

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, May 7th, 2019. 5:00 pm

Members present: Cathy Ryan, Cort Hansen, Sean Wadsworth, Mike Stewart and Kevin Tilton. Absent: Paul Brown – Alternate. Public: Cristin Bailey, Saco District Trails Manager, USFS.

Cathy called the meeting to order at 5:11 pm.

Under new business Cathy began with the discussion to approve the minutes for the 4/2/19 meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mike and with a second from Sean the minutes for the 4/2/19 meeting were approved 5-0.

Cathy noted that Cristin Bailey was present to introduce the Commission to the new White Mountain Trails Cooperative's "Mount Washington Valley Trail Project". Cristin provided background information on how the WMTC was started and the work that they had initiated on the Crawford Path during the summer of 2018 and the planned work for 2019 accompanied by maps showing the trail and the type of work performed. The Mount Washington Valley Trail Project (MWVTP) is a group that has been created to enhance what area trail clubs and organizations are doing with non-motorized trails in the White Mountains and specifically trails within the specific geographic location of the Mount Washington Valley. She noted that the cooperative effort of all interested parties would help raise money easier through grant organizations and individuals as well as pool volunteer labor. Cristin noted that WMTC had raised \$300,000 in 2 years for the Crawford Path project and had used over 300 volunteers for the project so far. She used several local trail projects as an example of potential funding and assistance needs including the local NEMBA group and efforts to develop additional hiking and riding trails on Mount Cranmore and Black Cap in the Green Hills. Cranmore is funding a \$70,000 dollar project to develop a downhill, machine built, mountain bike trail network on their property and one goal for the MWVTP would be to tie in trails on Hurricane Mountain Road with greater parking facilities at Mt. Cranmore with a new connector to Hurricane Mountain Road. Groups involved in the MWVTP would include the USFS, NH State Parks, NEMBA, AMC, The Nature Conservancy, WM Valley Trails Association, Granite Back Country Alliance and others including USVLT, the Albany Conservation Commission, Tin Mountain Conservation Center and the Access Fund.

Cristin explained that the WMTC was creating 4 different work groups for the trails project; Trails Projects, Data, Marketing/Social Media, and Development. She noted the importance of developing trail data. People and groups need to report on trails that need work and the type of work needed along with the location. She said the USFS had lots of data on their trail network but that the non-government trails were not well documented for the type of information needed to develop maintenance and trail improvement planning.

The current plan is to identify partners within the project area and then collect data to cost out work and determine who will perform the work. Projects would be ranked accordingly.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 29th, at the Saco District offices at 4:30 pm. Cristin extended an invitation to anyone willing to attend. She expected that there would be at least one additional meeting in 2019 sometime in the fall to plan work for the 2020-2021 season.

After Cristin's introduction the question of trail projects on the Albany Town Forest was discussed. Cort said that the only priority he felt was needed was for bridging on two separate stream crossings on the Swift River Trail. Those stream crossing are seasonally effected by high water events and can be difficult to cross.

Cathy noted that the Gibson Center and AARP was looking at local trails and the need for trail networks suitable for older walkers. She suggested that the Albany trail network was well suited for this type of user.

Under correspondence, Cathy noted the receipt of a recent letter from the USVLT requesting a visit to the Albany Town Forest property as part of their annual inspection. Cort said he would contact them to schedule and inform members of the time and date.

Cathy asked about a work date for a trails maintenance day. June 1st was agreed to be the best date. Mike was planning to go out on Friday 5/10 to walk the trails and he would report back on condition and needs after he had inspected them. Sean would join with Mike on the same day. Cort said he would work on arranging for post holes to be dug for new signage locations.

Under old business, Sean suggested that the commission spend a few minutes each meeting date reviewing the draft Ground Water Protection Ordinance. It was agreed that was a good suggestion.

The next ACC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 4th 2019 at 5:00 pm.

With no further business to address and with no public comments a motion to adjourn was made by Mike and with a second from Sean the vote was 5-0, and the meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.