

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 7th, 2023. 6:30 pm

Members present: Cathy Ryan, Kevin Tilton, Cort Hansen, Mike Steward. Remotely: Sean Wadsworth.

Cathy called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

Under new business Cathy asked for a review of the minutes of the 1/3/23 meeting and noted an error that needed correction regarding the number of votes cast approving the prior months meeting minutes which should have read 3-0-1, not 9-0-1. With this correction acknowledged Mike made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected and with a second from Kevin the minutes of the 1/3/23 meeting were approved 5-0.

A discussion about the Albany BOS meeting regarding the Conservation Commission budget for 2023 attended by Sean was held. The budget proposed by the CC was reduced by the BOS by elimination of some of the costs associated with the monthly meeting attendance. The rationale being that that line had not been fully expended during 2022. There was a discussion about whether this was a sound decision on the part of the BOS but Sean had indicated that should the CC meet monthly, the BOS had assured him that there would be a avenue to fund meeting attendance costs.

Discussion evolved around the proposed expense of \$2500 to cover the cost of the updated Timber Management Plan (TMP) that is required by the USVLT every 10 years as part of the Town's land-owner easement agreement with the USVLT for the Town Forest. The BOS felt that the funding should be drawn from the Albany Conservation Fund and not included as part of the CC budget. Cort noted that that the funds residing in the Conservation Fund was gifted by the TPL after the purchase of the town forest and that fund should not be tapped for operational expenses such as the cost of the TMP but used for forest improvements only. He felt that the TMP was a responsibility of the Town as part of their contractual obligations under the USVLT easement agreement. And further, that the CC has never spent their total expense allocation but in only one year in the prior 10 years, returning the majority of those funds to the towns general fund which has been in the thousands of dollars over the same period. Also all expenses incurred have been primarily sourced from outside the town budget as donations or grant funding and all work has been done by volunteers only. Kevin noted that the budget hearing was scheduled for 2/8/23 and that the time to argue the question would be then. Sean and Kevin noted that there may be funding sources to off-set the costs of a TMP available. Cort suggested that unless the updated TMP was demanded by USVLT this year, that it be postponed another year while funding sources or the town budget be drawn on. Sean said that he would look into possible funding sources.

Under old business, Kevin said that he has had no response from the NH DOT regarding the silt fence across from the ski jump on the Kanc but that during a recent observation it appears to be either removed or buried in snow and that until the snow was gone it could not be determined.

Further boundary line maintenance will have to wait until spring due to snow depth.

Cort said that he had received a report that the combination lock at the Crossover Trailhead has been vandalized and will need to be replaced.

With no other business to discuss and with no public comments, Cathy asked for a motion to adjourn. Mike made the motion and with a second from Kevin the motion was approved 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7.09 pm.

The next scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, March 7th, 2023 at 6:30pm. Town meeting is Tuesday March 14th.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.