

Coplin Plantation  
Public Hearing Notes  
January 19, 2022

The public hearing was held at the Stratton Community Building, Maine Street, Stratton, at 7:00pm.

Present were: Assessors – Benjamin DeFroscia, Robert Farrar

Tax Collector/Treasurer – Susan Howe

Clerk – Donna Pelletier

School Board Members – Linda Lowell, Bonnie Farrar

25 Residents

Upon arrival residents were asked to sign in and were provided with an agenda.

Ben DeFroscia started the hearing by welcoming everyone, leading the Pledge of Allegiance and introducing the elected officials. He then turned the hearing over to Robert Farrar.

Robert gave an overview of the immediate challenges facing the Coplin Plantation community:

Struggling to get candidates to run for open official seats. Trying to recruit community members with not much success.

Robert then went on to explain the 3 options open to the community followed by a brief description of what each option entailed.

Option 1. Continue as we are and keep trying to encourage residents to run for open official seats.

Option 2. Merging with Stratton/Eustis

Option 3. De-organization

A questions, comments, and discussion session was led by Ben DeFroscia.

**Discussions:** The possibility of changing the operating hours of the town office in order to attract office personnel was discussed. How taxes would be impacted by merging or de-organizing. The cost of attorney fees would be necessary if option 2 or 3 were implemented. The benefits of staying as we are giving the

community local control of their government. Merging with Stratton/Eustis we could lose the identity of Coplin Plantation, maintaining 8 miles of unpaved roads could possibly be an issue with the merger, but we would have the option of participating in their government. The big issue for discussion was that Coplin needed a website for better communication with the community. There is a website in the works.

**Questions:** Could the clerk services be contracted out to Stratton/Eustis if they were willing like we contract some of our other services? Would the identity of Coplin Plantation be lost with a merger? What are the duties of elected officials and what is the amount of time involved?

**Comments:** Residents thought more advertising for open positions was necessary. They would like to see a quarterly newsletter for current updates. There was a brief discussion concerning the pros and cons of social media. It was generally concluded that the best approach was the Town's new Website.

Ben DeFroscia, Donna Pelletier, Susan Howe, and Linda Lowell each gave descriptions of the positions they hold and the time involved.

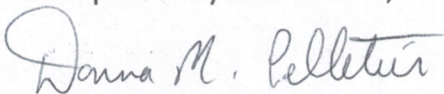
An informal show of hands was called for to determine which option the community members were leaning toward. Option (1), staying the course, was the most popular. Second was option (2), merge with Stratton/Eustis. Third was option (3), to de-organize.

The Assessors will be looking into the possibility of contracting with Stratton/Eustis for the clerk duties like we do for other services provided to the town from Stratton/Eustis. Also, trying to fill positions by job postings and networking with area Town Offices will be attempted.

The Assessors thanked everyone for attending and participating. Everyone was encouraged to attend the Town Meeting in March and School Budget Meeting in June.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna M. Pelletier