

## **FINAL Minutes of the Cannon Mountain Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Date:** April 26, 2024

**Time:** 10:00 AM

**Location:** Franconia Notch State Park Headquarters

### **Attendance**

**Members Present:** Monica Mezzapelle, Senator Carrie Gendreau, Representative Suzanne Vail, Frank MacConnell, Sue Ford, Thad Presby, Senator Shannon Chandley

**Others Present:** General Manager Jace Wirth, Director Brian Wilson, David Webster (Scribe), Peter Kaylie (Public Attendee)

### **Proceedings**

**Call to Order:** Frank MacConnell called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM, and a quorum was established by 10:06 AM. Following introductions, Director Wilson announced the expiration of Terry's term, leaving the chairperson position vacant and open for discussion.

**Election of Chairperson:** Monica Mezzapelle motioned to elect Frank MacConnell as Chairperson, seconded by Sue Ford. The motion passed unanimously.

**Tribute Discussion:** Director Wilson led a tribute to Richard McLeod, acknowledging his long-standing involvement with State Parks and Cannon Mountain, and his significant contributions. Plans for a future acknowledgement were discussed, initiated by George Bald, Commissioner Stewart, and Director Wilson.

**CMAC Statutes Review:** Frank MacConnell prompted a review of the CMAC statutes, with Director Wilson discussing the necessity to review RSA statutory duties and the guidelines governing CMAC's advisory roles. He emphasized the importance of diversifying funding sources beyond the Cannon Mountain Capital Improvement Fund, noting potential state-wide bonds and direct appropriations for capital improvements.

**Introduction of New General Manager:** Frank MacConnell introduced Jace Wirth, the new General Manager, and discussed the upcoming tram update. Jace was requested to provide a more comprehensive introduction, including his background and management experience in ski resort operations.

**Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** Thad Presby moved to approve the minutes from the May 8, 2023 meeting. Suzanne Vail seconded, and the motion passed. Sue Ford and Shannon Chandley abstained as they were not present at the previous meeting.

**Capital Projects and Maintenance:** Jace Wirth presented a draft capital plan, emphasizing the critical need for infrastructure updates, especially the aging lifts and base lodges. He highlighted

the dedication of the team, despite the lack of necessary tools and resources, and stressed the urgent need for substantial capital.

**Discussion on Funding:** Monica highlighted the challenges with the revolving fund, currently standing at \$6 million but already tapped. She discussed the general funds amounting to \$120 million and suggested increasing revenue streams to support self-funding for parks and Cannon.

**Self-Sufficiency Drive:** Director Wilson discussed the Division of Parks & Recreation operational budget of \$40 million, of which only 1% is sourced from general funds, primarily for historical sites. He emphasized the intent to maximize self-sufficiency through fees and other revenue sources, underscoring the park's efficiency in operating without general fund support.

**Comparison with Private Ski Resorts:** Jace made comparisons with private ski resorts, noting that incremental profits could not wholly offset the costs of decades of deferred maintenance.

**Capital Plan Discussion:** Frank MacConnell expressed enthusiasm for further discussion on the capital plan in conjunction with the business plan. The committee agreed that a follow up meeting in June would be valuable to focus specifically on the draft capital plan Jace produced for the Committee.

**Tram Update:** Director Wilson updated on the bidding process for the tram project, noting that the lowest bid received was \$33 million, significantly higher than the appropriated \$18 million. He mentioned a need to revisit the project details, highlighting a communication from Doppelmayr regarding their non-participation in the bidding process due to unclear project details.

**Adjournment:** Suzanne Vail moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Monica Mezzapelle. The motion passed, and the meeting concluded.