

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 2nd, 2016. 6:00 pm

Members present: Rob Nadler, Mike Stewart, Peter Carboni, Cort Hansen. Public: Steve Knox.

Rob called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Rob asked for comments or questions regarding the minutes for the 11/3/2015 meeting and the 1/5/2016 meeting. With no questions or comments Rob asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mike made a motion to approve and with a second the minutes for both meetings were approved 4-0.

Rob said that he had evaluated the Conservation Commission budget requirements for 2016. He suggested that the commission could reduce the budget total from last year by \$1000 as there was no expectation for needing the \$1000. He also suggested that the \$200 plus member fee for membership with the NH Association of Conservation Commission be dropped from the budget. His logic was that we were not currently using the Association benefits and that should we need to join in order to take advantage of their services we could do so another year. After some discussion by members it was agreed that the two proposals could save \$1200 this year.

Rob said that he was forwarding the land use agreement between the NHFG and the Town to the Selectmen for their review and the Commission's recommendation for approval. It has been reviewed by both the town attorney with some edits suggested by him, as well as having been reviewed by the NHAG. Rob said that there was no urgency since any use would not occur until spring or summer at the earliest.

Rob brought up the topic of a land use agreement with Colton Dow and Littlefield Farm for continued use of his portion of the field. He suggested that Dow's agreement be extended from 5 to 7 years in order that he could obtain the financing he required. Rob said that conservation commission approval for land use agreements were under the authority of the Commission and he had confirmed this with the Town Attorney. Peter made a motion to extend the land use agreement from 5 to 7 years, Mike seconded the motion, a vote was taken and the motion was approved 4-0.

Rob distributed a copy of a draft report from the Commission to be included in the Town Report in March. He asked if anyone had any comments or changes and that he would need to send this to the town's Administrator soon. Mike asked about the parking area mentioned in the report. Rob said that he has initiated work with NCC and DOT to develop a turn-out lot at the western end of the property along the Kanc. This would be more a turn out on the roadside than a formally designed parking lot and hopefully be plowed by the state during the winter months. Mike asked about plowing the other lot and the discussion included the topic of the obligation of plowing the NHFG lot in exchange for building and facility use and might this be combined with clearing the other lot after snowstorms. Rob said he would be asking Road Agent Curtis Coleman about plowing. Rob said he would include both lot questions to Curtis at the same time. Rob asked about the 6:00 pm meeting time listed on the report and if there was anyone who would like to change the meeting time. There was no interest in changing the 6 pm time.

Under other business, the O'Connor family has contacted the Commission about putting up a memorial bench on the Town Forest in memory of their parents. After some discussion it was suggested we make a motion to approve the placement of a bench, pending the approval of the design by the Commission and with the approval of the USVLT. Peter made a motion to approve the locating of a bench on the forest with both approval by the USVLT and the Commission, Mike seconded the motion, a vote was taken and the motion was approved 4-0.

Cort was tasked to contact the family to relay the wiliness of the Commission to go forward with the request pending final approval of the Commission and the USVLT.

Public Comment: Steve said that he was pleased that Dow was working on the fields and he mentioned that he had once had a conversation with Dow about locating a farm stand along the Kanc on the western end of the Forest on the exclusion area. Rob said that he could revisit the idea with USVLT in order to see if some grant money might be able to assist with this idea. Steve feels this is a win-win project for the Town and the farmer and used the example of the seasonal apple stand that is along the Kanc in the fall. Peter said he recalled that the planning board has the latitude to approve buildings under 200 ft. sq. for farm stand purposes. Steve mentioned that perhaps the USDA may have grant money available. Rob said that most of the grant money available from the USDA would benefit farmers and that town applications would not qualify. Steve reviewed the "50x60 Project" about New England's 50% agricultural self sufficiency by 2060. He noted that UNH is a key partner in this project.

Cort noted he had recently met with John Neely of the USFS at a regional fire conference and they had discussed the proposed prescribed burn on the fields. John said the USFS is still very much interested in doing this burn once conditions permit, perhaps this spring, which may come earlier this year if snowfall amounts don't change. Rob reviewed recent meetings with Jim Innis the new District Ranger at the Saco District office. Steve noted that his experiences vary with District Rangers but that they all have more authority than they let on.

Mike said that he had recently met with large landowners in the Bald Hill area including the Thomas family and that Kim and Beth were both receptive to the idea of a trail that would connect the Bald Hill town owned portion of the Forest to the lower and larger parcel along the Kancamagus Highway.

With no other comments and with no further business to address, Rob moved to adjourn the meeting. With a second the motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.