

MOUNT WASHINGTON COMMISSION
October 29, 2021 MINUTES (DRAFT)

A regular meeting of the Mount Washington Commission (MWC) was held at Cannon Mountain Peabody Lodge.

Call to Order. Chairman Bradley called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Introductions were made and Chair Bradley thanked Mr. DeVivo for hosting the meeting. PRESENT were Sen Jeb Bradley/Senate, Ed Bergeron/for Public, Dir Phil Bryce/Div Parks and Rec, Paul Fitzgerald/for Public, Derek Ibarguen/WMNF, Jack Middleton/MWObs, Wayne Presby/Cog Railway. Drew Scamman/Townsquare Media, Chris Thayer/AMC, and Rep Karen Umberger/House. Paul Ingersoll/for Public and Howie Wemyss/Auto Road were EXCUSED. Several members of the public and state employees were in attendance, including Harvard Negotiation and Mediation Clinical Program (HNMCP) advisor Rachel Viscomi, and students Seorae Ko, Erin Savoie, and Lowry Yankwich.

Minutes. Mr Middleton MOVED to accept the minutes of September 24, 2021; SECONDED by Mr Bergeron. The minutes were APPROVED as written by voice vote and Rep Umberger having abstained.

Capital Improvements. By separate email, Tom Mansfield provided an update on the Mount Washington capital projects. A copy is attached herein.

State Park Report & Operating Plan Review. Mt Washington State Park retail manager Christa Rousseau reported that the Sherman Adams Building (SAB) closed for the season on Oct. 17th with the last day of Cog operations to the summit. The MWObs museum closed on Oct. 12 and the Auto Road ceased operations to the summit on Oct. 24th. On par with 2018, the state park estimates 350K visitors in 2021. Retail is up 2.5%, having inventory from 2020 to compensate for the current supply problems. Renovations of the Tip Top House will be complete for a 2022 re-opening.

Master Plan. The Harvard Negotiation and Mediation Clinical Program (HNMCP) team reported on their findings thus far, including results of the interviews they held with summit partners and stakeholders. The team conducted several exercises during the meeting to promote open communications and discussion. A copy of their presentation and exercise notes are attached herein.

Commissioner Stewart said the exercises brought everyone out of their comfort zone, but generated great discussions. Ms. Tucker thanked Mr. Haley for bringing the HNMCP program to the Mount Washington Commission. Mr. Presby said there were several great ideas discussed at this meeting that could move the master planning effort forward.

The HNMCP team will provide the MWC with a draft of their findings and recommendations in the next month.

Partner Reports. Due to time constraints, partner reports were not given.

AOB. Those who wish to serve on the Master Plan Subcommittee are to let Chair Bradley know.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 7, 2022, at 9 a.m. at the Pope Memorial Library in North Conway.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Submitted by T. Tango-Lowy, MWC clerk.

Mt. Washington Capital Projects Update
Mt. Washington Commission Meeting of October 29, 2021
TCM

SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT & WATER SYSTEM UPGRADE

- The Division of Public Works has agreed to combine the Mt. Washington Water System Upgrade project (funded by ARPA) with the on-going Mt. Washington Sewage Treatment Plant Replacement project (funded by capital and LWCF).
- The Notice to Proceed for the design consultant for the water system portion of the project was issued on September 23, 2021.
- The bid package for the combined sewage treatment plant and water system project is expected to be complete by the end of 2021. Bidding documents will be issued by DPW in January of 2022.
- Construction start is anticipated in June 2022. Construction is expected to run through two construction seasons with completion in October 2023.
- Commissioning and start-up monitoring of the treatment plant will continue through the 2024 season.

SHERMAN ADAMS BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS (Concrete repair and chimney stack reconstruction)

- We anticipate this project will encounter logistical conflicts with the sewage treatment plant and water system upgrade project if they start concurrently. To minimize conflicts, we plan to stagger the start of the Sherman Adams improvements until 2023.
- The staggered start will allow time for the new water tanks to be installed and will leave the exterior of the Sherman Adams Building unobstructed for the concrete repair work.
- Bid documents for the Sherman Adams Building Improvement project are scheduled to be issued in September of 2022. Construction will start in 2023 contingent on whatever restraints may be involved in coordinating with the schedule of the sewage treatment plant and water system project.

SUMMIT WATER SUPPLY

- Emery & Garrett PLC performed an initial ground water investigation on site at the summit on September 17, 2021.
- They will make recommendations for measures to improve the summit water supply based on their findings. In particular, they will report on the feasibility of re-commissioning the well in the basement of the Yankee Building.
- They may recommend testing methods to determine if the Sherman Adams well and the Yankee Building well draw from the same reservoir of ground water.
- They will consider the risks and benefits of hydro-fracking the Sherman Adams Building well in order to improve its yield.



Mid-Semester Update for the MWC

October 29, 2021

Seorae Ko, Erin Savoie, Lowry Yankwich

Project Objective

Since 1969, the Mount Washington Commission has been tasked with managing the summit of Mount Washington. New Hampshire Revised Statute 227 requires the Commission to agree upon a shared vision for the Mount Washington summit, embodied within a master plan.

How can the Commission best approach the process of master planning in order to comply with its statutory obligation and articulate a shared vision for the future?



Master Plan Requirement – RSA 227-B

- Commission was created in 1969 "to manage the summit...property owned by the state" (227-B:1). Its **first** listed responsibility is master planning.
- Master plan is *required* every 10 years.
 - Historical note: Commission has made a master plan before, and gotten it approved. Commission developed the plan over 18 months in 1971.
 - No approved master plan since, but master plan drafted in 2010.
 - According to statute, plan must be submitted to governor on or before January 1 every 10 years for approval and for enabling legislation.
- The governor and council approve funds for capital improvements consistent with master plan.



Master Plan Requirement – RSA 227-B

- Master plan must include but is not limited to discussion of:
 - Capital improvements for 10-year period
 - Proposed operation of summit including fees for "facilities operated by the commission," personnel, and franchise agreements
 - Promotion of summit as "recreational, historic, and scientific" attraction
 - Protection of unique flora and natural resources of summit
 - Negotiation of public rights of way
 - Cooperative arrangements between private interests and commission (e.g. joint personnel, collection of fees)



Methodology

Assessment Data

Interviews

- **Commission Members (10 complete)**
- **Non-Commission Parties (8 complete)**

Direct observation
(MWC Meeting, 9/28
Site visit, 10/2)

Facilitated reflection exercise
(MWC Meeting 9/28)

Key Supporting Sources

Expert interviews
(2 complete)

Negotiation and dispute resolution theory

Statutory text (RSA 227) and background research on Commission members

Best practices from similar projects



Preliminary Findings

1

MWC's current approach to addressing operational, short-term issues is not conducive to addressing long-term, strategic master planning.

- Current meeting structure promotes information-sharing rather than joint problem-solving.
- Meetings prioritize getting down to business over strengthening relationships.
- Meeting format does not ensure that all perspectives are heard.
- While Master Planning is an item on MWC agendas, little to no time has been devoted to it in recent years, as more pressing items take priority.
- Regular meetings lack broader public input, which interviewees noted as a priority for master planning.
- Discussions about contested issues in meetings often tend to be backward-looking rather than forward-looking.



Preliminary Findings

2

Zero-sum mindset impedes opportunities for collaboration.

- Partners have identified missed opportunities to create shared value, especially with respect to infrastructure improvements and visitor experience.
- Gap between partners' intentions and how behavior is interpreted by others creates tension.
- Information asymmetries engender distrust, which makes collaboration difficult.
- Positional behavior overshadows examples of cooperation at both staff and commission level.



Zero-sum mindsets are common defaults in negotiation and often lead to suboptimal outcomes. (Robert H. Mnookin, et al., *Beyond Winning: Negotiating to Create Value in Deals and Disputes* (1st ed. 2000)).



Preliminary Findings

3

Master planning presents an opportunity to resolve major sources of friction.

- Partners expressed optimism that master planning could help the MWC reach consensus on long-term issues.
- Regular commission meetings rarely present an opportunity to discuss partners' visions for the summit which range from a European chalet to a hiker's natural paradise.
- Partners have divergent expectations about decision-making roles and responsibilities.



Preliminary Recommendations

- 1 Master planning meetings should be distinct from regular meetings, both in time and format.**
- 2 Restructure interactions to identify and make the most of mutually beneficial opportunities.**
- 3 Engage a facilitator to guide conversation regarding unresolved major questions.**



Next Steps

What will you take away from today's session?

Is there any additional feedback you'd like to give us as we move toward drafting our final report and recommendations?

Is there any feedback that you would like to share on today's presentation and exercises?



10/29 Presentation and Exercise Notes

Imagine that it is 2031 and you're reading a newspaper article about the amazing experience of the Mount Washington summit and the work of the Mount Washington Commission.

What's the headline?

- Invite all 6th graders for a free trip
- New facility completed
- Seamless visitors experience
- Exceptional accessibility
- Yankee building revamped
- Another successful season
- Incredible facility and experience to rival the view
- Fun for all and a plan for the summit
- State unveils new facility
- Mutually supported goals for summit
- Hard work!
- Timeless historical experience
- Year-round facilities
- Visitor experience and sustainability
- State gives 500 acres of new land for excellent collaboration
- #1 visitor experience by the Cog, Auto Road, the State, and the Observatory
- Reducing footprint, sustainable blog
- Broad public access

How did you work together to achieve these goals? How would you describe your cooperation?

- Remain open throughout winter
- Remain closed throughout winter
- Secure funding
- Increase variety of available activities
- Get broader involvement
- Define what “facilities” means, and then decide what to do for facilities
- Find common ground
- Subcommittees + focus groups
- Get structured process, look at existing charter
- Mutual respect & trust & interests for summit
- Re: master plan,
 - improve facilities,
 - become a team,
 - leave controversy behind,
 - get additional funding,
 - learn to like each other,
 - get a mediator
- Ground (summit activities) on visitor input, take surveys and get more public engagement
- Focus on smaller wins before trying to move on to larger ones

What could get in the way of achieving these goals?

- Status quo
- Lack of willingness to share and transparency
- Public outreach
- Differing views
- Funding and finances
- Safety
- Disagreements
- Lack of collaboration
- Not recognizing rights (suggested ways to reconcile and modify rights)
- Conflict between us
- Not compromising
- Not enough time to resolve matters
- Narrow-mindedness
- Looking back, not forward
- Conversation on back-burner

What could we do to overcome these obstacles?

- Social media outreach
- House and senate visit to mountain and info session + experiences package (the Cog, Auto Road, Hike)
- Subcommittee on strategic planning
- Bi-monthly meetings
- Separately facilitated MP meetings
- Flexibility and open-mindedness and active listening
- Asking WHY
- Formal agreement for outside facilitation