

**MOUNT SUNAPEE ADVISORY COMMISSION
JUNE 23, 2026 MINUTES (DRAFT)**

A meeting of the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission (MSAC) was held at the Mount Sunapee Resort, Newbury, NH. Chair Crepeau called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

PRESENT Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission Members were: Chair Adam Crepeau–Interim Commissioner, NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR); Meghan Butts–Executive Director, UVLS Regional Planning Commission; Shawn Hamilton–Director, Division of Parks and Recreation, DNCR; Elizabeth Harper–Executive Director, Lake Sunapee Protective Association (LSPA); Nancy Marashio–Designee, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF); Sabrina Stanwood–Designee, New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau, DNCR; Philip Trowbridge–Designee, Land Resources Management, NH Department of Environmental Services (DES); Christopher Turgeon–Designee, District 2 Engineer, NH Department of Transportation; Daniel Wolf–Designee, Town of Newbury, NH.

ABSENT Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission Members were: Ashlee Rowley–Executive Director, Lake Sunapee Region Chamber of Commerce; Derek Tremblay–Selectman, Town of Goshen, NH.

OTHERS PRESENT: Eric Goulet/ Clerk, Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission Clerk; and other members of the public. Members of the public who participated in Commission discussion and public comment included: Jeff Estella – Newbury resident; Chris Millette – Newbury resident; Kate Saunders – Executive Director, League of New Hampshire Craftsman; Steve Howard – Part-time Newbury resident; Susan Kelly – Member, Newbury Energy Committee; Steve Russell – Friends of Mount Sunapee; Stephen Shultz – Newbury resident; Adam Robinson – General Manager, Granite Gorge Mountain Park (former Mount Sunapee employee); Representative Karen Ebel – New Hampshire House of Representatives (New London/Newbury); Lydia Hawks – Friends of Mount Sunapee, Goshen resident.

CALL TO ORDER

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Crepeau called the meeting to order and introduced himself as Interim Commissioner of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) and Chair of the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission. He welcomed Commission members and

introduced Shawn Hamilton, Director of the Division of Parks and Recreation, as the Commission's newest member. Commission members then introduced themselves. The Chair determined that a quorum was present and declared that the Commission could proceed with the meeting.

The Chair welcomed members of the public, Mount Sunapee Resort representatives, state agency representatives, municipal officials, and other interested stakeholders. He noted the strong public turnout and reaffirmed the Department's commitment to transparency, public engagement, collaboration, and the protection of New Hampshire's natural resources. He also recognized the ongoing collaboration among DNCR, Mount Sunapee Resort, NHDES, NHDOT, the Lake Sunapee Protective Association, advocacy organizations, municipal partners, and other interested stakeholders.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Chair Crepeau stated that the draft minutes from the Commission's June 3, 2025 meeting had been circulated and requested a motion for approval. Philip Trowbridge moved to approve the June 3, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Sabrina Stanwood.

Vote: Chair Crepeau called for further discussion. Hearing none, the motion to approve the June 3, 2025 meeting minutes passed by voice vote. No opposed votes or abstentions were noted.

MOUNT SUNAPEE RESORT PRESENTATION

2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan (AOP)

Sue Donnelly, General Manager of Mount Sunapee Resort, presented an overview of Mount Sunapee Resort's recent operations and the proposed 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan. Ms. Donnelly thanked the Commission, DNCR leadership, members of the public, and Resort staff for attending. She noted that this was her second season at Mount Sunapee and emphasized the Resort's relationship with the local community, its staff, DNCR, and the State of New Hampshire.

Ms. Donnelly stated that Mount Sunapee Resort was open for 121 days during the prior winter season, from December 5, 2025 through April 5, 2026. She noted that the season marked the Resort's 77th anniversary and that the mountain received 77 inches of natural snow. She discussed several community and guest-focused programs, including

women's ski programming, "Snow-Go" offerings, New England Healing Sports Association programming, New Year's Eve activities, passholder events, the "Cardboard Box Race", and the annual "Slush Cup".

Ms. Donnelly stated that the Annual Operating Plan was submitted on May 15, 2026. She explained that the AOP identifies maintenance activities, on-mountain improvements, operating information, and ongoing coordination with DNCR and State Parks staff.

Ms. Donnelly summarized planned and completed projects, including: Building improvements; Work on the vehicle maintenance building; Trail maintenance; Snowmaking infrastructure work; New snowmaking equipment; Improvements to Sunapee Lodge; Replacement or improvement of boilers; Patio heating improvements; Vehicle and equipment upgrades; Parking lot paving and drop-off improvements; Bus transportation improvements; Ski and ride school traffic flow improvements; and Continued focus on operational safety and guest experience.

Base Area Operations, Parking, Transportation, and Craftsmen's Fair

Rick Ruggles, Senior Manager of Base Area Operations/Base Area Experience for Mount Sunapee Resort provided an overview of parking, transportation, snow removal, and summer event operations. Mr. Ruggles explained that his responsibilities include buildings and grounds, parking and arrivals, transportation, product sales and services, managing ticket offices, and guest information.

Mr. Ruggles described winter parking and traffic mitigation plans that included zone parking and pulse parking. He explained that these strategies are intended to move vehicles efficiently off Route 103 and into available parking areas. He also discussed digital signage, mobile app parking information, bus and shuttle service, weekend and holiday employee parking at the State Beach, overflow parking at the State Beach, local hotel shuttle service, and coordination with the Newbury Police Department.

Mr. Ruggles also discussed snow and ice management. He stated that Mount Sunapee Resort will participate with LSPA and DNCR in the "Snow Fighters Program", formerly known as "Green Snow Pro", to reduce chloride use and expand the use of chloride-free alternatives where appropriate. Mr. Ruggles indicated the Resort would be using chloride-free alternatives moving forward.

Mr. Ruggles then discussed the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen's Fair. He noted that the 93rd Annual Craftsmen's Fair is scheduled for August 1 through August 9, 2026,

and that Mount Sunapee Resort has hosted the event for 63 years. He described the event as a significant cultural, community, and economic event that supports artists, local businesses, visitors, and the region. Mr. Ruggles expressed appreciation for the partnership with the League, the community, and the State of New Hampshire.

Ms. Donnelly added that the Resort enhanced the guest experience in Parking Lot 3 by providing shuttle service, guest greeters, bottled water, snacks, and assistance to departing guests, which she described as a successful initiative.

Summer and Winter Recreation Programming

Doug Daniels, Senior Manager of Skier Services and Summer Operations for Mount Sunapee Resort presented information regarding summer operations and winter programming.

Mr. Daniels stated that Mount Sunapee opened for 2026 summer operations on June 20, 2026. He described summer offerings including Adventure Park activities; Aerial challenge course; Scenic chairlift rides; Yoga with a View; Mountaintop Music Series; Lift-served mountain biking; Mountain bike camp; Disc golf; Mini golf; Hiking on South Peak and the summit trail; Archery; and Chef's table dinners.

Mr. Daniels stated that fall operations are proposed to close on October 12, 2026, following Fall Fest and the "Duck Drop" event. He explained that the "Duck Drop" supports the Boys and Girls Club of Central and Northern New Hampshire and has raised nearly \$1.1 million over the past ten years.

Mr. Daniels also discussed winter ski and ride programming, including group and private lessons, school programs, scholarship opportunities, adult ski and snowboard programs, youth development programs, competition programs, and the Boston Ski Party program. He noted that more than 500 students from over ten schools participate in five-week winter sports programs.

Ms. Donnelly added that Mount Sunapee's goal is to provide access for everyone and highlighted partnerships with Boston Ski Party, NESAs, the Youth Enrichment Services (YES) Network, community school programs, the Newport Winter Carnival, chamber events, and other local programming.

Waste Reduction and Environmental Initiatives

Ms. Donnelly presented information regarding Mount Sunapee Resort's waste reduction initiatives. She stated that the Resort has worked since 2020 to reduce landfill waste and reported a 37 percent reduction in landfill waste during the winter operating season. She also discussed composting efforts, food waste sorting stations, employee engagement, and guest participation.

Ms. Donnelly noted that since 2020, 244 pounds of chip bags have been recycled into items such as Adirondack chairs, benches, and picnic tables for local schools and Resort use. She also discussed the rollout of reusable dining materials in Resort lodges and stated that Spruce Lodge is expected to receive similar improvements in the future.

Ms. Donnelly concluded Mount Sunapee Resorts' presentation by expressing her appreciation for the effort that went into the meeting and emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration between the Resort, the community, and New Hampshire State Parks.

The Chair thanked Mount Sunapee Resort for its presentation and recognized the Resort's achievements in the Snow Fighters program, including its reported 37 percent reduction in landfill waste through diversion efforts.

WASTEWATER FEASIBILITY STUDY UPDATE (DNCR)

The Chair provided an update on the wastewater feasibility study. He stated that on June 17, 2026, the Governor and Executive Council approved an independent technical evaluation of long-term wastewater treatment and disposal alternatives for the wastewater sewage lagoon system at Mount Sunapee.

The Chair noted that Weston & Sampson representatives were present at the meeting and that additional Weston & Sampson personnel were expected on site the following day. He stated that the study was underway.

The Chair summarized key milestones, including: Hydrogeological Assessment Technical Memorandum due August 11, 2026; Flow and Load Analysis Technical Memorandum due September 15, 2026; Preliminary Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Options Technical Memorandum due November 29, 2026; Preliminary findings discussion anticipated in winter 2026 or early 2027; and Draft report anticipated in spring 2027.

The Chair stated that there will be opportunities for public input and engagement during the study process and encouraged anyone with relevant data for Weston & Sampson to submit it to DNCR.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair opened the meeting for public comment. Members of the public were asked to state their name and municipality, direct comments to the Commission, keep comments focused on the AOP where possible, and limit comments to approximately two minutes due to the size of the audience.

Public Comment Topic 1: Lease Revenue and Transparency

Jeff Estella, a Newbury resident and year-round user of Mount Sunapee, thanked Mount Sunapee Resort staff and acknowledged the importance of transparency. He asked questions regarding the lease payment structure, including the fixed-fee rent and the variable percentage of gross annual revenue paid to the State.

The Chair stated that he believed the fixed rent is adjusted for inflation and stated that DNCR would review what information may legally be shared, noting potential limitations related to Vail Resorts as a publicly traded company. The Chair stated that DNCR would share information it is legally permitted to share or explain why information cannot be shared.

Mr. Estella referenced figures he understood had been shared publicly during the prior year, including fixed rent and variable revenue figures, and requested updated information for the most recent year.

MSAC member Dan Wolf commented generally that revenue from Mount Sunapee supports Cannon Mountain under the structure established by law and the lease arrangement.

Public Comment Topic 2: Wastewater and Broader Lake Impacts

Chris Millette, a Newbury resident, commented on the wastewater lagoons and the need to consider broader impacts beyond the Resort itself. He stated that the State Park includes more than the mountain and expressed concern regarding pressure on the area around Lake Sunapee, including increased year-round use of formerly

seasonal properties. He encouraged the State to consider the long-term cumulative impacts of wastewater and resort-related activity on the lake and surrounding area.

Public Comment Topic 3: League of New Hampshire Craftsmen's Fair

Kate Saunders, a Concord resident and Executive Director of the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, thanked Mount Sunapee Resort staff for their support of the annual Craftsmen's Fair. She stated that the event supports more than 200 small business owners, generates significant economic impact, and contributes to New Hampshire-made and New Hampshire-first partnerships. She also noted that the League works with the Resort on waste management, facility management, and environmental considerations during event planning.

Public Comment Topic 4: Master Development Plan and Public Process

Steve Howard, a part-time resident of Newbury, asked about the forthcoming Master Development Plan, the required timeline for public release, and how DNCR intended to interact with the public, local planning boards, and other stakeholders regarding projects discussed during the meeting, including wastewater treatment and building rehabilitation.

The Chair stated that the topic would be addressed later in the meeting as part of the agenda.

Public Comment Topic 5: Electric Vehicle Charging

Susan Kelly, a member of the Newbury Energy Committee, asked about plans for electric vehicle charging at Mount Sunapee.

A Resort representative stated that the Resort has been exploring EV charging options for several years. The representative stated that prior efforts had stalled but that the Resort is currently evaluating another potential program and would like to provide EV charging at the Resort.

Public Comment Topic 6: Friends of Mount Sunapee Operational Concerns

Steve Russell, representing Friends of Mount Sunapee, commented on several operational concerns identified in the AOP, including: Intersections between hiking trails and downhill mountain bike trails; Safety concerns related to high-speed mountain bike use and pedestrian trail crossings; The status of interpretive trail signage; Revenue

calculation for a package that includes State Beach admission; Restroom access on days when the Adventure Park is closed; and Lack of direct responses to prior public comments.

Mount Sunapee Resort representatives stated that they would look into the hiking and mountain bike trail intersections. Regarding interpretive trail signage, the Resort indicated that it would review its notes and coordinate with DNCR. Regarding State Beach admission revenue, the Resort stated that package sales are counted and the appropriate entry amount is remitted to the State. Regarding restroom access, DNCR and the Resort stated that they would review possible accommodation, while noting that portable toilets are available.

The Chair stated that DNCR would review comments received verbally and in writing. He stated that written comments on the AOP would be accepted through June 29, 2026, and that DNCR would strive to provide responses where possible or provide a rationale where requests cannot be accommodated.

Public Comment Topic 7: Ski Infrastructure and Expansion

Stephen Schultz, a Newbury resident, asked about ski infrastructure, lift improvements, and potential mountain expansion as related to the proposed Annual Operating Plan.

A Resort representative responded that Mount Sunapee evaluates infrastructure improvements annually and is undertaking snowmaking and lift maintenance projects. Regarding expansion, the representative stated that the Resort still has the permit for the expansion but is not currently pursuing the expansion as part of the present capital plan.

Public Comment Topic 8: Support for Resort Operations

Adam Robinson, a Keene resident, General Manager of Granite Gorge Mountain Park and a former Mount Sunapee employee, spoke in support of Mount Sunapee Resort staff and operations. He stated that Resort staff live by stated values including service, safety, inclusion, environmental preservation, and community contribution. Mr. Robinson stated that the Resort truly cares about the community. He expressed confidence in the Resort team and its preparation of planning documents.

Public Comment Topic 9: Legislative Comment and Wastewater Stewardship

NH Representative Karen Ebel representing New London and Newbury, commented on waste diversion efforts and stated that the Resort's progress in food waste diversion was significant. She also discussed Mount Sunapee lease revenue and its statutory relationship to Cannon Mountain. Representative Ebel referenced prior remarks from former DNCR Commissioner Sarah Stewart regarding the importance of proactive wastewater infrastructure planning and upholding the moral responsibility for long-term stewardship of Lake Sunapee. She commended DNCR and DES for advancing the feasibility study and expressed support for replacing the lagoon system before a serious problem occurs.

Public Comment Topic 10: Long-Term Public Stewardship

Chris Millette commented again that while Vail's interests may align with the State's currently, DNCR represents the citizens of New Hampshire and must take a long-term view of the public resource beyond any individual lease term.

The Chair agreed and stated that DNCR is committed to long-term stewardship in partnership with Mount Sunapee Resort and others.

Public Comment Topic 11: Snowmaking and Chloride Use

Lydia Hawkes, a Goshen resident and representative of Friends of Mount Sunapee, asked whether chemicals are used in snowmaking and raised concerns about chloride used in parking lot treatment reaching waterways. Ms. Hawkes noted concerns regarding snow piles and drainage toward Beck Brook and Lake Sunapee.

Mason Willett, Director of Mountain Operations for Mount Sunapee Resort, stated that chemicals are not used in snowmaking. Regarding parking lot treatment, he stated that Mount Sunapee has dramatically reduced its chloride ratio and uses snow management practices intended to contain runoff to the extent possible.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Following public comment, the Chair moved to Commission discussion regarding the AOP and proposed amendments.

Wastewater Feasibility Study Language

The Chair introduced a slide displaying proposed Annual Operating Plan (AOP) language regarding the Wastewater Feasibility Study and read the following proposed provision into the record:

“To the extent the feasibility study completed by Weston & Sampson Engineers makes any recommendations that are reasonably necessary to protect the environment or public health, the resort shall work with the State to evaluate such recommendations and develop an implementation plan. The resort acknowledges that implementation of such recommendations may require funding contributions from the resort, and the resort shall work in good faith with the State to determine the appropriate scope of work, allocation of costs, and implementation schedule necessary to address any identified concerns to the satisfaction of the State.”

The Chair stated that the language had been discussed with Mount Sunapee Resort and remained under discussion but represented the Department’s draft proposal at that time.

MSAC member Dan Wolf reiterated his recommendation that the wastewater language include reference to the Lease and Operating Agreement. He stated that the Commission had undertaken a thorough review of the lease and suggested that language be added that would clarify that future recommendations and implementations proceed within the lease framework. Mr. Wolf proposed specific language should include: “In accordance with the terms of the lease and operating agreement.”

Motion: Chair Crepeau presented Mr. Wolf’s suggested revision to the proposed wastewater provision, clarifying that any funding contributions or implementation obligations would be “in accordance with the terms of the Lease and Operating Agreement.” Nancy Marisco moved that the Advisory Commission recommend incorporating the suggested language into the proposed wastewater provision. The motion was seconded by Elizabeth Harper.

Vote: Chair Crepeau called for further discussion. Hearing none, he reminded the Commission that its vote was advisory in nature and would serve as a recommendation to the Department for consideration during the Annual Operating Plan approval process. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Access Road Language

The Chair introduced a slide displaying proposed Annual Operating Plan (AOP) language regarding the access road to the State Park Campground. The Chair read the following proposed provision into the record:

“The Resort agrees to an annual evaluation of the access road serving the State Park Campground by the State. To the extent the evaluation identifies grading, maintenance, or repair needs, the Resort shall be responsible for completing such work in a timely manner and to the satisfaction of the State.”

The Chair noted that DNCR would continue working with Mount Sunapee Resort to strengthen the access road language. No separate motion was recorded regarding the access road language.

Wastewater Feasibility Study Timeline and Implementation

MSAC member Meghan Butts asked about the timeline following completion of the final wastewater study report and how implementation would proceed.

The Chair stated that the final report is expected in spring 2027 and that DNCR intends to coordinate the study results with the Master Development Plan and Environmental Management Plan process. He stated that recommendations necessary to protect the environment or public health would be considered for incorporation into the longer-term MDP/EMP documents, while the AOP language is intended to address the shorter-term annual planning framework.

Environmental Stewardship and Water Quality

MSAC member Elizabeth Harper thanked the Resort, DNCR, and stakeholders for engagement and collaboration. She emphasized the importance of balancing recreational use with protection of natural resources, particularly water quality. She noted positive collaboration on the Beck Brook Stream Bank Restoration Project, alternatives to road salt, waste management, and the wastewater feasibility study. She also identified areas requiring continued attention, including stormwater management, erosion, runoff, culvert improvements, State Beach parking impacts, and continued coordination regarding the wastewater system.

MSAC member Nancy Marashio suggested that the feasibility study include clear outcomes identifying what the study is intended to achieve. The Chair responded that

the contract includes outcomes, including regulatory compliance, evaluation of alternatives, and recommendations to improve public health and environmental protection.

Cannon Mountain Revenue Context

MSAC member and Director Shawn Hamilton for DNCR Division of Parks and Recreation addressed comments regarding revenue from Mount Sunapee supporting Cannon Mountain. He stated that New Hampshire State Parks has operated as a self-funded park system since 1991. He explained that revenue-generating parks support parks that do not generate a profit and emphasized that State Parks functions as one park system. He noted that Cannon Mountain is the only state-owned and operated ski area in New Hampshire and one of few state-owned and operated ski areas in the country. He stated that Mount Sunapee revenue is important to maintaining Cannon Mountain as part of the State Park system.

2026-2030 MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AS INTRODUCED BY MOUNT SUNAPEE RESORT

Sue Donnelly provided a brief update on the proposed 2026–2030 Master Development Plan and Environmental Management Plan. She stated that both plans were submitted to DNCR on June 1, 2026. She described the documents as intended to guide future phases of the Resort while balancing guest service, operational needs, environmental stewardship, and partnership responsibilities with the State.

Ms. Donnelly stated that the documents include discussion of parking, flow, design days, lift capacity, lift network alignment, capital improvements, building structure, wastewater, and coordination with the wastewater feasibility study. She noted that the documents total approximately 600 pages and that the Resort reviewed them carefully to update information from the prior five-year planning period. No formal action was taken.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PROCESS (DNCR)

Eric Goulet, Commission Clerk, provided an overview of public review and comment opportunities.

Mr. Goulet stated that the 2026–2027 Annual Operating Plan was available for public review on the Mount Sunapee Advisory Commission webpage, with written comments accepted through June 29, 2026.

Mr. Goulet stated that beginning June 24, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., the proposed 2026–2030 Master Development Plan and Environmental Management Plan would be posted to the same webpage following internal DNCR review. Members of the public would be able to review those documents and submit comments through the same online process.

Mr. Goulet also stated that as the Weston & Sampson wastewater feasibility study progresses, technical memoranda and other study documents will be posted to the webpage as they become available. Future milestones, document releases, and opportunities for public input will also be announced through the webpage. The approved wastewater feasibility study contract and study milestones would also be posted beginning June 24, 2026.

Mr. Goulet directed members of the public to the website link, QR code, and printed flyers available at the meeting.

FUTURE MSAC OPERATIONS

The Chair stated that MSAC has historically met approximately once per year but that he would like to expand the Commission's role. He stated that there are opportunities to use MSAC for public outreach, public comment, transparency, and updates regarding Mount Sunapee Resort.

The Chair stated that DNCR anticipates holding a public hearing regarding the MDP and EMP in September or October 2026 to allow adequate time for public review of the approximately 600-page document. He stated that the hearing may also include an update on the wastewater feasibility study, as two technical memoranda are expected to be completed by that time.

The Chair stated that additional MSAC meetings may be scheduled if needed and expressed interest in meeting more frequently when there is substantive content for the Commission to discuss.

Commission members expressed support for increased public engagement, website communication, and more regular MSAC meetings.

Philip Trowbridge of NH DES stated that DES is willing to participate in future meetings and assist with review of study results.

OTHER BUSINESS

MSAC member Dan Wolf thanked the Chair, DNCR staff, Sue Donnelly, and Mount Sunapee Resort staff. He stated that the meeting was the most enlightening and encouraging MSAC meeting he had attended and expressed appreciation for the direction of the discussion. He stated that he believed Mount Sunapee was headed in a positive direction.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chair thanked members of the public for attending and reiterated the importance of public input. He stated that DNCR would review the comments received during the meeting and during the continued public comment period.

Motion: Upon completion of Commission business and public comment, Chair Crepeau requested a motion to adjourn. Dan Wolf moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Elizabeth Harper.

Vote: Hearing no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.