

# ***DRAFT MEETING MINUTES***

## **ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Tuesday, February 3rd, 5:30 pm**

**Members present: Rob Nadler, Jack Rose, Dick VanDyne, Cort Hansen, Paul Brown.**

Rob called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.

Rob asked if there were any comments regarding the minutes of the 9/2/14 meeting. Jack made a motion to approve the minutes of the 9/2 Conservation Commission meeting and Dick seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved 5-0.

Rob directed everyone to the Bragg letter dated 2/1/15 requesting use of the riverside portion of the open field for a wedding ceremony. Rob suggested we create a list of concerns to reply to Bragg regarding gate access, parking, litter removal, sanitation, mowing, duration of the event, etc. Jack proposed that the cost of a sheriff's deputy be researched. The discussion also noted whether an inquiry should be made to William Abbott of USVLT regarding any restrictions in the conservation easement for such use.

Jack updated the status of the DOT property and the transfer of ownership to the NH Fish and Game Department. Transfer of the property is in the final stages. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will need to be drawn up between the Town and the NHFG. The MOU will have to then be approved by the NH attorney general's office. The cost of upgrading the structures on the property for agricultural purposes is expected to be paid by either the individual farmer or farmers, or by grant funding provided through the USVLT. Should the Town be required to front seed money to cover initial expenses, those costs would be reimbursed by grant funds. Dick supposed that publicity created about the property use for agriculture may reveal donors for those infrastructure improvements. Rob will be supplying a copy of the Town Forest property from TPL to the NHFG records as requested.

Rob read a copy of the letter Dumas updating her interest in the second agricultural parcel on the field. It is her intention to plant cover crops on her section this year in order to improve the soil and plant in the following year.

Rob said he wanted to pass agricultural lease work over to Paul with his agreement.

The size of the airstrip was discussed and it was noted that there has been a gradual increase in the size of the area that is being mowed for runway use over the last several years. We may need to shorten the newer runway extension in order to accommodate the Dumas plot. Rob said that the current club president has moved out of town and there would be a new president selected soon. It was noted that the subject of a fee for runway leasing was waived last year in exchange for road maintenance at the USFS entrance.

Rob reported that he and Cort had met USFS Forest Supervisor Tom Wagner in November. Rob reviewed prior history regarding the construction of a new road access to the forest and field area, Saco District Ranger Mike Miller's involvement, etc. Wagner wanted to wait until a new District Ranger arrived at the Saco District to replace the transfer of Miller. Rob will follow-up with Wagner now that a new ranger has arrived and arrange for a meeting with all parties concerned. Rob also noted that burning the field was also discussed with Wagner and he indicated support and assistance for this task.

Rob noted that Josephine Howland has recently resigned from the Conservation Commission. Members suggested that a letter of thanks be sent to Josephine thanking her for her years of service on the commission. Rob said that we will need to write a letter to the chair of the Planning Board requesting a new representative to replace Josephine on the Conservation Commission.

The budget for the next year was discussed. Rob suggested we keep the budget the same as last year and restore the \$1000 in order to cover funding for improvements on the DOT site which would be reimbursed via grant funding or farmer fees.

Dick reviewed the financials and suggested that reserve monies be transferred to a money market account to increase the interest earning potential. These accounts can be drawn upon anytime and are insured by the FDIC up to \$250K. The Town Treasurer is responsible for the funds and Dick said he would talk to Mary and see if she was willing to transfer the funds to a money market account. Rob questioned the effort versus the return but if Dick was willing to make the necessary work there was no problem.

Rob said that he would be writing a report for the Conservation Commission reviewing the past year for inclusion in the Annual Town Report and submitting it shortly.

Dick inquired if everyone wanted to host another bird house competition this spring again. Discussion about the prize money awarded determined that we should maintain the same amounts as last year, \$50 for first place and \$25 for second place.

Jack brought up the issue of a sign on the field area. Size and location was discussed. Jack wanted to make sure that a sign went up this year. Cort indicated that William from USVLT had recently delivered another LCHIP sign which he said he would like to see posted along the Kancamangus with another posted on the opposite side of the road. Rob said that funding for a larger sign may be derived from the still undepleted USVLT funding for access and signage.

Rob mentioned that Ed Parsons had called him that day looking for more information on the Town Forest for a future Conway Daily Sun story.

Cort updated everyone on the recent false alarm regarding animal snares on the forest investigated by the local NHFG conservation officer Alex Lopashanski.

With no other topics to address, Jack moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second and a vote, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.