

**MOUNT WASHINGTON COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes of July 23, 2004**  
**Mount Washington Summit – Tip Top House**

**Members in attendance:**

Paul Fitzgerald, Public, Chairman  
Wayne Presby, Cog Railway, Vice Chair  
Guy Gosselin, Public  
Howard Wemyss, Mt Washington Auto Road

Paul Cunha, AMC designee  
Tom Wagner, WMNF, Ex Officio  
Paul Ingersoll, Public

**Members absent:**

Rep Gene Chandler, Speaker  
Jack Middleton, MW Observatory

Senator John Gallus, Dist. 1

**Others present:**

Will Abbott, Mt Washington Observatory  
Ken Rancourt, Mt Washington Observatory  
John Heneage, Dufresne-Henry  
Peter Andrews, Dufresne-Henry  
Gerry Vezina, Dufresne-Henry  
Former Speaker Harold Burns  
Former Speaker Doug Scamman  
Edith Tucker, Coos County Democrat  
Susan Zizza, Mountain Ear

Director Rich McLeod, Div Parks & Rec  
Mike Pelchat, Mt Washington Park Manager  
Dona Sanborn, Mt Washington State Park  
Stephanie McCann, Mt Washington State Park  
Chris Uggerholt, Mt Washington State Park  
Chris Skehan, AD Davis Insurance  
Torene Tango-Lowy, Div of Parks & Rec

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Vice-chairman Wayne Presby called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. Paul Fitzgerald is expected shortly. Attendees were previously introduced. Wayne asked Dufresne-Henry to present the Design Basis Report for electrical transmission engineering services for the summit facilities.

Design Basis Report John Heneage, Dufresne-Henry presented the report. Projected 2004-2005 generator electrical usage is ~750,000 kw-hr; ~\$300,000. Two realistic options for electricity are kerosene engine generators and grid power. The decision criteria included positive payback in 10 years, replacement of temporary generators, present and future load growth, and minimal impact to the mountain environment. Dufresne-Henry proposes installing a single medium voltage feeder using the Cog Railway right-of-way (ROW), along with fiber optic cable, to provide grid power and using the two existing CAT generators for automatic backup. Total estimated project costs is ~\$1,800,000. The cost/benefit analysis yields a payback in 5.6-7.5 years, below the 10-year basis. A conduit test will be done this summer.

The three-phase power design will allow monitoring of the power feeder; grid power can be cutoff for emergencies or cog railway maintenance with backup power provided by the generators. John discussed proposed generator building layouts and project schedule. Siting of the generator building was proposed between the stage office and the parking area; however, Rich McLeod said that the State is still negotiating with Dartmouth College for their property. The generator building could be sited at the old powerhouse site.

Attendees discussed the findings, including the test program, power shut down, and benefits of fiber optics for communications. Guy Gosselin favored the more sophisticated switchgear system because it would add to the communications capability without impacting the cost return timeline. Wayne Presby provided an overview of the ROW easement negotiations: Cog Railway would provide the easement for the power line (including fiber optic cable) and potential sewer line, and donation of

land for a base substation. Cog Railway is asking for a one-time \$75,000 fee to reimburse the Cog Railway for the cost it incurred in installing power to the base station.

Members discussed the project costs: Dufresne-Henry estimated costs based upon what it would cost to build in the valley, then doubled the cost to estimate building to the summit. Siting and design of the generator building was discussed. Paul Fitzgerald moved that the Commission approve DRED's proposal to request G&C approval of the Dufresne-Henry contract for design of grid power and fiber optic systems for the summit facilities. Guy Gosselin seconded; motion carries. Paul Fitzgerald moved that the Commission adopt the old powerhouse site as the favored site for the generator building and that the lowest possible building profile be used, including "none" (underground). Paul Cunha seconded; motion carries.

Organization reports *Mount Washington State Park* Mike Pelchat reported a May 8 opening with Tip Top House being staffed daily. Clear days can bring approximately 3,000 visitors. Mike reported on improvements made to the generator shed and summit improvements in response to the fire marshal's requirements. A second exit for the Sherman Adams Observatory would permit the building for assembly of 400 people. Parks will hold off filling the powerhouse cellar hole until the decision on siting the permanent generator building is made. Lease negotiations with the Observatory continues. Although the septic system is working well, the sand filter beds are at the end of their 15 year lifespan.

*Mt Washington Observatory* Will Abbott reported that the Discovery Center opened on June 30. Live video feed between the Observatory and the Discovery Center will be up on August 2. The Observatory continues its negotiation with the State; public tours of the Observatory is being planned (cost \$5).

*Mt Washington Railway* Wayne Presby said the new passing loop would be completed this summer. The two-hour round trip schedule will allow passengers longer stays at the summit. The Number 9 engine conversion reduced coal use by 67%. In addition to the new ski train offering, a new snowmobile trail is being cut along Base Road that will bring snowmobile riders to Jefferson Notch.

*Mt Washington Auto Road* Howie Wemyss reported the Auto Road's early opening in May. Road paving will continue. The Auto Road had a successful 100-year celebration of the Climb To The Clouds auto race.

*AMC* Paul Cunha reported an easy spring opening due to a mild winter. The AMC huts are at normal operation; the Highland Center is going well.

*White Mountain National Forest* Tom Wagner reported that the WMNFS is on track for maintenance. The WMNF 15-year plan is at the printers.

Approve minutes Paul Ingersoll motioned to accept the April 23, 2004 minutes. Paul Fitzgerald seconded; motion carries.

### Old Business

Rich McLeod reported that John White left his position as DRED Engineer. John had been instrumental in getting the permanent summit power project to this point.

Meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.

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