

MOUNT WASHINGTON COMMISSION
July 20, 2018 MINUTES (approved on 11.02.18)

A regular meeting of the Mount Washington Commission (MWC) was held at the Tip Top House at Mount Washington State Park.

Call to Order. Chairman Walter Graff/AMC, having a quorum of members, called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m. Members present were Dir Phil Bryce/Div Parks and Rec (DPR), Paul Fitzgerald/for Public, Paul Ingersoll/for Public, Martha McLeod/for Public, Clare Mendelsohn/WMNF, Jack Middleton/MWObs, Wayne Presby/Cog Railway (Vice-Chair), Drew Scamman/Townsquare Media, Rep Karen Umberger/House, and Howie Wemyss/Auto Road.

Also present were DNCR Commissioner Sarah Stewart, Robert Blechl/Caledonian Record, Allen Brooks/AG Office, Kevin Devine/MWSP, John Koziol/Union Leader, Tom Mansfield/DNCR Architect, Sharon Schilling/MWObs President, Diane Taliaferro/WMNF, Edith Tucker/Berlin Sun, and Torene Tango-Lowy/MWC clerk.

Minutes. Mr Middleton moved to accept the minutes of April 13, 2018; Mr Presby seconded. The minutes were approved.

Master Plan. Dir Bryce is working with UNH to conduct the carrying capacity study for Monadnock and Mount Washington state parks. He provided an update on the operational issues and hiker parking occurring along I-93 at Franconia Notch state park.

Attorney Brooks reminded members that their earlier discussion is protected under attorney-client privilege. Mr Fitzgerald MOTIONED to waive attorney-client privilege and release all documents to the public. Mr Presby SECONDED. Rep Umberger MOTIONED to amend the motion to enable AG's review of what's been done and provide the authority to release the documents. Mr Ingersoll SECONDED the amendment. Members discussed the amendment at length. Rep Umberger MOTIONED to amend the pending amendment to release the history document today; and to release the entire report after the AG has made its final updates and the MWC has reviewed the updated report. If any MWC member expresses by email within 10 days of his/her review of the final report any concerns, then the report shall not be released. Mr Presby SECONDED the amended amendment. The amended amendment CARRIES by roll call vote 9-2. The motion as amended CARRIES by roll call vote, unanimously.

Ms McLeod MOTIONED to release the history document entitled, "*Ownership History of the Mount Washington Summit.*" Rep Umberger SECONDED; the motion CARRIES by roll call vote, unanimously. Attorney Brooks will provide a coversheet and the history document to be posted on the MWC website by the end of day Monday.

Fee Collection. Dir Bryce said the Business Office is working on closing the books for FY 2018. Mr Devine reported that the park is now fully staffed; retail costs are being kept down; food service costs have increased slightly; and properly certified staff are keeping the sewage treatment plant working. More educational outreach to the public is need, as evidenced by the increase in mountain rescues.

Mr Devine informed members of the King of Thailand Birthplace Foundation event scheduled at the summit on August 25th. The SAB rotunda will be closed to the public from 4-6 p.m. for a private presentation to approx. 50 people to commemorate the 1919 visit of the summit by Prince Mahidol, Harvard alumni known for bringing modern medicine to Thailand. The restrooms will remain open to the public. The commission asked that this information be posted on the park website.

Dir Bryce announced that Mr Devine is leaving Parks, but thanked him for bringing positive changes to summit operations, helping to focus on the summit retail and food service, and building consensus with the summit partners.

Capital Improvements. Mr Mansfield gave a report on the sewage treatment plant monitoring and modeling that includes a study of the proposal to install a sewer line along the Cog track. The work is scheduled for completion in September. He provided an update on the water system study that

recommends the installation of two 20K-gallon water tanks closer to the Sherman Adams Building to replace the existing, aging tanks. The cost estimate for the water system project is \$860K.

HL Turner Group, who was doing the Yankee Building assessment, is in a contract dispute with the department. The matter is with the AG's Office. Rep Umberger expressed her dismay over the delay. Roofing work on the Yankee Building was being done today. DNCR submitted its capital budget FY2020-2021 request last April with placeholders of \$1.7mil for the sewage treatment project and \$2.5mil for the communications project. DNCR's total capital budget request is \$16.5 million.

Partner Reports. Auto Road. Mr Wemyss reported a good start and great summer season. They have been managing traffic flow on Rte. 16, are working on taking online reservations for guided tours, and are developing an app that can be downloaded by private drivers. The Auto Road is also involved with the King of Thailand event. The hotel project is near completion.

Cog Railway. Mr Presby said May and June were strong. Major projects include 256 tons of new rail for installation, use of the old Issacson Steel building as an enclosed maintenance facility for railcars and equipment. They are installing an approximate 130-ft. track extension at the summit to the track's original position within the Cog's ROW, which will enable the Cog to park trains at the summit for simultaneous loading and unloading of passengers.

MWObs. Ms Schilling thanked Mr Devine for his support and efforts to work collaboratively with the Observatory. Tomorrow is the Seek the Peak event, their largest fundraiser. The turnstiles installed in the summit museum are helping to improve efficiency at the entryway.

Townsquare Media. Mr Scamman thanked the Commission for welcoming him. He reported that maintenance work at the summit has been done and they are beginning to prepare for winter. He also expressed appreciation for assistance from park staff.

WMNF. Ms Mendelsohn said they are enjoying the National Forest centennial celebrations and the exhibit at the Museum of the White Mountains at Plymouth State. Trails maintenance on Crawford Path continues, as does their alpine botany and invasive removal efforts. The amount of dandelions being removed at the summit continues to decrease with less than 61-lbs. removed two weeks ago. She announced that Lorri Deyer, a former Berlin resident now in L.A., was selected as the 2018 Artist in Residence. Ms Mendelsohn introduced new Deputy Director Diane Taliaferro.

AMC. Mr Graff reported a busy start of the season with strong lodging reservations. They are providing hikers with online information on where to park for trailheads in and around Franconia Notch. AMC is hosting the WMNF centennial travelling exhibit, and they are also involved in the Crawford Path project, including its 200th anniversary next year. In response to Mr Ingersoll's inquiry, AMC is applying for a permit from the WMNF for a helipad to support AMC's Lake of the Clouds operation. AMC is no longer able to fly from the Cog's property.

Dir Bryce said Parks is doing what it can to alleviate hiker parking along I-93, but needs to protect its parking areas for the Tram, Flume and Echo Lake beach. Revenue earned there help to support the entire park system. Ms Mendelsohn said the alternative transportation working group is looking to strike the balance between safety and hiker access. Ms McLeod said hikers also bring revenue to the region.

Mr Graff thanked the Commission members: it is important and critical to work together for the long-term partnership at the summit.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 2, 2018.

Submitted by T. Tango-Lowy, MWC clerk.