

MOUNT WASHINGTON COMMISSION
March 4, 2022 MINUTES (Approved on 03/25/22)

A regular meeting of the Mount Washington Commission (MWC) was held at the Cog Railway Maintenance Facility.

Call to Order. Chairman Bradley called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m., with a quorum present. PRESENT were Sen Jeb Bradley/Senate, Ed Bergeron/for Public, Dir Phil Bryce/Div Parks and Rec, Derek Ibarguen/WMNF, Jack Middleton/MWObs, Wayne Presby/Cog Railway, Chris Thayer/AMC, and Howie Wemyss/Auto Road. Paul Ingersoll/for Public, Drew Scamman/Townsquare Media and Rep Karen Umberger/House were excused. Paul Fitzgerald had provided Chair Bradley with his letter of resignation. Several members of the public, summit partners, DNCR Commissioner Stewart and state employees were in attendance.

Minutes. Mr Middleton MOVED to accept the minutes of January 21, 2022; SECONDED by Mr Presby. The minutes were APPROVED as written.

Master Plan. Chair Bradley spoke to Governor Lynch who, due to current obligations, is unable to assist with the master planning process as a facilitator. Although not present, Mr Brooks was thanked for summarizing the vision statements and writing the Summary of Comments for Mount Washington Management Plan (Summary of Comments). Chair Bradley asked each MWC member to comment on the vision statements. Everyone thought it was a good exercise and pointed out the common themes, areas of mutual agreement and opportunities, as well as areas requiring further discussion. All agreed that implementation of the master plan recommendations is a shared objective.

Commr Stewart and Dir Bryce provided an update on DNCR's capital budget and federal ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) project requests. The Mt Washington septic and water systems projects and SAB (Sherman Adams Building) exterior repairs are previously approved projects already underway. Parks prioritized the \$23M ARPA funding requests based on revenue generation for the park system, such as campgrounds, parking areas and roadways, the Tram, as well as deferred maintenance needs.

Members agreed that the vertical infrastructure, such as the communication facilities, future technologies and the Yankee Building, needs to be discussed and included in the next summary.

Members discussed each item listed in the Summary of Comments to identify areas where they agreed and areas that require additional discussion. See attached Summary of Comments list, including notes on the discussion written in *italics*, a check mark (√) is used to indicate areas of agreement, an arrow (➤) is used to indicate an item where further discussion is needed and a box (□) is used for Action Items.

Tour of the Cog Railway Maintenance Facility. The Cog Railway provided the attendees with a tour of the new maintenance facility. Lunch was provided by the Cog Railway.

Cog Railway Update. Commr Stewart expressed appreciation for the Cog Railway's creativity and focus on the positive comments received on its track extension proposal that was presented to the MWC 18 months ago. Mr Duvall presented the Railway's proposal to construct "Lizzie's Station," a new station located near Lizzie's Monument and upon land owned by the Railway, and outside the State-owned summit circle. Lizzie's Station would provide sleeper coaches for lodging, and shelter, concession and restroom facilities open to the public. All Railway riders would disembark at Lizzie Station and could hike to the summit on the existing trails or take the free, public shuttle train to the summit. The Railway would agree to maintain its existing footprint inside the summit circle and work with the AG's Office to amend its ROW easement to clarify the Railway's use of the ROW easement and not expand beyond the existing tracks.

The MWC members discussed the proposal. Mr Wemyss said it was a great solution to the concerns expressed over the original proposal. Chair Bradley asked about the sleeper coaches and liked that the coaches were “tucked in” to better retain the viewscape and minimize the light impacts to the valley below. Dir Bryce said the additional public facilities provided by the Railway would complement summit operations. Mr Thayer appreciated the Railway’s creative thinking and the continuity of the summit experience where riders could enjoy walking the hiking trails to reach the summit.

Mr Presby said the next steps are to have preliminary discussions with the Coos County planning board. The WMNF and State are the abutters to the project. Buildout is planned over five years.

AOB. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 25th at 9:30 a.m. at the AMC Highland Center.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Submitted by T. Tango-Lowy, MWC clerk.