

## **Mount Sunapee Advisory Committee Meeting**

**March 9, 2004**

**Mount Sunapee Resort – Spruce Lodge**

**Members in attendance:** Commissioner George Bald, Herb Bennett, Terry Dancy, Jack Diemar, Tim Drew for DES, Director Rich McLeod, Nancy Marashio, Phil O'Brien, and Dan Wolf.

**Mount Sunapee Resort staff in attendance:** Tim Mueller and Jay Gamble.

**DRED staff in attendance:** Torene Tango-Lowy.

Meeting called to order at 9:40 a.m. Committee members introduced themselves to the public; Commissioner Bald recognized Senators Below and O'Dell in the audience.

### **Minutes**

Phil O'Brien motioned to accept the February 10, 2004 minutes, as amended. Dan Wolf seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Old Business**

Jay Gamble provided an update to the second 5-year Master Development Plan (MDP) preparation. Mount Sunapee Resort and the UVLSRPC held a public forum on March 3, 2004. The intent of the forum was to allow as much time as possible for public input on the proposed MDP. Jay asked for input from the committee members. Terry Dancy stated that the format of the forum was agreed upon by the Resort and the UVLSRPC. A meaningful impact study should address the long-term fiscal and viability impacts of a major ski operation. Several of the committee members suggested that the Resort hold another public hearing to address the questions that were asked. Nancy Marashio provided members with a copy of the statement read at the public forum by Charles Niebling of SPNHF.

Rich McLeod clarified that, based on his interviews with DRED's survey crew and former DRED Commissioner Thomson, the area between the leasehold boundary and state park boundary was not intended as a buffer zone. The leasehold boundary was drawn to encompass the immediate ski use area.

Commissioner Bald requested that the Resort continue to work with the UVLSRPC to hold another public meeting to address the public input received at the forum. Nancy corrected a Union Leader article that stated that DRED did not have to hold public hearings. Terry said he was misquoted in the article and that there have been many public meetings held regarding the proposed leasehold. Jay said a third lift and associated ski trails were proposed in previous (pre-lease) development plans for Mount Sunapee.

### **New Business**

Lionel Chute was not able to attend today's meeting; the Natural Heritage Bureau report on the East Bowl will be postponed for the next Advisory Committee meeting. Dan Wolf asked for a copy of the report; Torene will send him a copy.

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Commissioner Bald provided an overview of the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) process. Jay reviewed the components of the 2004-2005 AOP, including a schedule of operations for recreational activities. Mount Sunapee Resort has a lease agreement with Mount Sunapee Photography and may enter into a lease agreement with Mountain Edge Resort. Water withdrawals for snowmaking are consistent with the average withdrawal for the last four years. Mount Sunapee Resort will continue to implement projects previously presented and approved by DRED; including, the gravel parking lot #4. The Resort will carry out a variety of maintenance tasks this summer. A new temporary structure may replace the yurt that is used as a clubhouse for the Alpine Racing Program. The structure would be similar in style, but with increased square footage to accommodate the growth of the racing program.

Commissioner Bald asked Jay if copies of the AOP to the towns were sent. Jay confirmed the required distribution. Commissioner Bald said he would take up comments from the advisory committee members at the next meeting.

### **Mount Sunapee Resort Update**

Jay reported that February attendance met expectations. The Resort looks to provide skiing up to the second week of April, weather permitting.

### **Other items**

None.

**Next Meeting Date is April 13, 2004 at 9:30 a.m. at the Mount Sunapee Resort.**

Regular meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

### **Public Comment**

Commissioner Bald opened the floor for public comments, but clarified that this was not a public hearing.

Jerry Karr stated that there is a credibility issue; that it is not just a ski project, but a larger issue [negatively impacting] the surrounding communities. He stated that it is a real estate project.

Commissioner Bald spoke about the legislative requirements of any decision regarding the leasehold; he is to make a recommendation to the Governor and Executive Council. The decision is not easy, as he tries to craft good public policy. He considers the issues brought forth by the public in that it contributes to his decision-making. Commissioner Bald stated that insults to the leaseholder or the advisory committee members does not add to his decision-making. He said that the park belongs to the state and his consideration pertains to what will be beneficial to the state.

Dan Allen asked that the prohibition on snowshoeing across the ski trails that bisect the greenway hiking trails be reconsidered. He asked that the public be allowed to comment on the master plan once details are provided; it would add to credible public participation.

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Tom Pirozzoli, Goshen, expressed concern over traffic problems, specifically pertaining to Brook Road. He would like answers addressing this issue.

Charlie Niebling, SPNHF, asked for statistics on skier days and on lease payments. Commissioner Bald said this information would be available at the next advisory committee meeting. Mr. Niebling stated that central to the recommendation on the leasehold is the public interest concerning the additional 175 acres. The public interest-private benefit needs clear direction.

Cynthia Phillips, Goshen, was concerned about the increased traffic, specifically on Brook Road. She provided copies of statements from her neighbors. Other concerns include increased garbage, noise, trespass, and pollution. Also, she is concerned about water drainage from snowmaking, emergency services, and restrictions on the use of the mountain. She would like answers to these concerns and would like to review and comment on the master plan.

Cricket Hanna, President, Friends of Mount Sunapee, read a statement from her organization and provided copies to the advisory committee members. They oppose the leasehold expansion for three reasons: it further diminishes the natural and wild character of the park; resort-driven growth in Goshen seriously risks the character of the town; and, the leasing of public land for private development is detrimental to public values and sets a precedent.

Pen Meyer, Goshen, encouraged advisory committee members to visit Gunnison Lake in Goshen. She stated that additional ski trails were not needed; that the current view along the ridgeline should be kept.

Robert Kennerson, Newbury, said he often skis at Sunapee and that the Resort does a good job. However, he opposes the lease expansion because it would support a single-season activity. He stated that the intent should be to protect the land.

Senator Below, District 5, said it would be important to articulate the criteria used to factor in the public good/interest. This process can be approached in the same way as Planning Board procedure: the applicant may be asked to provide funding for independent analysis.

Brenda Shapiro asked that area residents not be “shut out,” that the proposed resort will create a transient community. She encouraged advisory committee members to visit Okemo’s Ludlow, VT resort as an example of what such a resort could look like.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Torene Tango-Lowy.*

*Revised and accepted by MSAC on April 13, 2004.*