

**MOUNT WASHINGTON COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes of February 18, 2005**  
**Mount Washington Cog Railway Base Station**

**Members in attendance:**

Paul Fitzgerald, Chairman	Walter Graff, AMC
Wayne Presby, Cog Railway, Vice Chair	Bill Dauer, WMNF, designee
Howard Wemyss, Mt Washington Auto Road	Paul Ingersoll, Public
Guy Gosselin, Public	

**Members absent:**

Jack Middleton, MW Observatory	Rep. Gene Chandler
Senator John Gallus, Dist. 1	

**Others present:**

Ken Rancourt, Mt Washington Observatory	Allison McLean, Div Parks & Rec
Will Abbott, Mt Washington Observatory	Mike Pelchat, Mt Washington Park Manager
Senator Harold Burns	Dona Sanborn, Mt Washington State Park
John Heneage, Dufresne-Henry	Edith Tucker, Coos County Democrat
Gerry Vezina, Dufresne-Henry	Paula Tracy, Union Leader
Peter Andrews, Dufresne-Henry	Art McGrath, Caledonian Record
Tom Mansfield, DRED Architect	Torene Tango-Lowy, Div of Parks & Rec

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Call to Order Chairman Paul Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Approve minutes Wayne Presby moved to accept the August 10, 2004 minutes. Guy Gosselin seconded; motion carries.

Electrification project Tom Mansfield, DRED Architect, provided an update on the project. Dufresne-Henry is in the final stages of design; plans were sent to commission members for review. John Heneage discussed the plan to reuse the existing powerhouse foundation and to design a low-profile, one-story building that fits with the architecture of the summit buildings. Underground utilities will be housed in the existing utility trench and include fiber optic for communications. Bid release is planned for late February and pre-purchase of materials will help address the narrow time period for construction.

Paul Ingersoll asked about the lease of the Dartmouth property. Allison McLean said the State will negotiate to purchase the property; an appraisal is in progress. Meanwhile, the State and Dartmouth will enter into an Intent-of-Parties agreement prior to construction. Guy Gosselin asked about the cost schedule. The original costs were based on a new and separate building located on state land. Revised costs are still being worked, but the powerhouse foundation is a larger footprint and material costs (especially copper) have increased.

Mike Pelchat discussed additional future use of the electrical building including a public observation deck, incorporating Yankee Microwave, and a UNH transmitter. Howie Wemyss suggested that rent could be charged for quarters in the new building. Mr. Pelchat reported that the generators are working well: costs run \$.10/kilowatt on 160 gallons/day. Members suggested dismantling some of the tank farm and removing unused towers as part of the long-term goal to clean up the summit.

Members asked about how the State would charge for electricity. Ms. McLean said the State would review and negotiate costs. Mr. Heneage said the PUC advises "fair cost;" but the Mount Washington project is not a utility project. Will Abbott suggested that the State build into its cost the maintenance of the line. It's estimated that an on-call contract for inspections, calibrations, and maintenance tasks would be \$20,000/yr.

Attendees discussed the heating of the generator building to reduce rime ice buildup, generator backup for buildings, a fire suppression system for the new electrical building, and emergency use of the new building

during extreme conditions. Mr. Pelchat responded to Edith Tucker's inquiry regarding Parks' winter management of the summit buildings, structures and generators.

Mr. Fitzgerald summarized the items the commission wanted answered: 1) Total project costs, 2) Electric cost to the end-user, 3) Reduction of fuel farm tanks and tower structures, and 4) Dartmouth negotiations. Mr. Fitzgerald will continue to work with Ms. McLean to stay informed of the Dartmouth negotiations. This project will go through the local planning process.

Mr. Presby informed members that the Cog Railway has given the State its commitment for a Right-of-Way for the cable; there are no further plans for a summit cog station. Mr. Presby offered a motion to have the State continue with its bidding process and send updated information addressing the commission's interests when available; there was no second.

Organization reports AMC – Walter Graff said the lack of snow has made for a slow winter, but the AMC facility is doing well. The AMC went to court against the State for the siting of a snowmobile trail near an AMC boundary.

*Auto Road* – The Auto Road is closed; there is no report.

*Cog Railway* – Wayne Presby provided an update to the Ski Train program. Visitors have given positive feedback and use is growing. The Ski Train is not intended for nor marketed to hikers and climbers. Upgrading to oil-fired engines continues with testing planned this Fall.

*Observatory* – Will Abbott said the Observatory continues its renovation of its technology and weather instruments at the summit.

*State Parks* – Mike Pelchat provided an update to staffing changes: Rich McLeod retired in December and Allison McLean has taken on many of the Park Director's duties. A fee restructuring package was approved by Fiscal Committee for a modest increase in park fees. However, the package did eliminate fees to Tip Top House. Retail operations closed with gross earnings of \$530,000; a 9% increase from last year. Other current tasks include: air emissions permitting; negotiating the tenant lease; a water bottle filling station; and gift shop remodeling, which will improve building traffic flow. Mr. Pelchat provided an update on the Summit Building second egress, emergency exit required by the fire marshal. He described plans for the Tip Top House to showcase historic documents, offer collectables for purchase, and accommodate functions.

Mr. Pelchat discussed other maintenance needs that are listed here, as requested by the commission: 1) Painting the old Alford antenna scorched by fire and now rusting; 2) Replacing the five heat furnaces that are failing; 3) Renewal of the gray water sand filtration beds; 4) Replacement of inadequate water pumps; 5) Installation of an alarm system in the Yankee Building; 6) Upgrading the obsolete Adams Building alarm system; 7) Repairs to the Adams Building cement coatings and exterior wood work; 8) Replacement of fuel oil spill prevention pumping safety systems destroyed by fire; and 9) Modifications to the septic handling system to accommodate cold weather use. Estimated cost for these repairs is \$250,000. Walter Graff suggests that Parks provide the commission with an overall maintenance plan with priorities and funding needs. Mr. Pelchat and his staff were recognized and applauded for their winter management efforts.

*WMNF* – Bill Dauer said the USFS is reviewing and responding to the public comments received regarding the Forest Plan. The final report will be issued in September.

Any other business There was no other business. Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

*Submitted by Torene Tango-Lowy, Division of Parks and Recreation.*