

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY COMMON LAND GOVERNANCE BOARD

Wednesday, May 12th, 10:30 am.

Members present: Steve Knox, Jack Rose, Rob Nadler, and Cort Hansen, Harry Richardson, Gregg Caporossi, TPL representative.

On Wednesday May 12th, at 10:35 a conference call between the LG board Jack, Rob, Cort (and later Steve with Harry absent) and Gregg Caporossi of the TPL got underway. The purpose of the meeting was to have Greg update the Board on the request by State's Scenic Byways Grant committee (SBG) to expand the grant application to include the construction of a parking area built to federal standards and to establish a construction and maintenance budget for trail construction.

Discussion began with Gregg reviewing his conversations with Dean Eastman from the State's SBG committee. He commented on his impressions of Eastman's request and the reasoning to do so was at the urging of his committee. The principal reason was to enhance Albany's application for the purposes of improving the experience of the Scenic Byway visitor. The \$175,000.00 amount was an estimate by the USFS to build an ADA compliant, gravel parking lot to accommodate 15-20 vehicles. Based on this estimate Albany would be requesting \$620,000 in funding from SBG monies (\$480K for easement acquisition and \$140K for infrastructure improvements, [with a 20% match of \$35K contributed by the town]). The \$175K would be reimbursed at 80% by the SBG Fund, so the net cost to Albany would actually be \$35K over 2 years (vs. \$20K over 5 years on the current application).

Significant to the discussion was that it was a reimbursement, which would require the town to raise initially the \$175K and then be reimbursed by the federal government. There was some reluctance on the part of the committee to attempt to ask the town to do so due to the criticism that the land purchase had generated in prior town meetings. Jack considered the request for a \$175K appropriation to be more dependent on the timing, than the amount of the request. His argument being that if the committee could show that the bulk of the money needed was already committed by the SBG fund, and the request was based on an 80% reimbursement, the balance to be paid from timber management revenue, then the voters would approve since it would not cost the town in the long term. Rob and Jack asked Gregg if there would be any further restrictions placed on the property, particularly farming. Gregg said that there would be no problem with farming and the only possible problems would come from either aqua culture or wind generation uses of the property. (Steve came into the conference call at approximately 10:55 and Greg then summarized the conversation thus far.)

The committee agreed that the wording of this expanded plan that involved the construction of a parking lot and trail network would need to be qualified by the use of language such as "subject to the approval of the town's voters" in order to leave the final authority to approve any expenditures with the townspeople. Gregg acknowledged that the state's SBG committee would have no problem with this qualifying language, since it already was on the current application. He, however, noted that that at the federal level, this might be a problem. The committee agreed that this would have to be the chance we would have to make, since the committee was in no position of authority to commit the town to any such expenditure.

Rob asked about alternative grant opportunities and Gregg said that the SBG was the only option available at the present time that covered such a large portion of the overall cost. Jack wondered if the time required to close the deal with the SBG funding was too long to satisfy the Kennett Corporation and whether they should be consulted about a potential extension and when the voters would be asked for any appropriation. Gregg felt that TPL would be in a better position of negotiation to approach them subsequent to the award of a SBG than prior to any funding award. As to voter appropriation, Gregg felt next March might be premature and that it might be as long as two years away and if it was awarded the town would have two years to complete the terms of the agreement. Rob inquired if the location of the lot was flexible, if so to establish the lot on the town center location thereby covering site development there with 80% federal funding. Gregg said that the location was not

specified in the application. Steve indicated his reluctance to support any further modifications to the grant application due to his concerns over continuing increasing costs and obligations.

Rob made a motion that the LGB approve revision of the application to include a parking area and trail plan, Jack seconded the motion and the motion was approved 3 in favor (Jack, Rob Cort) with 1 abstention (Steve). The meeting recessed at 11:30am to reopen at 5:00pm.

At 5:05 pm Steve reopened the meeting with Jack, Harry, Rob and Cort present.

Steve made a motion to accept the minutes of the 4/12/10 meeting. The motion was made, seconded and the minutes were approve unanimously.

Cort reviewed the morning minutes with the board. Harry proposed that the Board amend the language "*subject to the approval of the town's voters*" to "*subject to the approval of the town's voters which the Albany Land Governance Board does not anticipate to be a problem.*" Jack seconded the motion and the motion was approved with 4 in favor and with Steve abstaining.

Further discussion involved the issue of the \$35K cost to the town. Harry proposed that at the appropriate time Albany should approach the Kennett Corporation and TPL and request that they share at least a portion of this cost. The board supported this suggestion.

Steve brought up the topic of a regularly scheduled meeting. After discussion and agreement Jack moved that the fourth Monday of the month be established with meetings to begin at 5 pm. Rob seconded the motion and the board voted and approved unanimously.

Steve brought up the topic of the need to partner with a land trust to administer the land conservation easements that would be required once the land was purchased. Who the Board should talk with and what questions will be needed to prepare were discussed. Steve proposed that he invite someone from the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust to the next planned meeting on 5/24. The Board agreed.

Rob brought up turning the Land Governance Board into a town conservation commission. The merits and advantages of a conservation commission were discussed. Rob and Cort were tasked with researching this question further.

Steve expressed his concerns with the Scenic Byway's Grant application the restrictions now required and TPL and Gregg's support of those amendments needed as they evolved. As a result he tendered his resignation as Board chair. After discussion with board members opposing this step, Steve then resigned from the Board. As vice-chair Rob assumed the chairman's role. The board agreed to hold Steve's resignation from the Board pending his reconsideration of the action.

Jack motioned to adjourn the meeting, Rob seconded and the meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Cort Hansen,
Board Secretary