

MOUNT WASHINGTON COMMISSION
April 13, 2018 MINUTES *(Approved on 07/20/2018)*

A regular meeting of the Mount Washington Commission (MWC) was held at Franconia Notch State Park, Park Headquarters.

Call to Order. Chairman Walter Graff/AMC, having a quorum of members, called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Members present were Dir Phil Bryce/Div Parks and Rec (DPR), Mark Ericson/Townsquare Media, Paul Fitzgerald/for Public, Paul Ingersoll/for Public, Martha McLeod/for Public, Clare Mendelsohn/WMNF, Jack Middleton/MWObs, Wayne Presby/Cog Railway (Vice-Chair), Rep Karen Umberger/House, and Howie Wemyss/Auto Road.

Also present were Robert Blechl/Caledonian Record, Allen Brooks/AG Office, Kevin Devine/MWSP, John Koziol/Union Leader, Gary MacDonald/MWObs, Tom Mansfield/DNCR Architect, Ryan Presby/Cog Railway, Sharon Schilling/MWObs President, Edith Tucker/Berlin Sun, Mr Umberger, Hal Wilkins/public, and Torene Tango-Lowy/MWC clerk.

Minutes. Rep Umberger moved to accept the minutes of Dec 15, 2017; Mr Ingersoll seconded. Mr Ericson requested an amendment to the minutes. The minutes were approved as amended.

Master Plan. Mr Mansfield provided an update of HL Turner's assessment of the Yankee Building, expected completion is Sept 1. A survey of the communication tenants is being developed. Copies of the draft survey and any project reports that can be made public are to be sent to the MWC. Dir Bryce said \$2.5M for Mt Washington is being requested in the Capital Budget.

Mr Brooks informed the members that the MWC is not adjudicative, but a forum for cooperation. Members represent themselves and their interests. Dir Bryce said DNCR's surveyor and AG are researching the rights held by the State. Mr Fitzgerald MOTIONED to have the MWC's AG investigate the various rights and responsibilities of the summit parties and provide his report at the next meeting. Ms McLeod seconded. Members discussed the need to understand the rights held so as to resolve the current issues. Mr Brooks stated that discussion on his findings is attorney-client privileged conducted in a "non-meeting" session with members. The motion was AMENDED to have the MWC's AG research the ownership of the various parcels and the rights of the various partners, including their operational privileges, and to provide his opinion at the next meeting. Mr Ingersoll seconded. The motion was adopted.

Mr Graff offered to help mediate between the parties. Mr Brooks added that mediators are also available through the [Judicial Branch website](#).

Fee Collection. Dir Bryce provided copies of Parks' FY2017 Financial Report and reviewed the Mount Washington Fund and the State Park Fund. He is working with the Business Office to develop a forecasting document to enable Parks to make corresponding adjustments through the year. Members discussed the financials.

Capital Improvements. Mr Mansfield gave a report on the sewage treatment plant work that will be completed in the fall. The preliminary report on a proposed sewer line along the Cog track will be provided when complete. He reported on the early considerations for the water system.

DNCR will request in its Capital Budget \$1.25M for Summit Communication Facilities and \$1.87M for the sewage treatment plant. The Governor's Office and Legislature will approve the final budget.

Park Operations. Mr Devine presented the winter maintenance and repair work done in the Yankee and SAB buildings, the rear door of the Tip Top House, the HVAC system and the Pack Room. He is looking into options for replacing the Snow Cat. The 2018 parks operations schedule was provided, recognizing that some flexibility will be necessary in coordination with the summit partners. Donna Sanborn and Stephanie McCann are leaving after years of operating the food concession and retail store. Rep Umberger MOVED to send a letter of thanks to Ms Sanborn and Ms

McCann from the MWC for their years of service and to wish them well. Dir Bryce provided copies of the new State Parks map.

Partner Reports. Auto Road. Mr Wemyss plans to open to treeline the first weekend in May, weather permitting. He gave an update on the hotel construction and planned amenities.

Cog Railway. Mr Presby reported a 7th record season with 119K people. He discussed the bridge replacement that was damaged by the October storm, trestle repairs, continued cleanup along the track, and rail replacement.

MWObs. Ms Schilling thanked Parks for its assistance and cooperation this past winter; there was good coordination of snow and ice removal. Tomorrow, the Obs will celebrate with an Open House at the Discovery Center the anniversary of “Big Wind Day,” the 231mph wind surface record recorded by a human. The summit museum turnstiles are installed and its operation will be monitored this season. The Obs is also assessing the lifecycle of their Snow Cat, and they allow Parks to use their maintenance garage.

Townsquare Media. Mr Erickson reported on the impacts to communications from the difficult winter conditions, including the loss of Townsquare Media’s Portland ME radio path and Fairpoint’s loss of phone coverage due to the cover on the Yankee dish becoming misaligned. He thanked Parks staff for being in radio contact with him and their ability to adjust the communications equipment.

WMNF. Ms Mendelsohn provided copies of their Year 2017 Report. The Crawford Path, the oldest continuously maintained hiking trail in the country, celebrates its 200th anniversary. This year is the centennial of the National Forest and is being featured at an exhibit at the Museum of the White Mountains in Plymouth beginning May 16. They are creating a Trails Collective to fundraise and coordinate efforts with the many trail clubs who maintain the 1200 miles of trails. The Avalanche Center reports no major injuries having occurred this past season.

AMC. Mr Graff gave an update on their continued efforts in Maine’s 100 Mile Wilderness, their partnership with the WMNF on the Crawford Path work, and their educational outreach to Coos and Carroll Counties schools. No major projects are planned for 2018. Hut reservations are up.

Leases & Agreements. Ms Schilling reported that the MountWashington.com website that is privately owned is being offered first to the summit partners before potential sale to a domain name company for \$20K. Dir Bryce had consulted with the Travel and Tourism marketing staff who did not think it a good use of Parks funds as it already has a strong website presence. Mr Graff said he will bring the issue to AMC’s marketing team. Members discussed the value to purchasing the website as a launch point to each partner’s own website and an opportunity for joint promotions. They also questioned who would maintain the website and, should the site be sold and operated by a third party, if it would steer visitors elsewhere.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for July 20, 2018.

Submitted by T. Tango-Lowy, MWC clerk.