

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, November 1, 2016. 6:00 pm

Members present: Rob Nadler, Cathy Ryan, Mike Stewart, Peter Carboni, and Cort Hansen.

Public: John Neeley/USFS, Colton Dow, Jake Davis, Paul Richardson, Dave Richardson, Steve Knox

Rob called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

John Neeley from the Saco District USFS was introduced and explained that potential sources of funding may be available for programs that reduce the risk of wildland fires by reducing excess fuel on forest land around Albany. He noted that once wildfires in communities of pitch pine and scrub oak start, they are dangerous and hard to suppress. This national program helps accomplish this work by establishing fire breaks, solid fuel load reductions, etc. He noted that the last record "50 year" drought period was in 2001-2002 and although this year has been very dry, it has been lucky that there have been only 19 fires on the WMNF (so far this year). Hazard mitigation programs focus on critical areas based on forest type, such as oak and pine, slope and exposure. In Albany there are such situations along Passaconaway Road from the Moat trailhead to the covered bridge; Bald Hill Road, and some areas around the Town Forest. Rob said that the Conservation Commission would be interested in participation in this program in and adjacent to the Town Forest and that the Albany selectmen would likely be interested as well for other areas around the town. John said that Gilford, NH has a cooperative agreement with the USFS and that Albany should do the same if they are interested in pursuing this funding. This would also involve the CVFD and the NH DRED as in the past, using a burn plan created by the USFS. This agreement will need to be coordinated with the Albany selectmen as has been done in recent years.

Next was discussion with the Littlefield and Grand View farmers. Rob handed out a contact information form for the farmers to update and complete that included owner contact, legal business names, mailing and street address, phone and email contact, and listed address information for those entities that should be listed as additionally insured on the certificates of insurance. Rob asked the farmers to consider the length of time that they would prefer to be established on their land use contracts; 5 or 7 years and if the time established would be important for any financial reasons. The individual farm responsibilities for the Grandview Farm mowing was discussed with mowing on to the west and northwest of their section being their designated area. Littlefield Farm's mowing area is to the northeast and east of their section which they have been working on this fall. Rob pointed out the importance of mowing as part of the conservation easement and the value of the trading of mowing in lieu of fees for the use of the property. Cathy said that the Albany select board (BOS) would like to have joint meeting with the conservation commission and the farmers soon. Cathy noted some of the BOS's concerns regarding accurate documentation, etc. Rob discussed the planning for town sharing the NHFG site with farmers pending an agreement with the NHFG. There are some concerns regarding legal exposure and potential costs that the BOS have which will have to be addressed. Peter said that he had visited the NHFG lot and inspected the buildings which he thought would be adequate for agricultural storage purposes. Cort reiterated his desire to have any, or all, improvement costs not to be paid by taxpayer money, but by grant funding alone. An opinion, he felt, that has been the same long term plan of the whole commission. Dave said that it would be great to have a storage area for equipment that could be protected from the public and the weather. Jake mentioned that it would be good to have some signage to explain what the farmers are doing on the fields with background information to address commonly asked questions which they have getting this summer. Dave mentioned establishing a designated compost area for depositing plant and vegetable waste. Jake said that there could be a great opportunity to make some educational tie-in between agriculture and the school system at the same time with the cross country running race hosted by Kennett HS in the fall, or during the growing season with the Kennett Middle School classes. Jake and Colton felt it is important to exposure students to farming and try to capture the growing trend in agricultural education programs. Steve noted that there could possibly

be a tie in at the county educational level as well. Dave said the new dug well was a complete success. With about 12' of well tile and gravel pack, Dave said the well has had excellent flow and recovery all summer long with Grandview Farm pumping from it for extended periods without any water problems.

Rob asked for comments or questions regarding the minutes for the 10/18/16 meeting. With no questions or comments; Rob asked for a motion to approve those minutes. Peter made a motion to approve the 10/18/16 meeting minutes and with a second from Mike the minutes for the meeting were approved 5-0.

The members discussed the planning for new trail on the south side of the Kancamagus Highway. Mike noted that the USVLT was interested in making a second loop of bike trails on the south side of the Kancamagus before reworking current trail maps. Mike said he is working on a GPS data collection for the second loop. The first loop will be completed sometime in the spring of 2017. He asked that trail maps should credit NEMBA as a partner in developing these bike trails. Rob asked if the last map file was created by the USFS and if they would assist with a replacement, Cort said he thought they would be pleased to help out again. Cort said that he has forwarded last month's trail expansion vote to William Abbott of USVLT for approval as per his request.

Rob noted the annual meeting of the NHACC is coming up on 11/12/16. He mentioned that the Conservation Commission will pay for fees should anyone be interested in attending the meeting.

Rob and Cathy discussed having the next meeting on 12/6/16, a joint meeting of the BOS and the farmers.

Rob noted that he had met Bob Parrish earlier and he said that both he and Kathy Carrier's terms on the Swift River Advisory Council have run out. The BOS will need to appoint 2 replacements to the SRA Council. Other town representatives on the SRAC are appointed from Conway and Waterville Valley.

Cathy will need to have the BOS re-draft a memorandum of understand with the USFS, similar to the one that the BOS had signed the last 2 spring with the CVFD and the State Division of Land and Forests.

The next scheduled meeting is December 6, 2016 at 6:00 pm.

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.