

MOUNT SUNAPEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RSA 21-G:11)
March 17, 2016 MINUTES (DRAFT)

A meeting of the Mount Sunapee Advisory Committee (MSAC) was held at the Newbury Town Offices on March 17, 2016.

Call to Order. Commissioner Jeffrey J. Rose, as chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Members present were Melanie Bell/Town of Goshen, Director Philip Bryce/Div. Parks and Recreation (DPR), Sara Colson/Lake Sunapee Region Chamber (LSRC), June Fichter/Lake Sunapee Protective Association (LSPA), Nancy Marashio/Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF), Nathan Miller/Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC), Sabrina Stanwood/Div. Forests and Lands (DFL), and Dan Wolf/Town of Newbury.

Also present were several members of the public, Jay Gamble/Mount Sunapee Resort, several DRED staff, and Torene Tango-Low/MWC clerk.

Minutes. Mr. Wolf moved to approve the June 2, 2015 minutes; Ms. Stanwood seconded. The minutes were adopted.

Revised MDP/EMP. Commissioner Rose presented his [final decision](#) on Mount Sunapee Resort's Revised Master Development Plan & Environmental Management Plan 2016-2020 (RMDP/EMP). The RMDP/EMP reflects updates to the original MDP/EMP that was presented to DRED in June 2014. Commissioner Rose approved the RMDP/EMP, except for the mountain coaster, which is neither approved nor denied at this time. The focus of the RMDP is on the West Bowl proposal. The Commissioner appreciated having received approx. 750 public comments plus petitions, on his draft decision on the MDP/EMP released in April 2015. The final decision and RMDP/EMP contains substantive changes, based upon careful consideration of the public comments received, and provides a balanced approach for the future of the ski area, Mount Sunapee State Park, and the state park system. Key points of the final decision are listed below, and additional resources may be obtained from the [State Park website](#):

- Rejected the mixed ownership model between public and private lands
- Required all 150 acres associated with recreational facilities in the West Bowl (WB) be transferred to the state
- Required an additional donation of 260 acres as conservation lands
- Add an additional 10-year renewal option to lease
- Realignment of two proposed ski trails outside of the Exemplary Natural Community (Polygon D)
- Funding for research plots with Polygon D
- Permanent protection of the East Bowl
- No private development within WB lands being transferred to state
- Safeguards outlined if Goshen were to change or provide a variance in its zoning within its Recreational District.
- WB expansion must accommodate year-round hiking on the Summit Trail
- Conditional approval of the Mountain Coaster
- Local, state and federal permits are required for the project

The Commissioner's approval of the RMDP/EMP is codified in his Letter of Approval with conditions that outlines specific provisions that governs the RMDP approval. The agreement outlines the requirements and

protections of each party's interests and is intended to clarify the relationships between the parties and avoid ambiguity.

The Commissioner will revise the Public Involvement and Oversight Policy for the purpose of changing the membership of MSAC to add a representative from the Dept of Transportation (DOT). DOT will bring a valuable perspective to the MSAC planning and review process. The Commissioner will add to the MSAC agenda, a standing agenda item calling for an update by DRED, Mount Sunapee Resort, and the Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway Coalition on the hiking trails within the leased boundary.

Commissioner Rose stated that the 18-year partnership between Mount Sunapee Resort and the State has been successful in many ways: providing \$21 million in capital improvements at the ski area and doubling skier visits; providing nearly \$8.5 million in lease payments that supported capital projects at Cannon Mountain and improved the financial position of Cannon and the state park system; and providing tax revenue to the towns of Newbury and Goshen. The economic analysis on the West Bowl proposal forecasts increased revenue to the State and towns, and additional employment and economic activity for the region.

Commissioner Rose said that Mount Sunapee is a special place and Mount Sunapee State Park has a rich history in providing a wide variety of recreational opportunities of which alpine skiing has been a major part. Expanding Mount Sunapee ski area was a concept since the 1960's, and the State required the submission of plans for expansion in its 1998 Request for Proposal for the lease of the ski area. The Revised MDP/EMP is balanced and responsible with regard to the natural resources, recreational experience for the public, economic benefits, travel and tourism promotion, and the state park system; and the ability to bring recreation, conservation, and economic promotion is one of the defining attributes of DRED, and our State.

Components of the RMDP/EMP will require the approval of the Governor and Executive Council (G&C). Submitted for their consideration at the March 23, 2016 meeting is a Lease Amendment necessary for the West Bowl expansion project. Commissioner Rose looks forward to sharing the details of the plan and answering their questions. He said that management of public lands should be open, transparent, and holistic; and that the benefit of a project needs to be evaluated from how it serves the public good. His final decision reflects extensive public input and is a balanced approach for the future of Mount Sunapee State Park, and will benefit the Sunapee region and the State of New Hampshire.

Commissioner Rose thanked the MSAC and the public for their comments, which he reviewed regularly as he formulated his final decision. The RMDP/EMP 2016-2020, Final Decision Statement, Highlights of Commissioner Rose's approval of the RMDP, Lease Amendment, Letter of Approval with Conditions of the RMDP/EMP, and Public Comment Analysis and Report were provided to the committee members.

Ms. Marashio said that DRED's listening process was admirable: it is essential to know that the public was heard and to understand the balance between economics and natural resource protection. She asked about the G&C process, which is usually a brief question and answer format. Mr. Miller agreed about DRED's public process. He notes that public comment is reflected in the final decision, especially regarding the Mountain Coaster, impacts to Polygon D, and the addition of DOT on this committee.

Any Other Business. Commissioner Rose said the next meeting of the MSAC will likely be the end of May or early June for the purpose of reviewing the Annual Operating Plan 2016-2017.

Adjourn. Ms. Bell moved to adjourn; Mr. Wolf seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Submitted by Torene Tango-Lowy, MSAC clerk