

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, July 5th, 2016. 6:00 pm

Members present: Rob Nadler, Cathy Ryan, Mike Stewart, Peter Carboni, and Cort Hansen.

Public: Steve Knox.

Rob called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Rob asked for comments or questions regarding the minutes for the 6/7/2016 meeting. Cathy asked if she could clarify why the Selectmen asked for the attorney review of the land use agreements explaining that the use of the word “contract” versus “lease” was a concern for them and that the attorney review was done to ensure that the contracts fell within the authority of the Commission under NH regulation. With no further questions or comments, Rob asked for a motion to approve those minutes. Peter made a motion to approve the 6/7/16 meeting minutes, and with a second by Mike, the minutes for the meeting were approved 5-0.

Rob noted that on-going water project for the field had progressed with the completion of a dug well. The well which is part of a project to supply water and power to the field is part of a on-going USVLT grant. USVLT has encouraged the farmers to participate in the project and Grand View Farm complied and sought bids for digging the well. USVLT approved the \$2800 price and the well was completed in the last week of June. Rob said that it consisted of several sections of concrete well tile buried over 12 feet down. Dave Richardson reported that the flow was such that the walls were collapsing once the excavator went down over 10 feet. Grand View Farm is currently seeking bids on a gas powered water pump pending final USVLT approval. The well water does contain “fines” and may have to be filtered to be used in some irrigation systems. The farmers are investigating this issue themselves. The electrical utility connection, as has been covered on past meetings, is too expensive at this time, any power will have to be either solar generated, battery powered, or gas generated as projected costs were in excess of \$30K.

The commission is waiting for word from Curtis Coleman about finishing the parking area on the north side of the Kancamagus by the gate. In June, Curtis was planning on re-inspecting the site shortly and he said he may try and have the work done on a weekend by a small crew.

Mike explained that he and Cort had walked the boundary of the Town Forest lot in June on the south side of the Kancamagus Highway entering on the west border and walking south than east along a pretty well marked perimeter. Mike is looking to lay out a bike loop that eventually may connect the Kancamagus lot to the Bald Hill lot if abutting landowners are willing to have a trail cross their property.

Rob brought up a potential alternate member for the Commission, Matt Coughlan who recently moved to Albany from Conway and served on the Conway Conservation Commission as an alternate while living there. Cort said that he came recommended and has a background in resource management and has trail building experience as well. Cort will contact Matt to see if he can make the next meeting in August.

Rob mentioned that it is not too early to be thinking about the budget for FY2017. Cost consideration includes; field mowing, legal, potential administrative assistant for the Commission, etc. He noted that in 2016 the Commission put forward a budget that was substantially lower than FY2015 with reduced memberships fees, etc.

Rob thought it might be a good project idea to contact the NRCS and USVLT to see what kind of assistance they could provide in helping restore the last section of field on the southeast corner of the property adjacent to

Rt. 16. That section of the field is very wet in some areas and has the poorest soils. The NRCS which is part of the Department of Agriculture may have funding that could help offset the cost of these improvements.

Rob mentioned that one role of a Conservation Commission is to inventory wetland areas within their respective town. He noted that Albany is only 13% privately owned and 87% federally owned. He noted that Albany had been studied and surveyed in 1991 by North Country Council NCC. The initial research indicates that there may be an additional study as well. Discussion evolved around the value of another wetland resource inventory study and how Albany has utilized the wetland inventory in the past. Cort suggested finding out what, if any use, the other Albany boards' exercise the existing wetland reports, and, if the cost and effort to create a new study is a worthwhile investment.

Cathy brought up RSA 36-A authorizing communities to establish conservation commissions. She indicated that since becoming a selectman she has attended several workshops on topics related to her position. Cathy wondered if perhaps workshops or further education opportunities are available. Cort noted that one of the budget items dropped from the 2016 budget was the town's membership in the NH Association of Conservation Commissions as a cost saving measure. Rob suggested that perhaps the town may be able to source the membership fee within the town budget if selectmen felt it was of value. Commission members have attended their annual meeting in years past and the members frequently utilize the NHACC "Handbook for NH Municipal Conservation Commissions". Handbooks are provided to all new members of the Commission. Former commission member Dick Van Dyne was the last person to attend their annual meeting in 2014. Rob noted that the 2016 meeting will be in November if anyone is interested in attending.

The topic of communication between the USVLT and the Commission was discussed. In past years the board has frequently authorized Rob as chairman to speak on behalf of the Commission. In order to maintain this practice Cort suggested that perhaps a motion authorize Rob to speak to USVLT, or the farmers and others on behalf of the commission would be good idea to clarify the practice for the record once again. Cathy agreed, and suggested that perhaps this authority should be renewed annually. Cort made a motion to authorize Rob as chairman, to continue to work with the USVLT, the farmers and others on behalf of the Conservation Commission. With a second the motion was approved 5-0.

Cort noted that the O'Connor family has now located their memorial bench within the Town Forest. He had visited the site that afternoon to inspect the new bench and the placement. Cort said that subsequent to last month's meeting motion, he has contacted the O'Connor family and requested that a sign be added to the bench to indicate that it was "Donated" to the town.

The annual town picnic date is 7/23/16. Rob and Cort have been mowing the area for the past 4 weeks now.

Under public comment, Steve Knox said that he is chairing the Carroll County effort to utilize the county farm site and better plan for a localized food network noting that county spending on food exceeds \$200M annually with only \$5.5M provided locally. He is in the early stages of planning on improving these numbers and will be meeting with the Kendall Foundation on 7/20 along with the county delegation to learn more about the issue.

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.