

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, June 3rd, 2014, 5:30 pm

Members present: Rob Nadler, Jack Rose, Josephine Howland, Paul Brown & Cort Hansen. Dick VanDyne alternate.

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

Rob asked for comments on the minutes from the 5/6/14 meeting. Hearing no comments, Jack made a motion to approve the minutes and with Josephine's second, the motion passed. The minutes were then approved 5-0.

A brief discussion on the topic of the recent selection as an Editor's Pick – Best of NH 2014 in the Multi-Use Trail category. Rob and Cort reviewed the award. Cort is working on a press release to announce the selection for local publication.

Discussion began with a review of the Draft Agricultural Management Plan for the Town Forest that has been created by William Abbott from the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust and Olivia Saunders from the UNH Cooperative Extension Service and Nels Liljedahl from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Members were very pleased with the document and there were no recommended modifications proposed.

Rob reviewed the recent meeting along with Paul and Cort on May 17th with Olivia Saunders from the UNH CES and to show the land to a prospective farmer. Rob noted that USVLT has delineated the fields into smaller lot sizes of 1-8 acres. The farmer is interested in one of these lots and is working on a plan to farm next season. Like Mitchell, she will be looking to planting a cover crop to improve the soils prior to cultivation next year. Rob noted that he has an agricultural lease contract that he would like to have reviewed by town counsel before having Mitchell sign it. Paul made a motion that Rob do so, Josephine seconded the motion and the board voted 5-0 to have Rob submit it to town counsel for review.

Josephine inquired about the size of the Monarch Butterfly zone. Rob noted that the USVLT forest management plan indicated a buffer zone to be left for milkweed growth and those areas would be designated on the agricultural plan. He would have to check with USVLT to determine the size of this area. Josephine inquired about a name for this site so it could be registered by a national organization that is involved in such work. No names were given, with further study on this problem agreed.

Rob noted that he, Paul and Cort worked on the field on Friday the 30th, mowing, cutting and piling brush. Rob used his tractor and brush hog to tackle some of the area left by Susanne Brown last fall. Further mowing needs to be done in this area. Paul and Cort cut brush that has been encroaching on the field along the river on the north side. The intention is to chip the brush piles shortly.

Dick noted that he has hung the contest bird houses and explained where he placed them.

Rob and Cort reviewed the recent incident of construction debris found at the gated entrance to the forest on the Kancamagus Highway. The USFS reported the problem to Cort on 5/29. He went there the same day and found a truck load of fiberglass insulation dumped in the woods. On 5/30 they went to the USFS Saco District office and spoke with the Law Enforcement ranger there. The pile had been re-

moved by then, by who, is yet to be determined. The forest service has charged an individual with this violation and the Carroll County sheriff has done the same.

Rob noted that USVLT is planning on doing their annual walk-through of the property shortly and he would like to clean-up the debris that has been left on the two campsites west of the Moat Mountain view site on the Swift River. These campsites have been there since prior to the purchase of the land and have assorted junk left on them. Cort said that he can drive into the view site and from there use wheel barrels to move the trash out of the area which is a short distance from the view site.

Rob said that he, Paul and Cort had scouted out a potential parking lot site on the west end of the property on the same day they had met with Olivia Saunders. They have flagged the boundaries and expect to meet with Curtis Coleman soon to get an estimate on development of the lot. At the same time Curtis can look at gravel needs for the rough lot made last year ½ mile east of that location.

Cort updated the members on the status of the kiosk sign project. William Abbott has ordered large format, aluminum backed, vinyl maps of the trail network which are expected to arrive shortly. At the same time smaller versions of the USFS trail map have been ordered for use on small signs placed out in the trail network. These small signs will use scrap materials left over from the construction of the kiosks last fall. Trail maps in a brochure form will be printed for use using the USFS map with regulations and a suggestion that tax deductible donations are accepted for care and management of the town forest.

Cort discussed a complaint regarding a mountain biker user and horse riders that same morning. The mountain bike user felt the single track was too narrow to accommodate both types of use and that safety was a concern. Cort said that he had explained the prior to the purchase of the property, the committee had established that there would be no changes in made from prior use of the land in order to gain popular support from Albany voters. Cort told the rider that hopefully horse riders will recognize the limited space of the single track trails and will migrate toward the wider trails on the eastern end of the property.

Members discussed a tentative date of Friday, June 13th for further brush cutting and chipping on the fields. Cort will investigate chipper procurement from several sources. He feels that once this work is done, further brush cutting should wait until next spring due to the rapid growth of poison ivy along the field edges.

Josephine inquired about brush cutting on the south east corner of the field along the ditch lines and banking. Rob noted that there is possible grant funding available from the USDA and that investigation should be made into draining and improving that portion of the field toward future agricultural use. Some of these grant sources were discussed at last month's meeting and were forwarded to our attention from Mike Martin from the USFS.

The date of the Albany Town Picnic was notes as Saturday July 19th with a planning meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 11th at 6:00 pm at town hall.

With no other topics to address, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting and the meeting adjourned at 6:06 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.