

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Saturday, July 18th, 10:30 am

Members present: Rob Nadler, Jack Rose, Cort Hansen, Paul Brown, Dick Van Dyne (alternate). Absent: Jack Rose, Peter Carboni. Public: Steve Knox.

Rob called the meeting to order at 10:38 am in the Ray Burton Field at the MWV Radio Control Club airport site.

Rob proposed that the review and approval of the minutes for the June meetings be postponed until the August meeting.

Discussion began with the topic of the size of the airfield and the incremental increases in area that the field has seen in recent years. The problem of efficient cultivation of one of the three large agricultural lots with the present length of the runway is an issue. Rob indicated that USVLT does have issues with so much area dedicated to a non-agricultural use. Aerial photos from recent years were shown to highlight the increased runway length.

The topic of a fee for field use by the MWVRCC was discussed and that fees rates should be comparable with farming rates on a per acre basis. Dick suggested that perhaps one half of the fees could be accepted as an in-kind service with the other half to be paid in money in order that at least some income may be derived from the arrangement. Discussion evolved about the rate at which farmers are being charged, which is an under-valued rate in order to encourage development of the agriculture use of the field, and should not be used as an equitable comparison for cost.

Discussion over the agreement with the MWV Radio Control Club began with Rob distributing a draft list of regulations that has been worked on since the 6/2/15 meeting. Items on the list include; provision for a certificate of insurance, signed lease agreement, organic fertilizers and pest control limitations, approval of construction of fences, structures or signage, gate and vehicle access, cooperation with school events and hours of use. Paul suggested that a clause be added to note avoiding conflict with agricultural use.

Rob said that he had met with Colton Dow and that he had a tough time preparing the field last fall for planting a cover crop and that he had damaged his equipment because the field had not been tilled in so many years and was quite tough and root bound. Dow has planted perhaps ½ of his lot with different varieties of squash growing under plastic row cover and with a drip irrigation system that will allow him to water his crop should he require it. He is being careful not to over extend the cultivation of his lot to save money and match his produce demands at this season.

Rob said that he and Cort had recently met with William Abbott from USVLT to review town forest planning. William provided an updated accounting of the balance of the original USVLT grant for signage and parking improvements with \$4700 of funds still unspent. There is also another \$6000 grant which has been provided to help provide water and power to the agricultural field site. William indicated that the grants should best be expended before the end of the year.

Rob noted that he and Cort had met with members of the Richardson family involved with the Grand View Farm on Tasker Hill Road. They are interested in leasing some portion of the field for agricultural purposes along with the construction of 3-5 high tunnel greenhouses of approximately 30' wide by 90-100' in length with a lease period of 7 years. The scope and size of the proposed structures was felt to be too large. The problem of

deed restrictions on the structures was discussed and although USVLT may be flexible in their approach on this issue, other organizations involved with the purchase may not be, and this will have to be evaluated before any lease involving buildings could be signed. The Richardson's will work up a proposal to bring forward at a later date.

Due to the expenses Dow encountered trying to prepare the field for planting last fall, Rob suggested that perhaps we should try and obtain a grant in order to have the fields tilled by someone who specializes in converting old fields to cultivation-ready condition. This way we could attract more farm candidates as well as generate more income quicker due to less financial burden on the farmers.

Dick asked about further mowing and brush work. Peter Howland has finished his section of the field but more work needs to be done on the east and northeast side of that portion. It was unclear how much Peter would charge to do further work in this area. Rob said that we should wait until fall when the foliage drops and conditions for working improve. How to dispose of the brush was discussed with either chipping or burning as the likely solution depending on how firm the ground was in the work area. Dick asked about whether the USFS is sincere in their offer to burn the field. Rob reiterated that the plan to burn is very much a goal of all three agencies involved. The partnership of the USFS, NH DRED and the Conway Village FD is important to draw the resources required, but due to the dry spring fire season and the large Ossipee fire, the burn could not get done this spring. A burn plan has been prepared by the USFS and the selectmen have signed a letter of support on the burn project. The USFS is enthusiastic about burning the field but burning will now have to wait until fall or in the spring of 2016.

With no further business to discuss and with no public comment, Paul moved to adjourn the meeting. With a second, the meeting adjourned at 10:53 am.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.