

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 4th, 2014, 5:30 pm

Members present: Rob Nadler, Jack Rose, Dick VanDyne, Josephine Howland, Cort Hansen & Paul Brown, alternate. Public: Janet Wilkenson, Executive Director, NH-Northeast Organic Farming Association (NH-NOFA).

Rob called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Rob introduced Janet Wilkenson the Executive Director from the New Hampshire chapter of NOFA. Janet explained to commission members the background on NOFA and what the organization could do to assist with agricultural planning for the Albany fields. She explained the “mentor-farmer” program that NOFA coordinates, connecting beginning farmers with land organizations such as the Albany Conservation Commission and Land for Good, etc. She suggested that NH-NOFA and the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (USVLT) move forward on a pilot program using the Albany field. Janet explained that the problem with many beginner farmers is that they come in with limited resources and fail to stay on a property because of their limitations. She thought that this pilot program would be different due to the combined resources that NOFA and USVLT could assist with helping beginner farmers with costs related to soil improvements, equipment, etc. Cort noted that USVLT had indicated that they would have grant monies available for use should an agricultural plan go forward. Paul asked about fees for leasing land for various uses and referred to his draft RFP that was handed out at the meeting start. Janet thought that Paul's draft pricing appeared reasonable and referred to the Land for Good as a good reference for lease pricing. Janet asked the board if it was interested in working with NH-NOFA's beginning farmer program. The board consensus was yes, it was interested. Janet excused herself and left.

Jack made a motion to approve the minutes of the 1/7/14 meeting. With no discussion, the motion was seconded and the minutes were approved 5-0.

Rob introduced the letter to Suzanne Brown of the New Hampshire Institute of Agriculture and Forestry. NHIAF. The letter which was drafted by the Town Attorney, explains that Albany does not intend to renew it's contract with NHIAF for 2014, referring to the contract dated 3/6/2013, paragraph 13; noting the lease expired on 10/2/13, and paragraph 15; noting performance conditions. Rob said that he would be mailing the letter on 2/5/14, provided everyone concurred with the letter. There were no objections.

Rob passed around copies of a proposed budget for FY 2014 for the Conservation Commission. He proposed keeping expenses low for the next fiscal year. Some discussion followed about whether the Commission should request that a percentage of the Timber Yield Tax revenue be diverted to the Commission to reserve for conservation purposes. The discussion about uses of the revenue, and the funding itself went on, and questioned if it was a good time to request this. The general opinion was that it was not a good time to do so and to leave the request for another year. Josephine made a motion which Jack seconded to approve the budget as written. The motion was approved 5-0 with the budget showing a 20% decrease in spending for FY 2014.

Rob passed out a draft copy of a letter to be included in the 2014 Town Report. With little discussion on at least one editing question, Jack made motion to accept the letter as corrected, Dick seconded the motion and a vote was taken and the motion was approved 5-0.

Cort explained the revised copy of the trail map that the US Forest Service has been working on. Several changes have been made including; adding the USFS Ranger Station location, showing the boundary around the Kennett Ski Jump, adding a 'P' for parking on the west end of the property, adding trail section mileage, adding a missing piece of the Trestle Trail from Davis Farm Trail to the Swift River Trail on the east end, changing the running trail to the same line style as the other trails, showing roads as a different line style than the trails, adding the Albany Town logo, showing the B& M railroad line, and labeling the river and brooks. There were only 2 new corrections suggested; one, show trails in a red or contrasting ink, and two, check mileage figures on the Crossover Trail. Cort said he would forward these suggestions to Jana Johnson of the USFS. Once these corrections are made the commission hoped to be able to include a color map with the Town Report in March.

Paul presented his draft copy of the Request for Proposal (RFP) that he has been working on. The members reviewed the draft which is largely complete and provided suggestions to Paul's questions. With some blank sections to fill in with numbers and addresses the RFP is almost ready for distribution. The primary conduit for the distribution soon will be NH-NOFA, with USVLT and perhaps the UNH Cooperative Extension Service assisting.

With no other topics to address, Jack moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second and a vote, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.