

Joint DRED-UVLSRPC Public Hearing and
Mount Sunapee Advisory Committee (MSAC) meeting on the
Mount Sunapee Resort MDP/EMP 2015-2019
August 26, 2014 at 6 p.m. at Sunapee Lodge, Mount Sunapee Ski Area

The hearing began at 6:10 p.m. Nathan Miller, Executive Director of the Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) welcomed the public and introduced the state legislators, MSAC members, Mount Sunapee Resort (Resort) and CNL in attendance. Mr. Miller reviewed the agenda.

Commissioner Rose thanked everyone for attending. He provided the purpose of the hearing and an gave an overview of the public involvement process, as outlined in the Public Involvement Policy (PIP) that is associated with the lease. He reviewed the requirements of the Master Development Plan & Environmental Management Plan (MDP/EMP) and the Annual Operating Plan (AOP), pursuant to the Lease Agreement. He recognized the recent Superior Court ruling that found a mutual mistake of the parties and ordered the western and northern leasehold boundary to be coterminous with the western and northern state park boundary.

Commissioner Rose set the process for the hearing. He stated that written comments can be provided on the forms available at the information table, or by mail or email at MountSunapeeComments@dred.nh.gov. Written comments are due by September 26, 2014 and public comments and input from the MSAC and DRED staff, and for the purpose of facilitating an open and transparent public process, he will release his draft statement on the MDP/EMP for public review and comment.

Mr. Jay Gamble of Mount Sunapee Resort gave a presentation of the history and Mount Sunapee ski area and an overview of the MDP/EMP. New projects for which approval is sought are the West Bowl expansion of ski amenities, the upgrade of the Sunapee Express lift and the Mountain Coaster. Mr. Gamble participated in a brief Q&A session pertaining to the presentation, including clarification on the role of CNL and Mount Sunapee Resort under the lease.

1. Frank MacConnell, Newport is the owner of Bob Skinner Ski & Sports. He favors the West Bowl expansion. The State was inconsistent in its operation of the ski area. Mount Sunapee Resort has made 16 years of reinvestment, providing more revenue for local businesses. The Mueller's have been responsive to environmental and economic issues and made real improvements.
2. Colin Nelson, Newbury works at Mount Sunapee Resort and grew up at the ski area. Compared to the operation under the State, Mount Sunapee Resort has provided good equipment and better safety. His kids make it the fourth generation of working at the ski area.
3. Everett Polland, Sunapee enjoys the recreational opportunities here and cares about the State Park. He has skied for 50 years and since 1998, has seen incredible improvements. The West Bowl could greatly improve things. He is a local businessman in residential design whose clients choose to live here because of the recreational opportunities at Mount Sunapee. He is totally enthusiastic about the plans.

4. Eric Wheeler, New England Handicapped Sports Association was voted the best adaptive sports association for 2013-14. They support the expansion as they continue to offer the best ski experience to their clientele. The NEHSA has been a guest at Mount Sunapee since 1974.
5. Hess Gates, Sunapee is a small business owner, and has skied and hiked for 50 years. He owns a B&B near Sunapee harbor and gets summer business from the high quality experiences offered at Mount Sunapee Resort. The Plan will keep Mount Sunapee Resort competitive, otherwise visitors will leap frog to other ski areas. Mount Sunapee Resort is an excellent operator and an economic resource.
6. Keith Perkins, Goshen. Mount Sunapee Resort is the only developer who approached the (Colby-Sawyer?) College about their plans. He has a family business in Exeter where they use the SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis for business assessments. Mount Sunapee Resort is threatened by other ski areas that are expanding. They should capitalize on their strengths to create the opportunities shown in their plan.
7. Doug Graham, Sunapee favors the MDP/EMP and West Bowl expansion. He is a registered civil engineer and a skiing family. Since the lease, he has seen the clientele increase, the local economy improve and local business expand. He works at Mount Sunapee Resort as a ski patroller and guests wonder about the expansion. Real estate development is not in the Plan.
8. Jim MacMahon, Unity supports the Plan. Goshen needs it.
9. Bruce Healey, Newbury is the Town of Newbury's perambulator. Every 7 years, the Town renews its marks and bounds. The West Bowl expansion has the potential to impact the monuments which have historical significance dating back to 1793. He asks that care be taken not to impact the monuments.
10. Arthur Burritt, Newbury is an employee of Mount Sunapee Resort. He appreciates what the mountain provides and the West Bowl expansion will bring new interest. As a school bus driver, he sees kids enjoy the ski programs. He runs Davis Cabins and the guests appreciate the summer adventure park.
11. Will Abbott, Society for the Protection of NH Forests is VP of Policy and Reservation Stewardship. The Forest Society also serves on the MSAC. The Forest Society has a long history with Mount Sunapee dating back to 1911 with the goal of a public mountain park. He believes Mount Sunapee Resort has done a good job within the existing lease boundary. The State cannot lease lands they do not own. Mount Sunapee Resort can do as they wish with their private lands if their plans pass local planning and zoning review. They can donate the 600 acres to the State, but questions remain.
12. Steve McGarrett, Sunapee is an employee. Mount Sunapee Resort provides viable job experience and employment development for youth.
13. V? Sarkisian, New London. The State was always conducting surveys for years. Things changed with the Mueller's and improvements were made. The State should give its approval. Unrelated to the plan, he would like to see a larger flagpole and flag installed.

14. Jeffrey Scott, Chesterfield. Mount Sunapee Resort has been good for the area.
15. Maura Gorman, New London is an employee, including while under the State. Mount Sunapee Resort has proven its expertise and commitment. The Mueller's and senior management live locally and it makes a huge difference.
16. Luke Gorman, Sunapee learned to ski here. He has seen the Live-Work-Play promotion. The West Bowl expansion will increase the likelihood for youth to live, work and enjoy the area.
17. Kathy Hubert, Newport has seen 26 years of incremental real estate development. They make \$11 million in gross revenue. The State should not subsidize a single private company. Their bad real estate decision should not be bailed out by the people of the State.
18. Guenter Hubert, Newport. Mount Sunapee Resort does a great job. After 16 years, many area businesses are up for lease. Mount Sunapee Resort is designed to keep business activity enclosed within and does not provide retail opportunities outside the ski area.
19. Bruce Hudson, New London. For 16 years, Mount Sunapee Resort has provided a great place to hang out. He is in favor of the MDP. They do a great job as private business owners and as stewards, providing a positive work culture. They invested \$165K the first year and average 240K skier visits. It is revenue for the State, Goshen, Newbury and local business, including Cannon Mountain. It is a win-win. He hopes DRED comes to an amicable decision.
20. Virginia Schendler, Goshen requested that her time allotment be given to Will Abbott, which was granted.
21. Will Abbott, Forest Society. The Mueller's own land in Goshen and their plans for slopeside real estate development is problematic. The State cannot use public lands to benefit a few private users. Mount Sunapee Resort may not have plans for real estate, but the State needs to answer the question: Who owns the dirt? What is the State government's responsibility in this issue?
22. Ricia McMahon, Sutton and former state legislator from 2005-2010. No one questions Mount Sunapee Resort's management and intentions. She is concerned about the land donated to the State for recreation. Many can't afford the cost of the ski passes. Although Mount Sunapee Resort has said that there are no plans for real estate development, she was told it was the reason for the purchase of the land.
23. Chris Robb, Sunapee is an employee. Mount Sunapee is a huge draw for winter business. Mount Sunapee Resort has helped him as an employee with his work, housing and schooling.
24. Jolyon Johnson, Sunapee does not question the operator, but agrees with the comments of Will Abbott and Ricia McMahon. The plans don't show what the West Bowl development is, or the residential details. Ski ticket sales are not enough to support the facilities. Mount Sunapee State Park was created with properties taken by eminent domain for the public good, not for a private interest.
25. Jay Flanders, Newbury. There are not major condo development around this area. It is why the Mueller's bought the land.

26. Hal Krueger, Newbury. Get the ideas off the paper and onto the mountain. Running a ski area is a high risk business. Is Mount Sunapee Resort keeping up with demand? They have reached capacity based on the long lines at the lifts. Expansion is necessary to keep up with the demands of the visitors. Why is it wrong? It's a good public-private partnership. They have proven their growth and reputation, including within the history of the park.
27. Steve Russell, Newbury asked if Mount Sunapee Resort was sold to CNL or if the Mueller's are the direct leaseholders. Tim Mueller answered that CNL is the primary leaseholder and Mount Sunapee Resort is the sub-lessee and the operator of the mountain. Mr. Russell recited facts about CNL taken from CNL's website, including that they are a private legal investment firm providing alternative investment solutions. They has invested in ski areas nationwide and in hotels including the Mount Washington Hotel, and other real estate. Mount Sunapee is an investment to CNL.
28. Ralph Marche, Newbury runs a veterans ski program. He appreciates Mount Sunapee Resort's support of the program, including discounted tickets, to help vets heal.
29. Michael Dixon is the ski patrol director. He choose to accept the job at Mount Sunapee Resort because he trusts the Mueller's. He looked at the plans and saw their vested interest in the Park. He could work elsewhere, but trusts them. He looks forward to the West Bowl expansion.

Commissioner Rose thanked everyone and provided closing comments. He welcomes additional written comments due by September 26, 2014. Information is on the MSAC webpage from www.nhstateparks.org or by email at MountSunapeeComment@dred.nh.gov. Written comments can be left in the comment box at the exit.

His next steps are to work with staff to review the public comments and input from the MSAC. He will then provide his draft response for public review. Commissioner Rose closed the hearing at 7:55 p.m.

Submitted by T. Tango-Lowy, MSAC clerk.