

MEETING MINUTES

ALBANY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, June 7th, 2016. 6:00 pm

Members present: Rob Nadler, Mike Stewart, Peter Carboni, Cort Hansen. Absent: Cathy Ryan.
Public: Steve Knox.

Rob called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm. Rob asked for comments or questions regarding the minutes for the 4/5/2016 meeting. With no questions or comments, Rob asked for a motion to approve those minutes. Mike made a motion to approve the 4/5/16 meeting minutes, and with a second by Peter, the minutes for the meeting were approved 4-0.

Rob reviewed the history of the use of 'land use contracts' being used by the Commission and noted that the original contract used had reviewed by Town Counsel in 2013. Subsequent contracts for land use utilized the same text framework. In January 2016 Town Counsel confirmed it was appropriate for the Commission to sign and have a 'management contracts' during negotiations over the Grandview Farm agreement. After the March elections questions were then raised by the selectmen about the authority of the Commission to enter into agreements with farmers. In April Town Counsel said Commission could not have "leases" and reverses position on previous judgments, interpreting agreements as "leases". After both a public and non-public meeting with town selectmen, Rob along with selectmen Cathy Ryan and Rick Hiland went to the office of Mitchell Municipal Group (MMC) to find a solution and have MMC draft a new 'Land Use Contract' template for farmers using the field. The Commission now has a "land management contract" that we can use for the farmers. Rob noted that it is essentially the same contract as the original and now has been confirmed once again by the MMC as the template that will be used going forward. Copies of the land management contract were distributed and Rob noted that a fee for use is included in the contract. He proposed that the fees be waived, as has been the past practice and which has been previously discussed in meetings in order to allow the farmers to invest in the work necessary to develop the agricultural use of the fields. A motion to have the new land management contract signed by the two farms and have the fees waived was made. With a second the motion was approved 4-0.

Rob noted that the arrangement for the model airplane club is slightly different and that the fee, or a portion of the fee could be handled as an 'in-kind' exchange such as field mowing, which has been discussed with club leadership before. Or, the fee could be a donation to the conservation fund. Rob said that he would like to have a motion that authorized him to negotiate the best terms for a fee exchange with the club. Peter made a motion stating that Rob negotiate the best terms for the fee or an 'in-kind' trade for fees. With a second, the motion was approved 4-0.

It was noted that there is no further information on the water/power issue on the field from the USVLT.

Rob mentioned that a recent town column had included an error regarding the election of Commission officers and that it had been reported that it still needed to be done. He wanted to have noted that the election of Commission offices had been completed at the 4/5/2016 meeting the first meeting after the March town meeting date. The column noted other responsibilities of the Commission included compiling resource data for the town of wetland areas, etc. Cort suggested that new members review the Handbook for NH Municipal Conservation Commissions which was a good resource for duties and conservation commission authority under NH law. Copies were retrieved from the files and provided to both Peter and Mike. Rob suggested that the resource data for the Albany has been previously compiled by the UNH and that should it be needed, it can be accessed. He noted that there were other responsibilities that the commission holds including sharing some responsibilities

with the planning board but that without an increase in member time and additional town expenses that he did not believe those to be any priority, that the priority was the management of the forest and the development of the agriculture use of the field.

It was noted that Peter Howland had completed brushing work on the field adjacent to Rt. 16. Prescribed burning had taken place on the central fields in April, but the eastern edges remained untouched, likely due to manpower and burn condition restrictions. Further prescription burning is planned for later this fall or next spring. Cort started mowing the areas used by the town picnic event in late May.

Cort discussed the O'Connor family's request to establish a memorial bench within the Town Forest. He met with a family member to look at various locations in May. The family has chosen the junction of the Crossover and Swift River Trails along the riverbank as the location. Cort provided copies the wording the family plans on using on a plaque to be fastened to the bench and asked for member opinions. Peter said the perhaps the commission needs to establish a policy regarding such memorials or donations. It was felt that future elements added to the forest for memorials needed to be restricted to improvements consistent with standard trails facilities, such as benches, bridges, kiosks, etc. Rob noted that USVLT has approved this bench proposal. A motion was made and seconded to request from the O'Connor family additional text to note that the bench is "Donated", added to the plaque. The family intends to have the bench placed on the first of July. Cort will relay the request to the family.

Cort said that he talked with Curtis Coleman about finishing the parking area on the north side of the Kancamagus by the gate. Curtis will be re-inspecting the site shortly and he said he may try and have the work done on a weekend by a small crew. If so, commission members may be able to assist him with the finish work. He is hoping to do this over the next several weeks.

Mike and Cort will meet shortly to walk forest boundaries on the south side of the Kancamagus the western and southern edges adjacent to the Thomas property. Cort also noted that the annual USVLT inspection will be coming up soon. He plans on meeting with a USVLT representative to walk some portion of the Town Forest soon.

The annual town picnic date is 7/23/16; Rob said he will confirm this for field mowing planning purposes.

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 and the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Cort Hansen, Conservation Commission Secretary.