

## Town of Vassalboro Survey 2023

### #1 Would you favor a town ordinance that would help prevent phosphorous runoff entering local waterways?

YES= 81

NO=13

NO OPINON=11

#### Other Comments:

- Especially runoff into Webber Pond. It's a cess pool of algae which limits any participation or recreation on the pond.
- Strongly support an ordinance that prevents phosphorus from running off to waterways.
- Only if there were a defined limit for the use of lawn fertilizer containing phosphorus as well.
- I would need more information before commenting.
- This is a broad question. Are people putting it in? or are these natural chemicals? (trees etc.)
- Not if it costs us more money!
- Existing state law?
- Only the properties that border China Lake.
- Webber pond is valuable to this town and needs a priority from town leaders.
- Current shoreline ordinances must be enforced lack of enforcement is current major source of phosphorus in Webber.
- Grandfather established farms in a different program, so they don't have to spend their own money.
- How would you achieve this?
- If it does not impact owners not near lakes and rivers.
- I would be in favor of finding an ordinance that encourages citizens to do the right thing in preventing or reduction phosphorus. Examples might be to lower lake front valuation and therefore taxes by the number of preventative measures of lake front property owner or within the watershed.
  - Maintain a driveway/camp road to Lake Smart standards, having a buffer or a swale put in and maintained yearly.
  - The town might send a percent of the property tax (from those owners who are using preventative measures) to a fund that is used to maintain water quality like Courtesy Boat Inspectors, Dam maintenance, monitoring equipment.

## #2 Should commercial development be limited to certain sections of town?

YES= 74

NO=20

NO OPINON=10

### Other Comments:

- The only zoning, we have now is shoreland zoning. “piecemealing” ordinances is like partial zoning, do all or none.
- Depends on the types of businesses.
- Within reason. Vote on.
- Somewhat.
- Depends, are we considering a business park?
- If it is not too restrictive.
- We need more tax money.
- Town should consider “zoning” to determine areas for commercial development. Commercial development would benefit the tax base for all residents.
- Maybe a little like saving the lakes for camps, but in general no. Towns typically overreach here.
- Should be a comprehensive plan.
- For large commercial and all industrial
- Commercial development should be limited to certain areas of town.
- Large industry that has the potential to reduce our natural resources, pollute water, land or air and aren’t sustainable or tear up our roads with heavy trucks should be carefully regulated and restricted to route 201.
- The level of noise or traffic should be considered for all development.
- What type of commerce do we want to encourage?
- Encouraging businesses that support a rural area like landscaping, gardening stores, repair professionals (carpentry, electric, plumbing, mechanic)
- We need to look at what services are missing that we need as a town and where to encourage them to locate.

**#3 Do you support the Town promoting the preservation of land for conservation and/or recreation?**

**YES= 87**

**NO= 15**

**NO OPINON= 9**

**Other Comments:**

- The town has in the past and should continue.
- Would need more information.
- No tax dollars should be spent. Donated land only.
- Depending where, this is a broad question.
- Would provide opportunities for youth.
- We have plenty.
- Parks, walking trails, areas where people are allowed to visit.
- Promoting Yes! Legislating, No!
- If it does not impact the mill rate or tax basis.
- This might be done by adding fees to new development or expansions/development that goes to a fund for land conservation.

#### **#4 What is your preferred method of learning about town events?**

- Newsletter
  - local
  - Online
  - Mailed
  - emailed
- Local Newspaper
- Email
- Social media
  - Facebook
  - What's app.
- Website
  - A robust website
  - dedicated tab
- Reg. Senior page on Facebook
- Snail mail
- Electronic
- Town staff
- Town office sign
- Letter if personally affected.
- Videos of town meetings
- Flyers at Post office, town office and library
- Television
- Text about date and times for meeting for planning board and select board meetings.

## #5 What changes would you like to see in town?

- Having forums for discussing town issues that are moderated. Having more family, multigenerational opportunities
- Water recreation for all ages: we have 3 lakes in our town and no place for public swimming other than Breton's private place. There is no summer rec with swimming, sailing, canoeing.
- Waterville is developing an arts/music center, we could provide transportation for kids in the day care program to get to those activities.
- Connection young people and adults in town. Help youth feel that they are important contributors in our community. This could be town-related work like CBI, YCC or providing a website where it can match needs with you like raking or gardening for elderly. Encourage more youth groups like scouts, 4-h, etc.
- More commercial
- Moratorium on energy lines i.e., power girds
- Photo ID for Voting
- More green space
- Public access for swimming @ China, Webber, 3 Mile
- More business, Less government
- Zoning
- Improvement in Webber Pond.
- Ban solar panels, EV cars and trucks.
  - Tax EV car and trucks \$500 for road use.
- Enforcement of Junkyard ordinance.
- A recycling program.
- Traffic control
- Less vandalism
- Lower taxes
- The manhole covers set level with road (how many years?)
- Country stores in the East and North.
  - Important to keep village centers thriving. It would be nice to get has somewhere.
- Cleaning the lakes particularly Three Mile Pond
- More attractive park
- Side walks
- Only allow fireworks in certain areas on holidays to cut down on noise pollution.
  - Town ordinance to get a permit at a fee.
- Better boat launch area for China Lake with adequate parking

- Solicit feedback on town staff performance. There are some in the town that do not reflect the values of what a public servant should do.
- Keep it rural.
- Speed bumps on Taber Hill and Bog Road
- Fix the curve by Freddie's park on one side or the other not both.
- More people involved.
- New transfer station
- Less "pot" growing or "pot" retail.
- Dredge Webber Pond of weeds and algae
- More support for public programs
- Increase road budget.
- Senior housing assisted living facility.
- Dental medical practice
- Better Wi-Fi service
- Discount for paying taxes in full @ first payment.
- Stay small and not expand.
- Education changes. Vassalboro's education has gone down, bullying policy adhered to.
- Sidewalk on church hill road
- Less bickering
- Public transportation
- Continued investment in the school
- Bicycle paths
- Increase the size of the select board.
- Preservation of town property, especially improvement of rec fields and expanding hiking/walking trails.
- Roads trimmed of trees.
- Tax breaks for retired senior citizens

## #6 What challenges do you see in town?

- Communication within town
- The cost of living is going up and transportation options are going down.
- More isolation of families, elderly, Everyone! Less opportunities to socialize with neighbors or others in the community.
- Less ability to walk within the east village neighborhood due to traffic, loss of shoulders/sidewalks/public transportation.
- We continue to appropriate large amounts of money for public works (\$1.3 million for paving, new and maintenance of equipment, personal), solid waste (\$351,000) and public safety (\$200,000 police, fire dept, vehicles) with little discussion of what is the town's priorities? I would assume from our budget that it is education, property maintenance, health, and welfare of the citizens in that order. We do a great job at maintaining property with fire protection and excellent roads, a pretty good job in education but have little investment in health and welfare of the people who live her or of preserving the land and water for continued us for agriculture, forestry, recreation, or sustainable use.
- I recommend that we have a discussion about where and how we are willing to spend money on our priorities. Look at our stats on death particular in our people under 50 and se where are the preventable deaths and can the town reduce this?>
- I recommend that we have more services available for drug and alcohol prevention and treatment in our area.
- I recommend that the town look at the fire dept.'s recommendation last year to have a way to encourage residents to install and maintain smoke and CO alarms, that we educate all ages on how to deal with small fires, prevent first and prevent CO poisoning.
- Three Mile ponds algae bloom
- Crime
- Drugs
- Speed limits not enforced.
- Spending money needlessly
- Getting people to vote to approve zoning.
- Part time municipal employees cause too much turnover and smaller pool of applicants.
- Maintaining an animal control office that knows and can enforce the law.
- Maintaining exceptional education for our youth
- Traffic control
- Vandalism
- Need to promote business to come into town.
- The rise of discrepancy (what happened with the church on Priest hill was a good example) Lust for empire.

- Keeping it clean and safe.
- Becoming more of a bedroom community for Augusta and Waterville
- Increased vehicle traffic on our roads
- Keeping the rural atmosphere without stifling growth
- Creation of clean jobs, employment opportunities for young people.
- Aging of population- fewer volunteers
- Getting any ordinance passes to make people remove trash, hazardous materials etc. from their property.
- Find a way to encourage landlords to upgrade housing, including living conditions and exterior upkeep. Include periodic CEO inspections.
- Tax rates
- Upgrading the infrastructure (big ticket- new public works and new transfer station)
- More population growth
- Affordable housing.
- Respond time for state police or sheriff office to get to Vassalboro when they are needed.
- Sewer bill increase.
- Health of lakes
- I think that there are some people that would like to expand the size and role of the town. I do not think a majority in the town want this.
- Keeping a dedicated, knowledgeable code enforcement officer for long term
- Superintendent needs to go.
- Potential changes in traffic patterns NO! 4 way stop in East Vassalboro
- Stopping solar development
- The town does nothing about complaints
- Too much development
- Places to walk.
- We are still new residents and are not aware of any major issues.
- Poverty



## #7 What would you like to see more of? Less of?

- More communication an electronic billboard in front of town hall by the road
- Enforcement of speed limits
- More properties that are well maintained
- Encouragement of small businesses
- Investment of water quality
- Code enforcement of shoreline zoning
- Less of shoreline zoning
- Road work
- Keep the roads up and the fire department.
- Less salt on roads
- More free or low-cost programs through library, historical society, and grange hall
- No donations to anything that is not in Vassalboro.
- Neon signs are eye sores.
- Cannabis enterprises are not a positive beacon for the town.
- People to be more friendly.
- Less junkyards
- More communication about changes in town and what selectmen are accomplishing.
- More evening hours at town office
- Lower taxes
- Fewer government employees
- I love seeing the opportunities to get together (cribbage, bus trips, events)
- Notification of community concerns and views of residents about them
- MORE- community events that bring people together and build strong community.
- LESS- urbanization
- Less solar fields
- Bring back recycling.
- Less trash on side of roads
- Our library has been doing an amazing job bringing in more STEM kits and programs to the community. VPL is an asset to our entire community, and I would love to see it receive more funding and support. It would be nice if some of the school funding could get reallocated to the library department so every citizen can access instead of one that only a limited population can.
- Public transportation for seniors
- More access to our waterways for boating- recreation
- The aesthetics of the town is improved in many areas, especially parks and playground could use more of it.

- Less burn outs.
- More farming
- More church attendance
- Higher turnout for town meeting/ civil involvement
- More efforts like this mailing to reach out to townspeople.
- Less phosphorous run off
- Too much development
- Daycares
- Composting site
- More support of healthy lifestyle i.e., bicycle e paths/sidewalks
- Noise
- When paving roads, they crack up in less than a year.
- More local vendors at the old bean factory
- Places for more parking at boat ramps

## #8 Anything else you would like to write to us about?

- Junkyards
- Do not see power run by Augusta.
- Ban heat pumps!
- The Vassalboro sanitary district should enforce the ordinance that all residence and businesses connect to the public sewer within 5 years. This should lower payment for all who are forced to connect to the public sewer.
- The town should kick off a beautification effort project by providing a spring clean up day. Pick up junk, furniture, and other items free to the residents and dispose of them (explore how other towns have done this)
- Please make sure that people not on sewer are not asked to pay for a service they do not receive. We already pay for installation and maintenance of septic systems.
- Thanks to our dedicated and professional town employees. The constable, town office clerks, plow drivers and dump guys are doing a great job.
- Good job keeping on top of things.
- I do not agree with the police chief putting addresses of calls in his public reports. This can make people reluctant to call when there is a problem. - fear of retaliation etc. it can also affect property values when neighboring properties are listed for sale. As a retired state trooper with over 20yrs in, I know this is not good practice.
- I have never been notified of any town meetings. Why not? Don't we ever have any?
- Vassalboro is a rare oasis of rural life in between urban areas. That is what makes it great for me.
- I wish kids would stop doing burn outs and tearing up fields for fun.
- Make transfer station safer.
- Some of the clerks don't seem to like their job all that well???
- Many road signs are obstructed by trees and/or shrub growth.
- Id like to know where I can find how much crimes goes on in the town and the location and type of crime.
- Like seeing the historical society updates with building and displays
- The addition of sidereal/ malliard is a great way to have a more upscale living in Vassalboro.
- Keep it a small community.
- Improve the visibility of the town manager and select board members-outreach.
- Town of Vassalboro is fortunate to have a team of great employees. I have regular contact with town office staff, public works staff, transfer station staff. All are friendly, helpful, and dedicated to their jobs.
- Town police officer is a waste of money.

- It would be nice if the old mill in North Vassalboro had affordable housing.
- Will be leaving Vassalboro soon due to the lack of care for the safety of the community.
- Mark Brown was quick to help with placement of “slow, children at play” sign. The school is an improvement on where we were living out of state. Continued investment in our kids is key.
- Overall, I think our town is a great place to live. There are always challenges, but I have seen some excellent examples of good leadership. Keep it up. This survey was a great idea.
- Listen to senior citizen concerns.
- Put into the Townline how much money we got for alewives’ sales and what it goes for.
- How are town employees saving us money?
- Staff turnover?
- I think the new town manager is doing a good job.
- Give Cathy and Gene a big raise, they are loyal and long-lasting employees.
- Great job on the ball fields on the Bog Road.
- Everything is good.