

# MEETING MINUTES

## ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, August 18th, 2015. 6:00 pm

**Members present: Rob Nadler, Jack Rose, Cort Hansen, Dick Van Dyne (alternate), Peter Carboni. Public: Steve Knox, Mike Steward.**

Rob called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm and asked for comments on the minutes for the 6/2, 6/23 and 7/18 meetings. With no comments made, Jack moved that the minutes for the three meeting date be accepted; with a second to the motion the minutes were approved 5-0.

A discussion followed about filling the conservation commission position vacated by the recent resignation of Paul Brown. Mike Steward has volunteered to fill the position. Mike has been involved with the development of the bike trail network on the forest in association with the local NEMBA chapter and has been helping maintain the trails for the last several years. Rob moved that the commission vote to forward Mike's name to the Select Board for approval on an appointment to the conservation commission to replace Paul as a full voting member. With a second and a vote the motion was approved 5-0.

Discussion was started on the topic of the MWV Radio Control Club airport size of the airfield and the incremental increases in area that the field has seen in recent years. The problem of efficient cultivation of one of the three large agricultural lots with the present length of the runway is an issue. Rob indicated that recent discussion with USVLT determined that they have issues with so much area dedicated to a non-agricultural use and that the expansion violates the agricultural management plan. Aerial photos from recent years were shown to highlight the increased runway area. Discussion over the agreement with the MWV Radio Control Club followed with Rob noting the draft list of regulations that has been discussed since meeting with the MWVRCC representative in June.

Items on the list include; provision for a certificate of insurance, signed lease agreement, organic fertilizers and pest control limitations, approval of construction of fences, structures or signage, gate and vehicle access, cooperation with school events and hours of use. At last month's meeting it was suggested that a clause be added to note avoiding conflict with agricultural use. Rob said that the town had still not received a Certificate of Insurance from the MWVRCC. Settling a fee for field use by the MWVRCC was discussed and that fee rates should be comparable with farming rates on a per acre basis. It was noted that farming rates were purposely set low in order to encourage soil and field improvement costs that were expected to be high initially. Therefore, MWVRCC should be set somewhat higher, and although the ground footprint of what the use is small, the area required by the club is larger as well as their unrestricted and special access to the field and longer period of seasonal use. Dick renewed his suggestion that perhaps one half of the fees could be accepted as an in-kind service with the other half to be paid in money in order that at least some income may be derived from the arrangement. The impact of the fee on the size of the club was discussed and a fee of \$500 per year was agreed. Dick moved that the MWVRCC be notified that \$500 be set as the annual fee with 50% be paid in cash and the 50% balance be paid with in-kind service, if desired, with the size of the landing field to be established in advance in cooperation with the conservation commission. Peter suggested that the new fee be effective starting in 2016. With a second and vote the motion was approved 5-0. Cort will write up an agreement to forward to the MWVRCC for approval.

A review of the grant funds allocated to the 2 different projects was held. The balance of the original USVLT grants for signage and parking improvements has \$4700 of funds still unspent. Rob and Cort have met with

Curtis Coleman, Albany Road Agent, on the cost of finishing the lot work they have started. Curtis estimated that \$2500 would allow for gravel to level and finish the surface, bark chips to dress the shoulders and perhaps some barrier rocks to restrict vehicles to the lot. Cort expects to install an Albany Town Forest sign once work is completed. Rob noted that Curtis had told him that work may not occur until the construction season winds down in late fall. The topic of the western parking area was discussed. The present proposal is to level and widen the road shoulder on the north side of the road, pending state approval. Curtis felt that \$3500 might be needed in order to complete this project. It was felt that perhaps with the remaining balance of the signage and parking grant along with some additional USVLT support that this might be able to be accomplished. Curtis will contact state officials to receive the necessary approvals. There is also a USVLT \$6000 grant which has been raised to help provide water and power to the agricultural field site. William and Rob are working with Eversource to determine the cost of running power to the field edge. Who would pay for the monthly utility bill was mentioned. It was expected that initially, the town will be billed with payments being withdrawn from our budget, but that the farmers would be charged to reimburse the costs once they were established. William indicated that grants should best be expended before the end of the year if possible.

The project involving a town forest sign to be located on Rt. 16 just south of the Kennett Middle School and adjacent to the CVFD brick building was discussed. Rob said that he has talked with William from USVLT and he is supportive of this project in association with the development of a trail that skirts the property edge and crosses the brook on the granite slab bridge to reach the fields on the east side. This would involve approval by the Sell's who own the bridge and the land adjacent to the bridge. USVLT has a donor who is willing to support such projects and hopefully be tapped by USVLT to assist with this project.

Rob made a motion to send a letter to Curtis to move forward with completing the parking lot projects. Cort will send a letter to Curtis to notify him of this intent.

The Grand View Farm's recent inquiry about use of the field was discussed. The Richardson family who are owners of the Grand View Farm on Tasker Hill Road are interested in leasing some portion of the field for agricultural purposes along with the construction of 3-5 high tunnel greenhouses of approximately 30' wide by 90-100' in length with a lease period of 7 years. The scope and size of the proposed structures was felt to be too large at last month's meeting but William has indicated that perhaps some accommodation may be reached within the agricultural plan. The problem of deed restrictions on the structures had been discussed last month and although USVLT may be flexible in their approach on this issue, other organizations involved with the purchase may not be, and this will have to be evaluated before any lease involving buildings could be signed. Having the greenhouses/high tunnels outside of the visible view shed may be a workable plan and the northwest corner of the field behind the woody screen of tree is the possible site. William has suggested that a performance bond to cover the town may be worthwhile given the scale of their proposal. Issues include; set-up, performance bond, power, water, fee, floodplain siting, lease and insurance were noted. Rob expects that the Richardson's will work up a proposal to bring forward at a later date.

Rob noted that William had noted to him that USVLT is growing more to recognize the value of agriculture on the lands they hold stewardship on and this was an important step for their organization.

Jack brought up 3 topics he wanted to address. First, he was wondering about the timber value related to the Bald Hill parcel, in view of the Albany plan to resurface the Bald Hill Road next year. Cort will contact Don Johnson who did the most recent timber appraisal on the lot. Secondly, he said that the NHFG contact has notified him that the MOU regarding use of the FG/former DOT site has been sent to the NH Attorney General's office for review. Lastly, Jack said that he would follow-up with Curtis on an estimated cost of developing a road from Rt. 112 to the field with a spur linking the back of the NHFG lot.

Dick reminded the members regarding the Forest Account status and interest bearing yield and provided a recent statement. Rob said that Kathy and the town treasurer were working on that and no change would be made to incur any interest penalties. Any accounting changes for this account would await the year end.

Steve Knox noted that he had a conversation Colton Dow some time earlier prior to Dow's planting that discussed the idea of a farm stand on the north side of Rt. 112 on the "town center" site near where the western parking area would be located. Steve has suggested that perhaps Dow, along with other town agricultural leasee's might be willing to cooperate on a farm stand in that area. Dow had indicated an interest at that time.

With no further business to discuss and with no public comment, Jack moved to adjourn the meeting. With a second, the meeting adjourned at 6:53 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.