

Mount Washington Commission
September 10, 2008 Meeting Minutes
Mount Washington State Park, Tip Top House

Members in attendance:

Paul Fitzgerald, Public (Chairman)
Wayne Presby, MW Cog Railway (Vice Chair)
Walter Graff, AMC
Guy Gosselin, Public

Rep Martha McLeod, House
Jack Middleton, MW Observatory
Keith Lannom, WMNF
Howard Wemyss, MW Auto Road

Members absent:

Senator John Gallus, Senate

Paul Ingersoll, Public

Others present:

Randy Cooper, MW Observatory
Ken Rancourt, MW Observatory
Tim Moore, WHOM/Citadel
Bob Perry, Citadel Broadcasting
Edith Tucker, Coos County Democrat
Gail Scott, Berlin Daily Sun
Torene Tango-Lowy, Commission Clerk

Michael Housman, Div Parks and Rec
Tom Mansfield, DRED Architect
Paul Leary, DRED Communications Administrator
Mike Pelchat, MW State Park Manager
Johanna Lyons, Park Planning & Development
Bob Fairbanks, MW State Park
Ben Wilson, State Historic Sites Specialist

I. Welcome. Chairman Paul Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

II. Minutes. Mr. Middleton MOVED to approve the July 23, 2008 minutes as written. Mr. Presby SECONDED; motion CARRIES unanimously. Mr. Fitzgerald informed members that Director Allison McLean left state service last Friday. Mr. Housman stated that an interim director has not been appointed, but that Gail Wolek serves as deputy director.

III. Summit power update. Mr. Mansfield reviewed the site location options for the phase 3 summit electrical building work. A handout was provided the commission outlining three site options and five criteria used for selecting a site. The site options were: 1) under the canopy of the Sherman Adams Building (SAB), 2) the original generator building site, and 3) underground at the west side of SAB. The criteria were: C1) visual impact, C2) efficient electrical operation, C3) safe staff access, C4) construction cost, and C5) ease of maintenance. Canopy site. The State's preferred option was under the canopy due to the lowest construction cost and safe staff access. Mr. Mansfield showed a drawing that enclosed 3 ½ bays to house the backup generators, central electrical distribution equipment and wiring, and fuel system tank. Cedar shingle siding and trim details will be used to visually tie in to the SAB. A wind break will be created to help visitors entering/exiting SAB and riders awaiting the Cog trains by extending the wall of one side of the canopy from the enclosed bays to the SAB entrance. Removable panels will allow easy access to the generators for servicing. Delaying phase 3 would delay the upgraded power line to the WHOM building, compliance with DES requirements for the fuel tanks, and the fiber optic line to the Yankee Building. Old generator site. It would make use of an existing foundation, and could make use of the pre-fab concrete building, but it would not be visually appealing nor allow for future communications needs. Major concerns were for staff safety, ice buildup on the air intakes and exhaust ports and falling ice from the nearby antennas. Underground SAB. This site would hide the electrical building. The major concerns were potential ledge removal, potential compromise of the roof membrane, within the path of the drainage for storm water runoff, ice buildup of the intake/exhaust ports, and the cost of cutting into 2-ft. of the concrete wall.

Discussion ensued around the following issues: the canopy site provides the lowest loss of investment should a new master plan recommend a change in location; contracting changes and costs; improving the circulation of people; keeping electrical services centralized for efficient delivery of service; siting the electrical building away from SAB to localize potential fire damage. Mr. Presby MOVED to approve the canopy location as presented by the State; Mr. Wemyss SECONDED. Further discussion ensued. Mr. Presby AMENDED the motion to charge the State with every effort to make the visual impact of the canopy location pleasing. Mr. Middleton SECONDED. Motion CARRIES, unanimously. Mr. Presby asked about the restoration of the disturbed embankment at the Cog base. Mr. Mansfield had thought the contractor had addressed it, but will followup.

IV. Septic system rebuild. The State has identified two alternate sites for the septic system to address the concerns by USFS and Natural Heritage Bureau (NHB) about the proposed discharge outlet and protection of the alpine garden. The plant and discharge would be located next to the existing storage tanks, an area already

disturbed. Alternatively, the discharge could go to the existing sand filter beds, but that is on WMNF property and is not their preferred alternative. The benefits of the tank area are the use of existing tanks for overflow, reuse of existing lines, servicing from an existing road and no additional Cog or road crossings. An additional trailer would be used to process and store sludge, bagged as landfill waste. Discussion ensued: the pre-fab building is larger than needed for the trailer; the existing lines are viable; the project can be implemented next season; the discharge will be within the disturbed area and not over the power line trench; only DES permit is required and they are fine with the location change; the State will continue to consult with USFS and NHB; the system will be tucked behind the existing tanks, will be hidden with rocks and the trailer will be painted to best match the rock. Mr. Presby MOVED to encourage the State to move forward on its location for the septic system at the tank area, as presented. Mr. Middleton SECONDED. The motion CARRIES, unanimously.

V. Summit Master Plan. Mr. Fitzgerald discussed this effort with Director McLean. The division may be able to commit personnel and hard costs towards the effort. Additionally, Mr. Pelchat's weekly reports have been well received. State Park Planner Johanna Lyons was introduced. She informed the commission of the Division's current statutory requirement to develop a system-wide 10-year strategic and development plan. Master plan efforts are typically contracted out, as she is an office of one. Recent plans include Monadnock, Hampton Beach Area, and the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters tract. Legislature has asked the division to take a more holistic view of its capital improvement and budget requests. Ms. Lyons suggested that a working group be formed to: identify the issues for the summit; review the commission's original goals, its current role and its relationship with the division; to incorporate its planning efforts with the 10-year strategic plan; to coordinate with the State Park Advisory Council; and consider summit operations, management and capital improvements.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Fitzgerald said the master plan effort is an update to the 1971 plan, especially now that the State has the entire summit. Mr. Cooper stated that Mount Washington is not typical of the other state parks, but includes other partners; there may be need to go to legislature on their own. The enabling legislation charges the commission with the management of the summit. Ms. Lyons reported that the last big capital investment in the park system was in the 60's and that the division got \$6 million last year for capital improvements and to fund the 10-year strategic plan for a system-based, holistic view for development. She can provide background information about Mount Washington State Park and the division, including budgets, roles, responsibilities and vision. The 10-year strategic plan will likely be completed in April, 2009. Members reviewed the motion put forth by Mr. Fitzgerald. Mr. Presby MOVED to support the motion; Mr. Middleton SECONDED the motion as follows:

I move that the Commission establish a master plan committee to review and author an update to the master plan submitted to the Governor, Executive Council, Senate and House of Representatives of the State of New Hampshire on January 1, 1971. The committee shall, with assistance from the Division of Parks and Recreation, and other state agencies as may be available to it, draft a new ten year plan for submission to the Commission in September, 2009. The draft master plan for the Summit shall include but shall not be limited to:

- A. *Capital improvements to be made over a ten year period;*
- B. *The proposed operation of the summit by the Commission;*
- C. *Promotion of the use of the summit by the public as a recreational, historic and scientific attraction;*
- D. *Protection of the unique summit environment;*
- E. *The negotiation of public and private rights upon the summit;*
- F. *Cooperative agreements between private interests and the Commission;*
- G. *Proposed amendments as may be desirable to the Commissions' enabling legislation being RSA 227-B;*

The subcommittee shall be composed of one representative each from the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Mount Washington Auto Road, the Mount Washington Cog Railway, the Mount Washington Observatory, the White Mountain National Forest and the Division of Parks and Recreation. Each organization previously named shall be asked to appoint a representative to the committee promptly. Additionally, one of the public members of the Commission shall be appointed by the Commission chair to serve on the committee. The Commission chair shall appoint the committee chair once all members have been appointed.

The master plan committee shall, unless otherwise provided by the Commission, submit a draft report by September 1, 2009. The Commission shall review, revise and finalize the master plan as a recommendation to the Governor, Executive Council, and Legislature of the State of New Hampshire no later than December 31, 2009.

Attendees discussed the motion. Mr. Fitzgerald developed the motion based upon the verbiage of the 1971 master plan. Mr. Cooper restated that the summit is unique, that the Observatory had raised \$100K towards construction of SAB and they are working towards developing a multi-partner user fee system. Mr. Perry suggested that the

communications activities at the summit be considered. Mr. Presby AMENDED the motion to include representation from the telecommunications interest. Mr. Middleton SECONDED. The motion reads:

*...The subcommittee shall be composed of one representative each from the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Mount Washington Auto Road, the Mount Washington Cog Railway, the Mount Washington Observatory, the White Mountain National Forest, **the commercial telecommunication interest** and the Division of Parks and Recreation...*

Mr. Leary said the State has an interest in the communications activities: it pays the WMTW agreement from proceeds of its communications leases and will continue to use the proceeds for the purchase of the Dartmouth property. Mr. Fitzgerald responded that every interested party could provide input to the master plan subcommittee. The motion allows the parties to appoint designees; membership is designed so that no single party holds veto power. The master plan will be signed off by the MWC. Mr. Middleton provided a history of the MWC, designed to balance the interests of all parties. Mr. Fitzgerald confirmed Ms. Tucker's inquiry that the subcommittee work is subject to the right-to-know laws. Mr. Cooper said there is a misunderstanding of the legislation: that MWC manages the summit and therefore the Observatory lease should be with the commission, not the State. Rep. McLeod verified that the master plan will be an entirely new plan, not an update of the 1971 plan. Members voted unanimously, the motion CARRIES.

VI. Partner's comments. The Observatory received its grant for distance learning and the Bombardier. The State will look into providing a central area to post documents. Mr. Pelchat informed the commission of a demonstration windmill project that is 3 to 4-ft. high and able to withstand 130mph winds.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 16, 2009 at 10 a.m. Location TDB. The meeting adjourned at 12 noon.

Submitted by T. Tango-Lowy.