

Manager's Report

- I've had several requests for "Children at Play" signs to be erected throughout the Town. Advice from VLCT says it's not a good idea. VLCT's explanation provided.
- The Town of Hardwick has partnered with Hardwick Rescue to supply those who wish to better identify the location of their property with E911 signage. Hardwick residences can fill out an order form online or in writing and send an email to Amanda.Fecteau@hardwickvt.gov, who will process the order. Volunteers from Hardwick Rescue will assemble the signs and deliver them at no charge. Folks can also drop orders off in person at the Town Manager's Office.
- We will be placing temporary speed bumps on West Church Street as a traffic calming measure and in anticipation of motorists trying to get around the road construction in the village. The traffic calming measures will be in place for the summer months. We all have to do a better job paying attention to driving within the speed limits and staying within the lanes of travel on all roads i.e. the sign at the cross walk at the school.
- Bids for the Wastewater Plant project will be opened on 5/10.
- Still waiting on a cost proposal from the SE group for the Pedestrian Bridge. I know they are working with Engineering Ventures to get the proposal together. I have been updating USDA with information as I get it.

DWU

05/05/2022

"CHILDREN AT PLAY SIGNS" DO NOT GIVE A CLEAR MESSAGE

VLCT MAC advice regarding "children at play" signs is that if a municipality is to erect these types of warning signs they must do so in accordance with MUTCD (Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices) standards. 23 V.S.A. § 1025(a). However, as this Vermont Local Roads News article from June 1994 entitled "'Children At Play' Signs Do Not Give A Clear Message" makes clear, municipalities should think twice about erecting these signs:

Road signs give messages to drivers. If the messages are unclear, unnecessary, or confusing they can cause danger to motorists and others. Maine municipalities and the Maine Department of Transportation use the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) as the standard for placing traffic signs and markings to give clear messages to motorists. According to the report "Maintenance Management of Street and Highways Signs" by the Transportation Research Board, improvements in traffic signing have the highest benefit-cost ratio of any highway safety improvement. About 29% of tort liability lawsuits against highway departments are related to traffic signing. For these reasons alone, it is worthwhile to install road signs according to the MUTCD.

Citizens often demand that the town erect "Children at Play" signs on their street to reduce the risk of automobile-pedestrian accidents. Selectmen ask: What does the MUTCD say about "Children at Play" signs? If we erect a sign on one street, won't we get requests from other neighborhoods in town to do the same? What's the town's liability?

The short answer is DO NOT ERECT "Children at Play" signs. The long answer is a bit more complicated.

First, the "Children at Play" sign is unclear and unnecessary. It suggests to the driver that, if no such sign is present on another street, children are not playing there, and it is OK to speed or to be less careful. Another driver might interpret the sign to mean that children are playing in the road. Always? At what time of day?

Second, it gives parents and children a false sense of security. By relying on the sign, parents might monitor their children less closely and children might interpret the sign to mean it is acceptable to play in the street.

Third, one "Children at Play" sign leads to a proliferation of signs throughout the town. Since nearly every block has children living on it, there would have to be signs on each one. The effect of too many signs is that they become ineffective. The proliferation of signs breeds disrespect, not only for the specific signs, but for all signs.

Fourth, to erect "Children at Play" signs in response to one request usually generates similar requests, thereby basing sign placement on politics rather than on sound traffic engineering judgment.

Fifth, based on numerous studies, there is no evidence that "Children at Play" signs prevent injury or decrease the speed of vehicles.

Sixth, because they are confusing and do not meet specific criteria for good signing, placing "Children at Play" signs opens the municipality to liability.

Seventh, since all signs need to be maintained to be effective, the proliferation of unnecessary signs places an undue burden on maintenance crews. Purchasing, erecting and keeping these signs in good order is expensive.

For these reasons, the MUTCD discourages the use of "Children at Play" signs. However, municipalities can and should post signs for school zones, pedestrian crossings, and playgrounds. The MUTCD makes specific reference to these situations. Signing such areas gives clear messages to drivers about the kind of zone they are entering. "Children at Play" signs, on the other hand, do not meet a specific criteria.

You might want to check with Vermont Local Roads to see if they have any more recent guidance.

Jim Barlow, Senior Staff Attorney

Road Foreman Report
May 5, 2022

- Roads graded: West Hill area, West Woodbury, Marsh Rd, Tucker Brook, Smith Farm Rd., Town Farm Rd., Ward Hill, Mountain View Rd., Dimick Rd., Bayley Hazen, Stagehouse, Hardwick Farm Rd., Pumpkin Lane, Porter Brook, and Montgomery Rd. Started today on end of Bridgman Hill and working back towards town. Should be finished next week.
- Replaced culverts: Tucker Brook, Smith Farm Rd., Cobb School Rd. and 2 more on Bridgman and started ditching on Smith Farm.
- Cleaned the two parks downtown, poured concrete for new light base on Main Street and set streetlight back up.
- Helped mark gate valves and manholes downtown for grinding
- Repaired catch basin on Summer St. and sewer manhole on Vermont Avenue
- Helped with a sewer and water issue on Lower Cherry St. and dealt with two water leaks

MEMO: Hardwick Select Board, David Upson & Mike Henry

FROM: Tonia Chase

Date: May 05, 2022

Subject: First, Second & Third Class Liquor License & Outside Consumption Permit

Hello Everyone:

Tonight you have the following permits for consideration.

First Class license for:

41 South Main, LLC d/b/a The Scale House

Second Class Licenses for:

Third Class Licenses for:

41 South Main, LLC d/b/a The Scale House

Outside Consumption Permit for:

We have no cited incidents involving any of the above businesses.
