

MOUNT SUNAPEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RSA 21-G:11)
MAY 31, 2017 MINUTES (DRAFT)

A meeting of the Mount Sunapee Advisory Committee (MSAC) was held at the Newbury Town Offices on May 31, 2017.

Call to Order. Commissioner Jeff Rose, MSAC Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. Members present were Melanie Bell/Town of Goshen, Director Philip Bryce/Div. Parks and Recreation (DPR), Tim Drew/DES, June Fichter/Lake Sunapee Protective Association (LSPA), Doug King/NHDOT, Nancy Marashio/Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF), Rich Marshall/Lake Sunapee Region Chamber (LSRC), Steve Schneider/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 (MSR), Patrick Hummel/DPR, and Torene Tango-Lowy/MSAC clerk.

Minutes. Ms Marashio moved to approve the June 23, 2016 minutes; Mr Wolf seconded. Mr Drew requested an amendment to clarify the weather impacts on the 2015-16 ski season. Ms Stanwood requested an amendment to reflect that the greater fringed-gentian (*Gentianopsis crinita*) was found at Mount Sunapee. The minutes were adopted as amended.

Mount Sunapee Resort Annual Operating Plan 2017-2018. Mr Gamble gave a brief overview of the AOP, starting with an addendum to p. 27 regarding the *Gentianopsis crinita*. Ms Stanwood provided copies of the addendum and spoke to the topic. After a brief discussion, it was determined that DRED would monitor the brown knapweed. Topics discussed included the 3-D archery course, the Kids Mountain Adventure Camp, and the mountain bike trails. The 2016-2017 ski season had 222,000 skier visits over the 124 days.

Entering its 20th summer of capital projects and capital maintenance, the MSR plans an estimated cost of \$675K in maintenance projects. No new major capital projects are planned this year. See AOP p. 36 for a list of planned maintenance projects and improvements to the Summer Adventure Park area. The projects approved under previous AOP's are listed on p. 37, but will not be commenced in 2017. The projects listed on p. 38, taken from the 2015-16 AOP are also delayed at least until 2018.

Mr Gamble responded to questions from the Committee, including comparisons with other NH ski areas, discounted and promo ski tickets, and use of the beach parking lot during the ski season. The MSR was reminded to check with NHB prior to the construction of new ski trails. Mr Gamble said that no new major capital projects listed in the Master Development Plan are currently planned. The MSR went before the Newbury Planning Board for its archery course and the project did not require Planning Board review. Mr Drew reported that MSR is in compliance with DES permitting and requirements.

Ms Marashio said she would like to see some of the lease revenue kept in the region rather than all of it going to Cannon. Dir Bryce replied that construction projects are expensive and that Cannon helped to get Parks out of the red. Now, Parks is able to reinvest throughout the parks system. There was discussion about repairs to the Campground Road.

Hiking Trails. Mr Hummel provided an update on the collaborative efforts of the SRKGC, MSR and DRED for the Summit Trail, including the spring cleanup by the MSR. An annual work plan is still being worked on.

Any Other Business. Commissioner Rose responded to a question – the CNL REIT was set to dissolve and, along with several other ski areas under the REIT, was purchased by Och-Ziff. The AG's Office is reviewing the purchase, however, the lessee and operator remain the same.

Commissioner Rose informed the committee that the Governor's budget proposal included reorganizing DRED to the Dept of Natural and Cultural Resources that incorporates Parks, Forests and Lands, and the divisions under the Dept of Cultural Resources. The Divisions of Economic Development and Tourism will be organized under the Dept of Business and Economic Affairs. If the budget passes the Senate today or tomorrow, the bill has an effective date of July 1st. Oversight of the ski area remains under the Parks Division and within Parks statutes.

In reply to Ms Bell, Mr Gamble said the West Bowl expansion project will take an estimated two years of engineering and environmental studies before applications are submitted to the towns, DES and other regulatory entities. Permit approvals will take several more months, if not years, before any ground-breaking activities.

Commissioner Rose opened the floor to public input. Ms Bushueff said the summer programs are expanding and that the archery proposal was not in the Master Development Plan (MDP). She is concerned about the summer programs precluding other recreational activities. It was explained that the MDP is a general master plan with the finer project details contained in the AOP. The archery course is made of temporary structures that are removed at the end of each season: it is not a permanent installation. The AOP is part of the public process for the ski area operation and Commissioner Rose asked that comments be sent by June 19th. Ms Marashio said the lease allows the operator year-round operations. The MDP is a conceptual plan with specifics contained in the AOP. She was comfortable with the AOP proposal.

Mr Sanborn asked if the trail to Lake Solitude is part of the MOA for the Summit Trail. Mr Hummel said the MOA pertains only to the Summit Trail. Ms Russell thanked Commissioner Rose for opening the floor to public comment. Commissioner Rose replied that the nature of the committee meetings are public and are not formal hearings, but that public comments are always welcomed. Mr Russell said fee-based activities have expanded in scope impacting those areas used by the public and that the archery course is being proposed without notice. Mr Wolf replied that Mount Sunapee Resort may not know the public's interest in a specific activity, for example, the Segway Tours were offered and then discontinued. The MDP shows the conceptual areas for projects and the AOP contains the actual projects planned for the upcoming year that takes into consideration financial and market conditions.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m. The next meeting is at the call of the Chair.

Submitted by Torene Tango-Lowy, MSAC clerk.