

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, April 4, 2017. 6:05 pm

Members present: Rob Nadler, Mike Stewart, Cort Hansen, Peter Carboni, Alternates: Austen Bernier, Paul Brown; Absent: Cathy Ryan. Public: Steve Knox

Rob called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm. He noted that Austin Bernier would be an acting member in place of Cathy Ryan in her absence.

Rob asked for comments or questions regarding the minutes for the 2/8/17 meeting. With no questions or comments, Rob asked for a motion to approve those minutes. Mike made a motion to approve the 2/8/17 meeting minutes and with a second from Peter the meeting minutes were approved 5-0.

The election of Commission Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary was held. Rob asked if anyone was interested in any of these positions. With no takers, he suggested that if everyone agreed, that the positions would remain as they were in 2016. With no further discussion, Mike made a motion to approve committee positions with Rob as Chair, Cathy as Vice Chair and Cort as Secretary and with a second from Peter the motion was approved 5-0.

Cort reviewed his correspondence with John Neely of the USFS regarding managing a prescribed burn this spring on the Town Forest fields. John had indicated that due to his prior commitments he could not perform as a burn boss, but perhaps Steve Solomon of the CVFD or someone from the NH DRED could act as such. Cort said he would contact Steve Solomon to find out if he would be available. He said that the Albany BOS needs to start the process with a MOU with the USFS regarding the Town's involvement in a fuel reduction program in Albany. This is the same program as was outlined in a prior Conservation Commission meeting last fall.

Rob said he had a list of questions for Cathy to provide to Town Counsel (TC) to help define the donations to the Town Forest. He was looking for some guidance to determine how to handle volunteer labor, donated equipment time, memorials, dollar values for each, etc. He will contact Cathy with the list of questions for the TC.

Rob discussed a recent request he had from Grand View Farm to put up temporary caterpillar tunnels on the fields at the start of the growing season that would be removed once the danger of frost had past. These tunnels are up to 12' wide and 8' tall by as much as 150' in length. He said that approval for these tunnels would fall to the USVLT and that he had previously contacted William Abbott regarding this question. Abbott had replied with a list of criteria that would have to be met in order to approve what USVLT regards as temporary structures. Rob indicated that time was important as the farm needs to order and have ready the tunnels for use at the start of the growing season.

Rob asked for a motion to authorize him to work with USVLT to provide to Grand View Farm the details restricting the establishment of tunnels as they are listed by USVLT. Peter made a motion to have Rob deliver the details as provided and approved by USVLT to Grand View Farm, with a second from Mike the motion was approved 5-0.

Paul asked about volunteer labor and if it was covered by the Town's insurance carrier. Rob said that Selectman Rick Hiland has provided a copy of the release form to Rob that the Town's insurance carrier has delivered. Rob will forward a copy of this waiver to members for review. Paul suggested a version that has a 12 month duration period to avoid having to sign off on the same form frequently whenever work was being performed by commission members. Peter inquired as to the presence of any students on the fields if they are in-

volved in any educational program as has been suggested by the Littlefield farmers and if the students are covered by SAU 9.

Rob noted that Rick Hiland has provided him with draft copies of the agricultural agreements that need to be finished and delivered to the farmers. Once the final copy has been created it will need to be reviewed for approval by TC before getting signatures by the farmers. Rob said that we need to establish the area of responsibility for mowing that the Grand View Farm will be assigned in exchange for their use of the field area. He noted that the Littlefield Farm and the MWVRCC model airplane club already has been assigned their areas.

A brief discussion of strategic planning for the next 10 years was held. A priority was made of the need to reclaim the field area adjacent to Rt. 16 to clean the swales, reconstruct a pair of granite slab bridge abutments and drain the wet area near Rt. 16. Also noted was the plan to construct a trail from near the Rt. 16 RR crossing down to the fields using the granite slab bridge. Cooperation of at least one of the abutters will be necessary, as a short portion of this trail would cross private land.

Rob said that the Albany BOS would like to have the commission provide a map of the proposed site of the western trailhead location in order for the State DOT to approve development of a pull-off lot at that site. Rob indicated that he felt a driveway permit was not needed and used by example how many pull-offs are located along the Kancamagus Highway. Mike asked if the pull-off and establishment of a trailhead and kiosk would fulfill the requirement to establish use of the 50 year period in deed for that 6+ acre parcel by the Town.

Peter asked about whether signs within the Town Forest fall under the Albany Zoning sign ordinance regulations or if they were exempt since they were town authorized. Peter questioned if the Albany ZBA needs to approve these signs. He indicated that the Planning Board is working on a re-write currently.

Mike said that he'd like to locate with Cort, a site that can be used to deliver materials this spring that will be used this summer for construction of the bike and hiking trail on the south side of the Kancamagus Highway.

Rob said that he would copy everyone with the volunteer release form for work on the Town Forest. Mike said that NEMBA has its' own form and he was wondering if that could replace the need to have another signed form. NEMBA covers their volunteers with insurance liability coverage for trail workers which involves a safety program, daily safety talk, etc.

Paul offered to start work on the history of the Town Forest. He will look into some prior history of the area, farms, home sites, logging and railroad history along with recording the process on how the Forest was acquired by the Town.

With no other comments, and with no further business to address, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made and with a second the motion was approved 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.