

# **DRAFT MEETING MINUTES ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Tuesday, June 6, 2017. 6:06 pm**

**Members present: Rob Nadler, Cathy Ryan, Mike Stewart, Cort Hansen, Peter Carboni, Alternates: Austen Bernier, Paul Brown. Public: Steve Knox**

Rob called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Rob asked for comments or questions regarding the minutes for the 5/16/17 meeting. With no questions or comments, Rob asked for a motion to approve those minutes. A motion was made to approve the 5/16/17 meeting minutes and with a second, the meeting minutes were approved 5-0.

Rob asked for a trail update. Mike asked about the status of the material donation from NEMBA for bridging material on the new trail network south of the Kancamagus Highway. Rob said that the BOS had approved the donation and that the BOS was working on a procedure to accept and process grants and donation under a specific dollar amount. Mike explained that the planned bridge work would be done almost immediately adjacent to the road across from the parking lot where the trail would cross a wet area at the base of a banking. He further detailed the trail plan for development as the summer progresses. Cort noted that he had inspected the trails from the fields to the west end of the property and he found them in good condition. Mike has done some early trail work which had included leaf blowing and blow down removal on the entire trail network. Cort suggested that a trail day be planned for July in order to cut back annual brush growth. He estimated that 4-8 volunteers could finish the work in less than 4 hours.

Rob discussed parking and access issues that had been raised at the May meeting. People have been parking at the gate by the Saco District USFS office and have blocked the gate preventing the farmers from accessing the fields. He has spoke with Jim Innis, Saco District Supervisor about signage and if the USFS may have some signs that can be used at that location and had inquired about developing a second access gate behind the district garage area. Dog problems which had been discussed at the May meeting were reviewed and Rob displayed some draft signs that asked dog owners to keep their pets away from the farmed areas and to clean up after their pets. He asked for suggestions on wording these signs which, once agreed upon, could be made by prison industries.

Rob reviewed the history of the USVLT grants as they related to the agriculture and trail development of the Town Forest. Two grants have been awarded the Town: a \$7400 in 2013 for access improvement, signage and kiosk construction, forestry use, and a \$6000 grant in 2015 to incentivize more agricultural use of the fields by development of a well and storage shed. The total of the two grants was \$13,400, of which \$7376 has been drawn on them since 2013, leaving a balance of \$6024 remaining. Rob and Cort discussed finishing of the Kancamagus parking lot which they rough finished in 2014 by using some of these remaining funds. They met with Curtis Coleman in 2014 for an estimate on completion and it was determined that this can be done. Rob asked Cathy to report the balance of the grant to the BOS and ask them to accept the gift from USVLT to complete the work on that project including parking lot, maps, signage, kiosk, farm shed or any agricultural related project.

Rob asked Cathy about the status of the agreement with the NHFG Department regarding storage sheds at the Kancamagus lot. If the BOS does not intend to complete the agreement with the NHFG then any remaining funds from the USVLT grant could be used for shed construction for farmer use on, or near the fields. Cathy reported that the lease document was being reviewed by the BOS. Steve asked if any responsibility to maintain the buildings on the part of the Town was included in the agreement. Rob said that he would have to review the

document again to check, but he did not recall any such clause in the agreement. It was noted that the agreement was for a trial period of 2 years only, which NHFG wanted to include in order to test the arrangement before entering any longer term agreement. Rob noted that the agreement has been reviewed by the NH AG office and the former Albany Town Counsel (TC).

Cathy explained the current policy which is being developed by the BOS to have the CC receive donations. They would like to have the CC accept gifts under \$200, and that quarterly; Cathy would then total the donations and report the sum to the BOS for acceptance. Rob asked if Cathy could ask Town Counsel (TC) to review the CC options for accepting donations to the "Conservation Fund" (CF) a separate fund and account independent to the Conservation Commission's operational budget. What does TC think; could donations be directed to the CF provide an option for accepting bequeaths, etc.? He noted that purchases for small projects such as bridging, signage and such are cumbersome and slow if the process is too involved.

Rob asked Cathy if any date had been selected for the town picnic. No information was available.

The topic of signage was brought up again. Wording for dog signs was discussed, along with the suggestion that temporary signs could be laminated for immediate use. Rob noted that the Commission has had past discussion on the placement of signs identifying the Town Forest and listing the various organizations that contributed funding to the purchase of the property. Cort said that he plans on creating a larger sign town forest to be placed on posts at the new parking area once it is completed. He also said that the plexiglass cover sheets on both of the kiosks are in poor condition due to cracks and breaks, probably from thermal expansion. He suggested replacing the plexiglass with Lexan sheets when the time comes, as Lexan is more durable and easier to cut, etc.

Paul reported that he has an outline of history for use on the web site. He has been studying some prior history of the area, farms, home sites, logging and railroad history along with recording the process on how the Forest was acquired by the Town.

Rob noted that he needs to meet with the Mount Washington Valley Radio Control Club to delineate the area they will be responsible for maintaining in exchange for use of the field area.

With no other comments, and with no further business to address, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made and with a second the motion was approved 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.