

# MEETING MINUTES

## ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 pm**

**Members present: Rob Nadler, Jack Rose, Dick VanDyne, Cort Hansen, Josephine Howland, Steve Knox Alternate.**

Rob called the meeting to orders at 5:35 pm.

With one comment made regarding the 11/13/12 meeting minutes, a motion was made to approve the 11/13 minutes as amended, which was approved 5-0.

Rob told the Commission that a check had been received by the town for \$5387 for timber harvesting on the south side of the Kancamagus Highway. He said that it was about \$1400 more than expected which was a surprise. Rob said that the group should sort out NH state statutes how to disperse and account for money generated from timber harvesting in Albany.

Rob initiated the conversation on the agricultural use of the Albany Town Forest fields. He asked if the Commission needed more time to evaluate the entire project and the multiple aspects that agricultural use would involve. It was his suggestion that we slow down the process and start a more thorough plan. Some discussion was made about the pros or cons of having a limited term agreement with NH Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (NHIAF) and Susanne Brown. And, if a short term arrangement would have any negative aspects. The access to the property was a common concern with all members and many expressed that opinion that access issues should take priority over all other planning since extensive agricultural use would create probable conflict with the current access points.

Rob noted the stealth-like Forest Service/Highway Fund that Albany had utilized once before. He suggested that the Commission take a 2 prong approach; work to get the NH DOT and the USFS to cooperatively design and build a new access road to the fields and at the same time attempt to find a farmer interested in either haying or growing some other crop on the field with a short-term agreement. NH DOT would have to approve the location of the road as well as the USFS but Rob felt that it would serve both their interests in having a road not off of RT. 16 and not utilizing the current parking area through-way at the Forest Service Ranger Station. The WMNF Supervisor Tom Wagner would have to approve this concept and the State of NH DOT would likely prefer that the road not intersect with RT. 16 due to traffic flow reasons. Steve asked how Mike Martin Saco District Ranger would he feel about this plan and how does he feel about increased traffic around the Forest Service Ranger Station. It was thought that although Martin has been supportive of the land purchase, if a new District Ranger was to replace him, potential problems regarding access could occur. Rob thought that we should start higher up, suggesting Executive Councilor Ray Burton, being most effective at bringing in the right individuals in the NH DOT. He suggested that the group come up with a single sheet proposal for both the NH DOT and the USFS, and that we make it their project, having them adopt the road project entirely.

Rob made a motion that the Commission table any further discussion on the agricultural use of the field for the present time and focus on resolving the access issues. Josephine seconded the motion, a vote was made and the motion approve 5-0.

A second motion was made to see if the Commission can get the NH DOT and the USFS to sponsor construction using funding from the stealth Forest Service/Highway Fund. Jack seconded the motion, a vote was taken and the motion approved 5-0.

Jack moved that we meet on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2013, since the regular first Tuesday of the month was New Year's Day. Rob seconded the motion, and with a 5-0 vote the motion was approved. Rob repeated his suggestion that we work on a list of bullet points for next month's meeting to present to the NH DOT and USFS toward a meeting date them later in January or February.

Steve asked about the best date for a visit to Hardwick VT either 1/14 or 1/28. Jack, Dick Josephine and Steve who plan on traveling there chose the 28<sup>th</sup> of January.

Steve said that he had talked to Albany Selectmen about having the NH statutes changed in order to have Conservation Commission members elected by voters instead of appointed by selectmen. He has talked with Senators Jeb Bradley and Sandborn and Representatives Ed Butler, Tom Buco and all are interested in the concept. Steve said he would see who would be interested in sponsoring legislation this session. It was also discussed that should legislation be approved, there would then have to be a article drawn up for town meeting to approve in Albany.

Dick said that he had a call from Carol Andrews Director of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions. Dick said that she had told him that by naming public forest land after the name of the town, in our case the 'Albany Town Forest', any timber harvesting would be exempt from any timber yield taxes and that selectmen from all towns where this is done would find this legally acceptable. This is good news and would save money on any planned timber harvest.

After noting the next meeting date of 1/8/13 a motion to adjourn was approved and the meeting ended at 6:40 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.