

# MEETING MINUTES

## ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**Tuesday, February 6th, 2018. 6:00 pm**

**Members present: Rob Nadler, Cathy Ryan, Cort Hansen, Mike Stewart, Sean Wadsworth, Austen Bernier Alternate. Absent: Paul Brown Alternate. Public: Steve Knox.**

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

Rob asked for comments or questions regarding the minutes for the 12/5/17 meeting. With no questions or comments, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve the 12/5/17 meeting minutes was made by Mike and seconded by Sean. With a vote, the 12/5/17 meeting minutes were approved 5-0.

Rob presented a sheet with the proposed budget figures for 2018. Rob asked if the BOS had included a warrant article to apply annual surplus funds in the CC budget to the Conservation Fund. A brief discussion followed Rob's question regarding funding the Town Conservation Fund. Cathy and others agreed that this may not be a good year to make that change due to the jump in taxes this year. Steve asked if expenditures from the Conservation Fund would have to be approved by the Town. It was explained that some expenditures would not, but that purchases of land, etc. would require prior approval.

Rob mentioned that he had emailed everyone copies of the report from the CC for inclusion into the 2018 Town Report asking for comments. No comments were received so the report will be forwarded to the Town Administrator.

Rob brought up for discussion a 1/17/18 email from the Town Administrator informing him that the Albany BOS had withdrawn \$1,031.00 from the Conservation Commission budget for legal expenses requested by the BOS. Cathy said that she had researched the background on the legal advice that Selectman had sought from Town Counsel which included the farmer contracts, gifts and the proposed warrant article for the March 2018 town meeting. Rob said that the BOS had overstepped their authority, not only had the CC not requested any legal advice in 2017, but that the CC had not voted on any legal expenses from the CC budget. He felt that this was not right and not appropriate. Cort said that in his opinion the CC had most of those same questions addressed by the prior TC and these legal expenses were a rehash of the same issue and a duplication of costs proved to be largely unnecessary and a diversion from work that could have been otherwise accomplished while the CC waited for second legal opinions. Cort said that since the founding of the Town Forest he had felt an obligation to act frugally with the budget, as that was one of the criticisms at the start, that the Forest and CC would simply become another town expense. He said that is why the CC has always worked to obtain grant funding for project work on the Forest. Now the BOS was spending CC budgetary money without the vote or approval of the CC. Cort noted that it was not worth further discussion but that he wanted to go on record with his disapproval of the process.

Rob announced his resignation from the CC effective 2/6/18. He has provided a letter to Cathy to forward to the BOS. The letter details projects that he thought should be pursued by the Commission which included purchase of the adjoining parcel of land on the northwest corner of the forest along the Swift River, completion of the parking areas off the Kancamagus Highway and to look at potential future sale of the Bald Hill property to fund land purchases or forest improvements elsewhere in town. He added that the Timber Management Plan will eventually need to be updated as well. Steve said thank you from the town for his time and efforts. Rob noted that Town Forest property purchase was a big project that required a lot of time.

Mike said that the local NEMBA members would be meeting later this winter to start scheduling work days and the Albany trail project on the south side of the Kancamagus would be part of that scheduling.

Cathy asked about the NHACC membership. Rob said that although no one had attended any seminars in 2017 members can avail themselves of publications, seminars and field trips. Cort said that he receives regular emails regarding conservation issues and reporting on legislation before the NH Legislature.

Rob said that he would give the draft copy of the MWV Radio Control Club (MWVRCC) land use agreement. He noted that like the farmers they are responsible for mowing a portion of the field area in exchange for their use of the airfield. He noted that the Certificates of Insurance had been received from the farmers.

Rob returned his building key to Cathy and the file cabinet key he gave to Cort.

Steve noted that some research that he had done using USDA data suggested that annual food sales in Carroll County are estimated at \$200M but that only \$5M are produced locally.

With no further business to address, Rob asked for a motion to adjourn. With a motion from Mike and a second from Sean the vote was 5-0, and the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.