

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, November 13th, 5:30 pm

Members present: Rob Nadler, Jack Rose, Dick VanDyne, Cort Hansen, Josephine Howland, Steve Knox Alternate. Public; Suzanne Brown (NHIAF), Paul Brown, William Abbott (USVLT).

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

With no comments made regarding the 10/2/12 meeting minutes, Jack made a motion to approve the minutes which was approved 5-0.

Rob noted the upcoming UNH Cooperative Extension's program titled Forest Laws for Municipal Officials to be held on 11/27 & 11/29/12 in case any of the board could attend either session.

Dick reported on his recent attendance at the NH Association of Conservation Commissions meeting in Concord. He said that he had been reading the booklet he received there regarding all matters relating to the financial responsibilities of the NH Conservation Commissions. He will provide his notes to both the Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen once he is done.

Rob opened the discussion regarding possible use of the Albany land by a Community Supported Agricultural (CSA) group or farmer. He spoke toward the commission's sharing the vision for some type of agricultural use of the property but at the same time the responsibilities of the CC to the Town as well as the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (USVLT) as the conservation easement holder. Susanne Brown of the NH Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (NHIAF) indicated that she was confident that a self funded farm could work with some risk shared by the Town. Rob explained that the Town could not and would not support any additional expenses, but that the CC would like to see a lease written that would factor in a farmer's investment in improving the property. Rob went down his handout list that noted the various factors that would enter into a lease agreement such as; size of the lease acreage, type of agreement, lease terms, soil conditions (before lease and after), property access, etc. Susanne recommended that the first use of the property would be to introduce livestock. Noting that she is a certified organic farmer (COF) and that livestock would be the highest margin/highest nutrient rich crop on the property. Some discussion went around regarding the type and use of livestock varieties on the property. Steve reiterated his opinion that the town was putting up the land for use by a farmer or CSA group and was not in any position to provide cash, however the town could support grant applications.

The CC members felt that Susanne representing the NHIAF should come up with a lease proposal and work with USVLT on an agricultural management plan. Steve felt that many of the questions raised needed to be answered before going very far on the planning stage.

Jack asked about how was the NHIAF funded. William asked about lease agreements that the NHIAF had entered into and could the CC be able to see them? Steve asked about labor sources that the NHIAF relied on and would crops be planted and harvested in a timely manner. Susan explained that the NHIAF uses 3 types of labor, interns, resident farmers, and one other note recorded here.

Rob reiterated that a lease agreement would be required and then the lease and agricultural plan would have to be reviewed and approved by the USVLT. Regarding time frames, Rob noted the next CC meeting dates would be 12/4/12 and around 1/1/13. William noted that the USVLT meets every second

Monday each month. Susanne suggested that she could have something prepared by the either of those dates.

Steve asked about the lease noting acreage required, so negotiation might begin. Susan said that her lease proposal would be in brief bullet form and would reflect a gradual approach to profit sharing over the length of the lease. Susanne left the meeting shortly thereafter.

Rob asked William about the status of the \$6400 grant request he had submitted to USVLT in October. The grant proposal came about with William informing Rob about a potential grant source that might help underwrite some of the access related expenses on the Albany land. Rob had written a proposal that included gravel for parking lots, gate and kiosks construction, etc. William said that he had added another \$600 to the grant request to pay for additional grass seed and fertilizer to help stabilize the recent logging landings and skid roads left from the summers logging operations. He said that it would be after the New Year before there was any answer on the request.

A discussion was had on the status of the trail work on the property. Rob and Cort had cleared a parking area and installed a log gate adjacent to the logging landing on the north side of the Kancamagus Highway east of the ski jump over two days in October. The following Saturday Cort, Jack, Josephine, Scott and 2 volunteers from the local NEMBA club Rob Adair and Albany resident Mike Stewart cleared the hiking trails from the landing east along the river to the fields and along the old road from the fields back the landing. All the blow downs and brush were removed and a leaf blower was utilized to clean debris from the trails. In addition 2 short relocations were constructed to go around river bank erosion caused by tropical storm Irene. Work remaining to be done on the eastern end is now blazing and signage. The western end trail work is left for next spring. The question of trail names was discussed. The Swift River, Davis Farm, RR Wye and Crossover Trail names were agreed upon. Cort will begin layout and routing of the new signs shortly.

Rob said that the check for the recent cutting should arrive shortly. William said that it had been mailed on the 7th of the month.

Jack asked about land access near the fields. The group discussed options from the east and south by the either the RR crossing on RT 16, RT 16 near the intersection of the Kancamagus, from the Kancamagus highway west of the State garage by use of the old road or otherwise, or from the FS driveway east around the Ranger Station.

Rob brought up how much the CC might want to scale the lease over a time frame. He suggested that initially we might just want to cover the cost of mowing the fields with a modest 5% profit sharing.

Steve handed out a draft agricultural plan that he had been working on that he thought might help frame the discussion with Susanne Brown and the NHIAF or any CSA group or farmer we talk to.

A motion was made to adjourn which was approved at 7:35 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.