within the ordinance.
- Advance notice before a road loses eligibility for Town services.
- Uncertainty regarding ownership and maintenance responsibilities for certain private roads.
- Need for Town assistance, coordination, or cost-sharing for road repairs.
- Public safety concerns related to emergency access, mail delivery, and winter plowing.
- Long-term concerns regarding drainage, paving, and road reconstruction costs.

Closing

Town officials thanked attendees for their comments and indicated that all feedback would be considered before the ordinance is finalized and presented for a future vote. The hearing concluded after additional opportunities offered for public comment.

Recorded