

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, November 5th, 5:30 pm

Members present: Rob Nadler, Jack Rose, Dick VanDyne, Cort Hansen, Josephine Howland, Paul Brown alternate. Public: Susanne Brown, NH Institute of Agriculture and Forestry.

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

Rob made a motion to approve the minutes of the 10/1/13 Conservation Commission meeting. Jack moved the motion Josephine seconded it and a vote was taken. The minutes were approved 5-0.

Paul presented a sheet of questions that he had generated while researching the options for leasing the town field for agricultural use. There were many questions related to what restrictions might apply, what the lease package should look like and the procedure to initiate the lease process as well as some miscellaneous notes. The handout started off conversation with Susanne questioning the length of her lease. She was under the impression that she had a 3 year agreement. Rob said that we did not have a copy of the lease agreement on-hand but that the size of the property would likely permit multiple users if that was in fact the case. Most committee members were of the understanding that it was an annual lease with the right for annual renewal should both parties approve. Susanne said that she interpreted the agreement to require mowing by September (not having to cut during the growing year). She indicated that she had expenses related to transporting equipment, fuel, labor, etc. that needed to have consideration in the arrangement. Committee members noted that their interpretation was that the cutting would occur early enough in order to allow harvesting of at least a crop of mulch hay this season in order to offset expenses and the late cutting was simply lost opportunity. Susanne indicated that the field was much too woody and it was unlikely that mulch hay production was possible without burning or chopping the existing cover. Jack asked her about burning and she said that Saco District Ranger Mike Martin had said that the USFS could do it as a training exercise. Cort said that Rob had told him that Susanne had this conversation with Mike Martin and so he had asked Mike about the idea earlier in the week. Mike had indicated that they were neither sufficiently staffed or had funding to allow them to do so. They could however advise. He suggested the Conway Village FD do the burn. Cort noted that Curtis Kennett had been the assistant fire chief during previous burns and the fact it was then a Kennett property was an important factor that would now probably rule out this suggestion. Jack said that he would ask the CVFD chief about burning the field. Dick asked Susanne about what she intended to do about the woody residual material left over from mowing. She said that she hoped it would be burned, if not perhaps a flail mower might help chop up the wood residue. Some discussion followed about how much more mowing needed to be done and the areas that could not be mowed along the drainage ditches. Susanne said that she hoped to be able to finish the last section not mowed. Commission members asked questions about the machinery she was using and Susanne explained the size and problems she had experienced during the season.

Conversation went around to access. Cort said that in his recent discussion with Mike Martin he said that he had a draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the town prepared and he would be sending it soon. The DOT garage was discussed and the likelihood that the initial length of the road would be shorter as a result, however, the need for a road that entered Rt. 112 would be needed since access through the DOT site would be restricted by locked gates. (Jack excused 6:15 pm)

Paul asked Susanne about what would be her plan for the land. She said that would depend on who managed the lease and she explained that her function was to refer the town to interested parties who

then would select the type of use for the land and NHIAF would manage the lease. She explained that she can go a step further than the organization Land for Good, in that she is able to do agricultural planning and create an agricultural plan for the property. Paul asked how soon she could have such a plan and she said that she could do so by January. Josephine thought it would be good if the land could help Albany become food self-sufficient or at least assist organizations like the Dinner Bell, Gibson Center, etc. Paul asked about estimated hay yields and she thought about 10 round bales or 50-60 square bales per acre. Dick indicated some skepticism about those numbers. Rob said that he would call USVLT to discuss agricultural use.

After Susanne left there was a brief discussion about the trail status and work remaining on the parking area off the Kancamangus. Rob and Cort said that they had scouted out some possible locations for the far western lot and had not found any suitable sites that would allow 6-10 cars to park without preventing four wheel drive vehicles access to the numerous skid roads. As a result any lot in that area would have to have some type of barrier constructed to prevent vehicles from leaving the parking lot and entering the property illegally. Cort said that as soon as we receive the map data from the USFS we can get maps made and posted on the kiosks and that this process had been delayed by the government shutdown.

With no other business to address, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion approved, a vote was taken and the meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.