

# ***DRAFT MEETING MINUTES***

## **ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Tuesday, May 6, 2014, 5:30 pm**

**Members present: Rob Nadler, Jack Rose, Josephine Howland, Paul Brown & Cort Hansen. Dick VanDyne alternate.**

Rob called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Rob asked for comments on the minutes from the 4/1/14 meeting. Hearing no comments, a motion was made to approve the minutes and with a second. the motion passed. The minutes were then approved 5-0.

Rob explained the recent meeting that he and Jack had attended in Littleton, NH on May 1<sup>st</sup> on governmental procedures put on by the NH Muncipal Association. The full day seminar covered many topics related to the administration of town government for selectmen and town boards. Josephine asked about reserve funds. Rob explained that the rules were quite old and have not been updated in many years and that all of Albany's funds remain in a forest conservation fund as required and if the need exists in the future we would then open a forest management fund.

Rob said that he and Cort had recently met with William Abbott from the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (USVLT) as a follow-up discussion on the agricultural plan and the forest map project. William is planning on finding a template that he can work off of to outline an agricultural plan for the field. He has been discussing this with Olivia Saunders from the UNH Cooperative Extension Service who will be assisting with this effort. Rob noted that he and Cort would be meeting Olivia on May 17 at the fields to show a potential farmer the field area. Rob suggested that if Paul was willing, he should plan on being present. Paul indicated that he could attend. Rob will be working on a lease document that, once completed, he would show to Town Counsel for his legal opinion.

Rob updated the members on the recent meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup> that he and Cort had with Mike Martin and employees of the USFS Saco District Ranger Station. The meeting was held as a follow-up to last year's discussion on the layout and engineering of a replacement access road from west of the state DOT to the field area. The group walked out behind the ranger station to evaluate the burn conditions for the field, access questions, etc. They discovered that the Conway Village FD had attempted to burn the field the night prior, but the conditions were not favorable, and the burn was limited to less than a half acre in size. They also discovered an illegal campsite near the river and, while they were returning to the station, met a Conway PD patrolman who was following up on a complaint on the same campsite. Cort said that it appears that the burn conditions are not going to be optimal this spring and the burning will have to wait another season. Rob said that the Forest Service has backed off from their offer to engineer the road citing manpower issues the result of last fall's government shut-down. This problem has been discussed with USVLT and possibly involving HEB Engineering has been proposed. Dick noted that HEB could possibly be eligible for a tax deduction for donated time related to their engineering assistance. Rob said that he would follow-up with Doug Burnell, an HEB employee and USVLT board member. The Forest Service wants to move their gate from its present location on the road by the ranger station up closer to the paved apron in order to more closely monitor users in that area. Mike indicated that they had to work with Conway Village district staff to establish property boundaries before moving the gate location. Regarding the gate, Rob noted that due to the amount of unauthorized use behind the gate the flying club has changed the lock combination code on the gate lock. Cort has notified the CFVD and the USFS who are now aware of the new code for the lock combination.

Rob discussed several grant resources that Mike Martin from the USFS had sent Cort. Although one of the deadlines had passed for applications, they were both sources that may be beneficial in the future for maintenance and development of the new road and suppression of brush on and around the field area. Rob noted that there were other sources that would become as important and once the road planning was further established we would be able to apply for.

Cort updated members regarding the map project he is working with USVLT on. He explained that the large format maps for the kiosks were going to be satellite photos with trails superimposed over the photos. These vinyl laminated metal maps are commonly used by Nature Conservancy and other organizations on their lands and look very nice. Since the USVLT grant is being used for the kiosks, William's photo map will be used for the kiosks while the smaller scale, Forest Service created map will be used for the tri-fold maps for handouts, etc. Cort suggested that if these vinyl laminate maps are so inexpensive, he may try and obtain several copies of the smaller map made up with vinyl for use beyond the kiosk sites.

Rob said that he and Cort were going to go out on the Kanc on Friday to scout out locations for the next parking area by the town center exclusionary site. The problem with that area was with the ease that off-road users might be able to leave a parking lot in that area and drive into the forest. So siting that lot was going to be more challenging in order to limit costs associated with putting in barrier rocks, fill, etc. Once a site was selected, Rob would contact Curtis Coleman for assistance on the lot construction. He and Cort are planning on resuming improvements to the parking area at the logging landing by removing some more small trees and stumping them out. Once this work is completed the lot can be graded and finished.

Rob said he was hoping to locate some 'iron rangers' steel hollow posts, in order to solicit donations from visitors. He will contact Mike Miller to look into this.

Paul asked a follow-up question regarding the new road. Rob reviewed the plan which involved the cooperation of the NH Fish & Game and the USFS to use the old DOT property and buildings for the agricultural project, construct a new road to access the field area and retire the existing access road behind the ranger station. With the construction of the new road, a small parking lot will be created at the DOT entrance for users that formerly would have used the ranger station to park for access to the field area.

Josephine inquired about Monarch Butterfly habitat preservation. Rob noted that the USVLT forest management plan indicated a buffer zone to be left for milkweed growth and those areas would be designated on the agricultural plan. Josephine explained that she had recently attended a program on Monarch habitat preservation and that this zone could be registered by a national organization that is involved in such work.

With no other topics to address, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting and the meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.