

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, April 1, 2014, 5:30 pm

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

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

Rob asked for comments on the minutes from the 3/4/14 meeting. Hearing no comments, Jack moved to approve the minutes and Josephine seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 5-0.

Rob brought to everyone's attention Glen Mitchell's recent application for agricultural use of the field this summer. It was noted that he is seeking a 5 year lease for 10 acres of the field. The draft of a lease agreement will be needed to be created prior to any use and the agricultural plan will need to be completed by William Abbott of the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust (USVLT). Rob said that Glen does not have an urgent need to have this done immediately.

Conversation went on regarding the agricultural plan for the field. Rob noted that William had recently asked for suggestions, or a "wish list", for inclusion in the agricultural plan and he had already received some input from members. Discussion went around on what types of use should be included in the agricultural plan and Rob made notes of everyone's suggestions that he said he would submit to William for inclusion. Some conversation revolved around the topic of different livestock use of the field and the desire to have as part of the agricultural use of the land, some return for Albany residents in the form of some type of CSA food share, etc. It was agreed that perhaps 5 acres be the minimum lease lot size to avoid management and access problems.

Members reviewed the two maps that Rob had provided from William Abbott who had generated maps of the fields showing the existing soil types and a possible division of the field into different size lots. The lots used either apparent, or natural boundaries, to break up the field area into lots from less than a acre in size to larger plots.

Returning to the lease agreement with Glen Mitchell, Paul noted that Glen would have a better cash flow at the end of the growing season, and perhaps the lease agreement should reflect that any payments be made later in the summer season.

Cort discussed his conversation with Fire Chief Steve Solomon of the Conway Fire Department (CVFD) regarding planning for a controlled burn of the field this spring. Chief Solomon asked that the Albany Board of Selectmen provide a letter authorizing the CVFD to burn the fields, noting any events that may be impacted by the burning this spring. Solomon noted that the burn would be subject to the precise timing of optimal burn conditions and would occur on a short moments notice. He said once the fields start to green up it would not burn well, so the window of opportunity will be tight this year. Members discussed areas to burn and areas to avoid burning, such as the model airplane landing area. Rob said that he would draft a letter for the selectmen's meeting on 4/2/14.

Discussion of the use of the field by the model airplane club went on. Rob had a recent discussion with Jeff Dicey, club president in which Dicey indicated that they were maintaining the access road. Rob felt that if this is true, and they are making improvements to the road, that discussion about charging the club a fee for use of the fields may be premature. Jack's earlier discussion with a club past president had indicated that they thought they had deeded and indefinite use of the property for free. This is apparently

a misconception on their part since there is no mention of the club use of the field in the deed. Cort said that a conversation with the late David Roode had revealed that either the USFS or the CVFD did not want any improvements made to the road in order to discourage use of it by the general public and so they had not decided to invest in adding material to fill seasonal puddles in the road. Further investigation it was agreed would be needed on this issue.

A brief review of spring work was discussed. The competition of the kiosk project and the western parking lot were the two principal topics. The importance of completing the western lot would then infer that development on the town's exclusionary zone had begun, thereby meeting the deed restrictions on the property. The problem with containing vehicles to the lot was discussed with the issue of how to best keep vehicles from attempting to off-road use the property beyond the lot's perimeter. It was agreed if available, barrier rocks were the best choice since they were impervious to rot and were difficult to move and thereby circumvent.

The topic of a spring trail day was raised. Cort thought we should wait for the May meeting and schedule a day in early May for a volunteer day. Cort thought we should however look toward working on brushing the edges of the field before then.

Dick noted that there were 12 bird houses ready for judging in the Town Hall hallway. The deadline for bird house entries was 4/1/14.

Dick also noted that since he is 86 years old and cannot contribute to some of the field work needed so that he was proposing that he become the alternate member to the Commission and that Paul replace him as a full member. Rob pointed out that the Commission needed to elect the chairman position as well, so this was a good opportunity to do so. Jack then moved that Rob be elected Commission chair, Dick seconded the motion and a vote was made with all voting in favor. Rob then made a motion that Dick be moved to the alternate position and Paul replace him as a full member. Jack seconded the motion, a vote was taken and all voted in favor.

Dick suggested we judge the bird houses before we adjourn the meeting. The commission went out to the hallway and selected the winner and runner-up bird houses. Dick said he would contact the two winning entries and then install them later this spring in the forest.

With no other topics to address, Jack moved to adjourn the meeting, with Josephine seconding and a vote taken, the meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.