

# MEETING MINUTES

## ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**Tuesday, December 3rd, 5:30 pm**

**Members present: Rob Nadler, Dick VanDyne, Cort Hansen, Josephine Howland, Paul Brown alternate (voting due to Jack Rose not present). Public: Joe Ferris.**

Rob called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. He noted that Jack would not be attending the meeting due to illness.

Rob asked if there were any comments regarding the minutes of the 11/5/13 meeting. Dick made a motion to approve the minutes of the 11/5/13 Conservation Commission meeting. Josephine seconded the motion and a vote was taken and the minutes were approved 5-0.

Rob and Paul discussed the Land Access Information meeting that was hosted by the UNH Cooperative Extension Service that they both attended on 11/20. The meeting was an information session designed to connect individuals interested in buying, selling or leasing farm property with others in the region. Other organizations including USVLT and NHOFA also were in attendance. Rob and Paul met with several people they thought would be good contacts once the commission determined our leasing plan.

Rob said that Jack had talked with Steve Solomon of the Conway Village Fire District (CVFD) and that Solomon had indicated that they would be interested in burning the fields in the spring. Other options and equipment for mowing was discussed.

Rob said that he had hoped that Janet Wilkinson from the New Hampshire Organic Farmers Association (NHOFA) would attend the meeting today as he had invited her to do so. It was his hope that the NHOFA and USVLT would work jointly to sponsor either a farmer, or farmers, on the property for agricultural purposes.

The topic of the New Hampshire Fish and Game (NHFG) and the arrangement that had been discussed by Jack and Rob to use the one of the buildings on the former NH DOT garage site for agricultural purposes by the town. Rob said that he expected that any improvements on the building would have to come from grant monies from either USVLT, NHOFA or another donor. In exchange for using the building, Albany would have to plow to the building in the winter. Other buildings on that site would be used by the NHFG for boat winter storage. Joe Ferris asked about property access and Rob explained the 2 current access points and the plan for a new access point at the west end of the property. There was some discussion about access for farming and it was noted that the USFS is willing to have the current access used for agricultural purposes.

Paul mentioned that one discussion he had had at the 11/20 UNH Extension meeting was with someone who suggested that once the commission starts interviewing for a lessee, that they recommended we add a farmer to the interview panel in order to get quality, farmer-related, agricultural questions asked during the interview stage. Josephine asked about water and Rob mentioned that there were several drilled point wells in place in the area of the fields, however, there was no electrical power at these well heads. Alternative power, in the form of solar, engine or tractor powered pumping was discussed. Rob said that he had emphasized at the 11/20 meeting that the town was interested in reclaiming the field and that the end result would be the creation of perhaps an additional 15-20 acres of field after the forest edge areas and overgrown field sections were cut back.

There is no word on the status of the Forest Service map according to Cort. He will follow-up with Mike Martin at the USFS Saco office. Rob said that he was hoping to see map included in the Town Report for the town meeting in March.

Dick asked questions about the Conservation Commission annual budget. Rob said that the money for the regular operation came from the annual operational budget that was created by the selectmen each winter for approval at town meeting. Other sources of money could come from the Forest Fund or Conservation Fund, monies that can be generated from timber harvesting, current use tax penalty payments, donations, gifts, etc. Rob said that once we start generating revenue from either timber harvesting or agricultural uses, we will need to have a fund set up for this revenue. Josephine asked about the managed Tree Forest signs that are commonly see on large tree forest properties. Cort said he could ask either Rob Adair Conway Conservation Commission chairman, or Don Johnson, Forester about these signs and what is required to obtain one.

Rob asked Joe about his opinion about using timber yield taxes or a portion of the timber yield taxes to put into a conservation fund and whether he would favor the idea. Joe said it would depend on having a plan or goal in setting the size of the fund, but if a plan was reasonable in it's goal he could support such a proposal. Rob asked the members if they thought it was a good idea and all agreed it was a good idea to do so at the next town meeting but before doing so, some research should be done to find out what the yield from these taxes were over the last 10 or so years to calculate a average figure to start from.

With no other business to address, Josephine made a motion to adjourn the motion was seconded. The motion approved, a vote was taken and the meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.