

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2013

6:00 PM

1 Monument Square

Alton, NH 03809

Approved: January 20, 2014

R. Loring Carr convened the meeting at 6:00 PM and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence. The following members and staff were present:

R. Loring Carr, Chairman
David Hussey, Selectman
Marc DeCoff, Selectman
E. Russell Bailey, Town Administrator

Cydney Johnson, Vice Chairman was absent
Robert Daniels, Selectman was absent

Approval of the Agenda

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the agenda as presented and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Appointments

None

Announcements:

Town Offices will be closed at Noon on December 24th and all day, December 25th in celebration of the Christmas Holiday.

Selectmen's Committee Report

R. Loring Carr noted that the Budget Committee will meet tomorrow night, December 12, 2013.

Town Administrator's Report and Updates by E. Russell Bailey

Dahl Property

There are two (2) new monitoring wells installed and in reference to the landfill contamination with the test results in, there is no VOC contamination, the manganese and arsenic exceeded state levels. Additional testing will be necessary as there is an issue with turbidity. There is also an issue with

drainage around the landfill that needs to be addressed. In the near future there will be a need to set a meeting with the Engineer and Scott Simonds.

Marc DeCoff questioned the length of time the wells need to be tested before the clean section of the land could be subdivided? E. Russell Bailey responded that there is no rule; it is the decision of the Board. David Hussey inquired about core samples from the land? With a response of there is no gravel.

West Side Restroom

There is an issue with the heating system at the facility and they are open 24 hours a day, year round for the activities at the Bay. We have received quotes for as low as \$2,500.00 up to \$4,500.00 with an option to replace the oil furnace or convert to propane. This will need to be addressed in the near future.

AVAS Building

Previously there were two (2) bids for the AVAS building; being higher than we had anticipated. We have asked for some quotes to just install separate heating units in each of the three (3) rooms which is about half the price of the original bids. Marc DeCoff brought forward a new system which is electric, it is a heat pump. The current system is functioning now; possibly investigate the heat pump idea which probably wouldn't work in the restroom facility.

R. Loring Carr made a motion to fix the West Side Restroom furnace in the amount of \$2,500.00 and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Marc DeCoff will obtain the information regarding the heat pump system.

Loader Transfer Station

Scott Simonds loader has filled tires which are dangerous in the wintertime. It was previously agreed to pursue getting new tires, based upon state bid. There is someone willing to buy the old tires for \$1,000.00. We need approval for purchase of the tires in the amount of \$7,587.00 based on the state bid.

David Hussey made a motion to approve the purchase of the tires in the amount of \$7,587.00 and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

County Commissioners

An email was received from the County Commissioners; they would like to meet with the Board. Questioned was a possibility of combining meetings as they originally wanted the Board to tour their facilities but the thought was it would

be better for them to come here. E. Russell Bailey to schedule the meeting for a January meeting.

Tax Maps

This is an annual renewal for updating the tax maps with Cartographic and it is required each year. The amount is in the 2014 Budget \$2,625.00.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the \$2,625.00 for the tax map maintenance updating from 4/1/2013 through 3/31/2014 and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Public Input I

Jeffrey Clay addressed the Board, read an excerpt from an Attorney General's memo in reference to the Right to Know Law and Attorney Jim Sessler's opinion regarding simultaneous emails sent to a quorum of a public body. In his opinion, he felt that an apology was due to Selectman Daniels. He also questioned referring matters to the town attorney due to the associated costs and holding telephonic meetings.

Approval of Selectmen's Minutes

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the minutes of Public Session I, November 4, 2013 and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to re-open the minutes of Public Session II, November 4, 2013 and add Item #4 and R. Loring Carr seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the minutes of Public Session I, November 18, 2013 and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the minutes of Non-Public Session, November 18, 2013 releasing Items 1, 2, 3 & 4 and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the minutes of Public Session II, November 18, 2013 and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

At this time it was brought to the Board's attention to correct/approve the November 4, 2013, Public Session II minutes.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to add item #4 and approve the minutes of Public Session II, November 4, 2013 David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Old Business:

At the request of the Board, the Conservation Easements section of these minutes was transcribed verbatim to the best of our ability.

Russ Bailey

Conservation easement this has been discussed probably by the board at least 2-3 times. And it's been awhile. Back in the July 1st meeting you all had approved conditional for the agreement to pursue with the Conservation Commission and NH Forest Society for the Belknap Range Conservation Easements. And in your packets is the easements that we just received and what we have tonight is for you all to review that. The Conservation members and representative from the Forest Societies are also here. If you want them to come up

Loring Carr

Yes join us. That would be great

Russ Wilder

On this map there are 3 parcels that are involved and a 4th over in Gilford. But the 3 in Alton are the Forest Society project. So the 3 parcels are, one of them is the Trailhead by the way, I'm Russ Wilder with the Conservation Commission. There are 3 parcels; one of them is the Trailhead 75 acres that Dave Roberts from Farmington owns. There's another 100 acres up near, between the summit of Mount Major and Straightback along Willows Trails. Those trails are up there near Jesus Valley snowmobile trail.

Dave Hussey

Is that Hertel's land ?

Russ Wilder

No that's Jensen's. Van Hertel's piece is a 450 or so acre piece at the end of Reed Rd which includes the ridge line that has East Quarry and North Straightback Mountains on it. And also, a beaver pond down over the backside near where the town boundary of Alton, Gilmanton and Gilford come together there's a stone out in the woods there, marks that boundary. Tom Howe from the Forest Society is here and Earl Bagley who is the Chairman of the Conservation Commission of Alton Conservation Commission is here. We have 3 access agreements for the town of Alton for the consideration of what our donation of \$230,000 towards the project from the land use change tax fund. That's where the money came from, the land conservation fund. That the town would get an interest in these 3 properties and the interest would be public access and perpetuity so you couldn't close off the access to Mount Major you could get access up into the mountains at the end of Reed Rd and in

fact you'd have another piece of the Jensen piece actually butts up to the state forest property. It's on the summit.

Dave Hussey

Can you explain to me what interest is?

Russ Wilder

Well its, the interest is, it could be any number of things ownership and trust. It could be in this case, what we have is public access as the interest and what that does for the town, is it gives us access but it doesn't give us any of the burden of having to do maintenance or walk the property boundaries and do stewardship activities and all that sort of stuff so the thought is by cooperating with the Forest Society who is a professional organization in doing these land protection projects, that the town get the full benefit of having that without any further burden on the town. That was the intent.

Dave Hussey

And these lands can never be sold or anything in the future

Earl Bagley

No, they cannot. This is kind of like what's happened over on Mt. Monadnock where the Forest Society over the years has picked up pieces of property and slowly brought the, you know the whole land around Mt. Monadnock and it has protected those trails.

Dave Hussey

I've heard in some circumstances that the Society could actually sell land if they wanted to. I just wanted to be sure they couldn't do it on this

Earl Bagley

No they would not be able to do that. But I can ask, Tom Howe is the, Tom Howe has been doing land protection efforts for a long time.

Dave Hussey

I'm just saying if we re going to put a quarter of a million dollars into this I want to make sure the people are protected forever.

Russ Wilder

Exactly. And the you know the town voted in think it was in the 80's that we should do this. That we should try and use our funds to do exactly this. So this intent is yes, this is what it's supposed to be, supposed to be forever supposed to be we'll get the interest for access to these valuable lands for the Town of Alton forever but Tom would you like to comment any further on that.

Tom Howe

Yeah just to respond or clarify you're your concern. What's happening is that we are committing to a permanent conservation arrangement for these lands and in fact we are also committed to conveying and removing the development rights from these lands in the form of separate conservation easements that we will plan to convey to the Lakes Region Conservation Trust, our partner in the project and in the course of doing that that will legally and formally removed any development potential and value from the property so that regardless of who owns it, it is only available for conservation related uses so that is an inherent expectation of all parties that that development potential is permanently removed from these properties.

Dave Hussey

How about timber rights and stuff like that?

Tom Howe

We have the ability to manage for forest products. Our quick reaction initially is that the Roberts track the one that is close to the trailhead is probably not suitable for much if any forest management at least for a very long time and the principle reason there of course is that the primary use and the activity that's going on that parcel is the recreational use and the trails and that is first and foremost in terms of our management object is to do our best to manage and enhance those qualities and everything else takes a back seat to that based on what we understand about that parcel. The other track principally the Hertel track I would suggest lends itself most to potential future forest management but even there that got cut so hard and extensively.

Dave Hussey

It usually does

Tom Howe

Ah yes indeed. That is not unexpected that its going to be many, many decades before I think we would under take some serious or focused effort there it just needs time to recover in the meantime the trails and recreational use and access becomes our number one priority in terms of what we do and how we manage that with others to ensure that its used and enjoyed appropriately

Loring Carr

I just have some questions on the documents themselves

Tom Howe

Sure

Loring Carr

Oh they're pretty much the same

Tom Howe

Yes actually you've notice that the verbiage is pretty much identical there's just a there's a slight change in wording I think on snowmobiling with respect to if I'm not mistaken the Hertel parcels simply because there are no existing snowmobile trails there and we of necessity we needed to slightly tweak the wording about snowmobiling because of that fact on that track. But I think virtually you'll find the language unless I'm forgetting something is, is the same across all three documents.

Loring Carr

On the number one that's on page two of

Tom Howe

Yep, I might recommend just looking at the Jenson one because that the simplest of, I mean it's the most straight forward.

Loring Carr

Ok, number one of the first paragraph on that one it says hiking, nature observations, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, fishing but specifically should not include camping mountain biking, recreational use of all terrain vehicles I know a lot of people are doing this mountain biking they take a bicycle up on the ski lifts and then go down. Are you saying you're not going to allow that?

Tom Howe

No and bear with me on the language for a minute. What the document is doing is here is its setting out the kinds of uses that are absolutely guaranteed rights of the public to come onto the property and to do these things without question. That is different from the other uses that are not part of the guaranteed amount of use that the Forest Society as the owner of the property could chose to allow or not as it wishes. Let me pick an example. If you show up on the property after this is set up and you want to snow shoe anywhere you want on the property, you have the legal right to do that under the terms of this document. If you show up on a horse or an ATV you might or might not be able to do that depending on what our policy is on that particular use at that time. In other words it's above and beyond the base level of guaranteed right of public use. And the reason we draw that distinction, we are not saying we are not allowing ATVs or snowmobiles or horses or whatever else it is you might want to do on the property. It's just that we need some ability to manage and control what that usage is and where it is. Because those kinds of things as you can imagine may rub against some of the other public uses that also might want to happen on the property and we as the landowner have, we view, the responsibility to provide an appropriate mix and balance of those uses and interests and so it might be that we would say, fine for mountain biking but we'd like mountain biking to happen in this area only or on these trails only. Whereas horseback riders or snow machines

are welcome to use these other areas or these other trails or all the trails, but at some other time. The point is that's the kind of flexibility of management we believe and found we have needed in our experience of managing lands for public recreational use. We need that flexibility to do the job well and to do it right and to do it in the face of the uncertainty of the future because these documents are as you can see they are forever or as long as that can be. And so we in looking ahead and the impossibility of knowing what the world is going to be like and public interests and activities and how people will recreate fifty or a hundred years from now, we need that flexibility to be able to do our best in accommodating the broad array of public interest. We are all about multiple uses. That's our philosophical underpinning. But we would be hard pressed to be forced into guaranteeing a level of usage that's so far beyond what we can anticipate or balance against other public benefits and uses that we feel obligated to recognize and respect. So I'm hoping perhaps in a long winded way that that gives you a sense this is establishing the floor the minimum that's the guaranteed right of the public and then above and beyond that you may well be able to do something on the property but it would be a function of whatever our policies and best judgment and use arrangements are at the time

Dave Hussey

Ok, scenario. Say if the Conservation people decided they want to put, I don't know say a zip line in, and you guys didn't want it in. Would they have any power at all to get something like that in? I'm not saying they are going to but I'm just saying would they have any power at all or are you people the sole governing power of that land?

Tom Howe

By conservation people whom are you referring to?

Dave Hussey

The two guys on each side of you

Russ Wilder

The Conservation Commission in Alton

Tom Howe

The Conservation Commission would not have the authority to install that kind of an improvement on the property. That would rest with us as the land owner because its not part of the guaranteed set of rights that are spelled out here. It's above and beyond that. We might say if someone if the Conservation Commission wants to come to us with a proposal for and you fill in the blank zip line, whatever cross country ski course. I mean, who knows what in fifty years, might be desired. We will be glad to consider a reasonable proposal whatever we think at the time is appropriate and we might well say great that's sounds fine. Let's go for it. Let's work out the arrangements for you to

do that and with our understanding of X, Y and Z and we work out those agreements and make it happen. But the point is for us to sit here today with this document and forever more say anything is fair game.

Dave Hussey

I'm not saying. I'm just looking to see what they would have a say in.

Tom Howe

They would not have the right to go on the property and build things or install improvements. That's not part of what is granted to the public here. The right, the fundamental right is to get onto the property on your own two feet or snowshoes whatever and to be able to access and use and enjoy the entirety of that property in the ways that are spelled out here. That's the fundamental free if you will guaranteed right that will be conveyed here. And that's above and beyond the fundamental benefit of the grant that you will be providing of getting these lands protected in the first place because as you know right now, any of those land owners could wake up tomorrow and say I'm done with the public using my property and they could post it and you know it would not be a pretty picture to see what kind of activities or issues would unfold from that point so this is really the first time in our collective history through joining together with multiple groups and interest and funding sources that we've been able to set up prospect of securing these lands for the first time and if we can't everything remains wide open and vulnerable and that's really been one of the things that I think has been a big surprise for most people hiking on the mountain. They have no idea that 98% of that property that they're walking on between the parking lot and the summit is privately owned and subject to the whims of whatever those land owners want to have happen. This is a fundamental change in that risk vulnerability even though most people have not understood that to this point.

Russ Wilder

Yes, we had, the Belknap Range Coalition, we had a table in the parking lot from August through the first of November. An amazing amount of people came through had no idea they had hiked there for years brought the kids up there family and stuff and they were totally surprised that it was private land. Just to reinforce this data we have people there almost every weekend.

Tom Howe

One other thing that you fundamentally get with your grant of funding for this project is you get leverage as a key stakeholder in what I guarantee will be many future discussions and decisions that have to be made about what happens in the vicinity of Mount Major. Right now and I think you know this there very big and serious problems that are needing to be addressed. It's a miracle that no one has been hurt or killed on Route 11 with the parking overflow that happens on those beautiful hiking days. I'm just amazed. We are on borrowed time collectively. Other issues that are just screaming out right

now, the lack of trash facilities the lack of toilet facilities. The serious trail erosion that's occurring now and its getting much worse with each storm that we are getting. These are big issues and problems and by our being willing with you and other partners to step into the breach here and really try to gain some ability to manage these lands and address these issues, we're able with you to have seats at the table if you will for what I know are going to have to be discussions and decisions. We know that we alone as the landowner cannot do this work alone, we can't. The problems are too monumental and solutions for things like the parking and trash and so on those have to involve the town in my view and your position at the table for those discussions especially to do with trails issues and recreation management frankly become your position becomes a stronger one if you are a holder of these legal interest with a very real stake financially in what we are all trying to do here. We can't do it alone and I would venture to say you can't do it alone either. The town hasn't done it hasn't taken the initiative to this point were sticking our necks out in hopes that you'll jump in with us I'm mixing my metaphors here because it will take a coalition of groups and interests to address the issues that are there and going into the future none of us can do this alone

Earl Bagley

One of the big problems before was that nobody maintained the trail because they didn't own the land and I don't know if you people have hiked up or not but I hiked up with my daughter and some of these look like you're in a brook. It probably went across at one time went like this (hands motion straight across) now it goes across like this bout 5 or 6 feet (hands motion down then together) the only thing left on the trail is all the rocks that didn't run down. Like he said I can't believe that the fire department isn't up there more often than they are now because it's just and you see the little kids the mother has the little kids and they're bouncing on the rocks its something. They're going to spend most of their money for the first I don't know how many years to get the trail back so they're safe. Or people to do it.

Tom Howe

Yeah the problems there that I've mentioned very briefly we don't know how much it's going to cost to deal with these issues but one thing I can say with absolute certainty it will be a very big expense and so part of our need is having some way or mechanism that could allow for the ability to pay for whatever the solutions are that we together come up with to address these issues. These are not cheap issues to deal with. It's not something that any one group or any one town would be able to undertake on its own or fund on its own. It's a big tiger by the tail here and we're going into to this very humbly because of the magnitude of it. It's not unlike what Monadnock has been in which we took that tiger by the tail a hundred years ago. The state happens to now manage much of that even though we are the underlying owner of the property. But there were major infrastructure improvements that had to be made to address the what, 100,000 people who were going up

and down the mountain every year. Mt. Major based on the vehicle counts that were done last summer by the Belknap Range volunteers. We think the numbers are not far off of Onancock in terms of number of visitors per year for all we know it may exceed Monadnock. So this is a state wide recreational resource that you have in your town which brings lots of benefits in many ways but also has very real and significant responsibilities and liabilities associated with the land and we need to be eyes wide open about assuming those responsibilities. Again we can't do it alone we want to do this with the Town of Alton and the other key groups that clearly has stakes and interest in these issues

Loring
Ok

Earl Bagley
One place we thought about to get money from the state but that was basically kind of turned down because they just don't have any money you know for anything like that.

Loring Carr
Well we just bought a piece of property out on the lake. That cost a lot of money but I won't blame you for that

Earl Bagley
We lost how much tax dollars

Loring Carr
Yes

Dave Hussey
Yes we lost, Alton lost

Tom Howe
This land stays on the tax rolls

Loring Carr
So I guess what this paragraph is saying is specifically saying not allowing camping, mountain biking, recreation or all terrain vehicles

Tom Howe
Its not part of the publics right. We might choose to allow those things if it fits within our management scheme of things.

Loring Carr
The next paragraph it says you may close off things for any duration. I'm a little concerned about that.

Tom Howe

Yup. We tried to be narrow you'll notice it says only for one or more of the following purposes. We tried to list specifically the things that might come up, we hope they don't, we don't want them to come up. But they're specific circumstances that we think in the interest of just safety for example under the first what few things there or if there's some particularly sensitive resources that you know the best thing to protect something sometimes is to exclude it from the public access you know I don't know what that would be right now.

Loring Carr

But now, is there going to be any input from the Alton Conservation Committee into some or any of these decisions, like that

Tom Howe

I would hope so and I expect so because what were envisioning here once we can acquire ownership we have talked about the promotion of some kind of a call it what you will a working group a forum a periodic gathering of all the stake holders who have vested interests in not just in Mt Major but the Belknap Mountains. And that's going to be the time and place to have all parties discuss and be able to have input on the key decisions about things like new trails being built, trails being relocated, trails being put to bed, major issues that have a ripple effect across many properties that's what we envision being the agenda for periodic meeting of all the groups including and especially the Town of Alton having a seat at that table.

Loring Carr

But you haven't got anything in here spelled out for this kind of meeting

Tom Howe

We don't because we're just the Forest Society. We are talking about something we can't commit on the part of all the other stake holders that they are going to be willing to participate in something like that. We're on record promoting and endorsing the formation of this group of stake holders and we I would expect that we will take a very significant roll in helping to facilitate that and convening meetings and so on I cant sit here to day and say we will be the convener because I think what it takes is an initial gathering of the groups to decide is this something that other people want to do. We want to do it but I can't sit here and tell you that other people I can't commit on the part of other groups to convene or participate in that

Loring Carr

Could we put something in here that would say that you would have an annual meeting with at least with the Alton group?

Tom Howe
Sure

Loring Carr
I don't know how you feel about that

Tom Howe
Yeah, no that would be good

Russ Wilder
I think that would be good. We have the Belknap Grange Conservation Coalition that we're a member of and the thought was that a lot of the members of that coalition would work with the not only the Forest Society but the LRCT and there's a group called the BRATS that are trail tenders from the Belknap Range Trail Tenders that do the stuff around Belknap Mountain and they would be part of it so that the trails could be maintain all the way across as well plus the scouts over in Gilmanton because they own some of land on the mountain

Tom Howe
I think I can, I need to check in with others tomorrow but there's a very good chance we can add comfortably to this a commitment that regardless of all the other discussions going on we will commit to consulting with and meeting with the Alton Conservation Commission at least once a year to look at the big picture and if it turns out that that's a part of a larger forum great but at a minimum we'd be nuts not to commit to that to be blunt. Because it's in our interest to be working closely with you, presumably you the same with us. So I would be happy to pursue that and add it. I think barring some surprise you can expect that in here.

Earl Bagley
The other thing is that this is not all the land

Loring Carr
Right, right

Earl Bagley
There are other parcels. I don't know how many there is left you probably know

Tom Howe
A lot

Earl Bagley
So I mean, so it isn't that we have the whole control of everything now

Russ Wilder

We're still working on it

Loring Carr

Those other ones probably fall under the same idea right

Tom Howe

We'd like them to and obviously if you can partner with us on future projects and needs I would have every expectation that we want to continue the same kind of arrangement barring some surprise. Makes sense to me.

Loring Carr

Dave you have something to add to that.

Dave Hussey

I think there should be some kind of input, every year from the Town of Alton. I don't think it should be forgotten that's what I'm getting at.

Tom Howe

Yep. it makes good sense makes good sense. Assume that will be in unless you hear otherwise. I'll confirm that and provide revised wording on this we should be able to do that by the end of tomorrow.

Loring Carr

That would be great. And on number 3, it's about the fees

Tom Howe

Yup

Loring Carr

This could be a, I don't know an issue or not. I don't know, if you put in a lot of money I would hate to do this and then see next year to see a sign up there that says its \$10.00 to hike up Mount Major, how we going to do that?

Tom Howe

We could not impose a fee for just the privilege of hiking up because that is guaranteed under that number one.

Loring Carr

Ok, if you put toilets there and you pick up the trash I understand that's going to cost money and I do understand that you should get reimbursed by these people but how are you going to determine that fee?

Tom Howe

How to actually do that, how to implement that?

Loring Carr
Ya

Tom Howe

I'm not sure to be blunt. I don't know all the right tools or mechanisms for a collection arrangement that can work. What we're trying to do here is really set out the concepts of what's intended and the concept is that above and beyond that base guaranteed set of rights and uses that you are assured of without charge above and beyond that we need some way of being able to fund whatever those expensive things are. I can't sit here and articulate precisely how that's going to happen in this document and I would suggest we shouldn't try. Because how that might be done five years from now ten years from now might be very different from the way it should happen fifty years out so this is really attempting to layout the frame work. I would guess that probably if we enter into some sort of major facilities improvements and so on for which we need to collect some funding from some users to me that would be something we'd want and need to talk about with you and our other partners because it has an impact on everybody and I would envision then some kind of a MOU or some document that gets into those details after all the parties that have an interest in that issue have had a chance to talk it out and hash it through. We're not going to be the ones to know the perfect answer to all this stuff but if we can lay out the concepts and the principles of preserving the right to be able to have users who use those kinds of facilities pay for them in some fashion not just the construction but the maintenance that's the concept we are trying to embody here but we can't. We don't pretend to know exactly how to make that happen in great detail.

Russ Wilder

It does say here the first thing is, it does say you should not charge the granter which is you, shall not charge public fees for accessing and in using the property in accordance with the agreement. But if you should do improvements you have the right to be able to

Tom Howe

We have the right to

Russ Wilder

The right to charge some fees says you have pay toilets or something like that would be a way to do it; that fee would endure

Tom Howe

And you can hold us to

Russ Wilder

I think the key point is that the town is getting the right of access which is what is needed for the money we are spending and if we go over and above that there's an opportunity for you to get the funding basically.

Tom Howe

Alright and you all can hold us to this. I mean you can part of your being at the table with your investment if I can call it that in describing it that way that then gives you the ability to work with us to figure out what is the right mechanism for implementing some way if we need it of funding the expensive facilities that may ultimately be needed. Again the seat at the table if you will the leverage that you gain by becoming a more vested partner in all of this will give you more ability to have sway in these important decisions in the future.

Loring Carr

Could there be something in there that there would be some input into these fees from Alton Conservation Committee?

Tom Howe

Um, sure. I mean we've got, if we add the annual consultation what we could also do for this section 3 is add a similar we can add something that's parallel to that where, I don't have exactly the right wording but the concept is that if major facilities are proposed to be put in we have an obligation to consult with you about it

Loring Carr

Yes, right

Tom Howe

How that works, what s going to happen. And I think we can commit to that kind of a communication.

Loring Carr

That's what I'm wondering

Russ Wilder

I would say also in addition to the Conservation Commission or maybe through the Conservation Commission that Fire and Police be involved because they actually go up there a lot.

Marc DeCoff

You know how many times they've gone up there and people have come down and they haven't been able to charge for transport we've been up there all night trying to find a person, you can't charge for it.

Russ Wilder
Yeah right

Tom Howe
That's actually a great that's a great case in point where I think we all want for that kind of service granted its not a service we're providing but we would want for you to be able to collect a reasonable user, that's a user fee

Russ Wilder
And the other thing is being able to coordinate there's going to be a gate that's going to be put up there getting better access for rescues and things like that you know using that old class six road that's the first part of the trail and I think it would be great to put that in then we have a chance have a seat at the table then officially.

Dave Hussey
I think you should I think I should have a lot of input for what your doing here.

Loring Carr
So the snowmobile trails are going to be pretty much left open where they're at now

Tom Howe
Yes

Loring Carr
Unless something in the future changes that, like logging

Tom Howe
Right, based on what we know and understand right now we would be highly likely to enter into what would be our typical 5 year I don't know if its called a lease or a permit or a license or something standard agreement that we work out with snowmobile clubs that want to use the lands we own for the established existing trails.

Loring Carr
Yeah

Tom Howe
And as long as the usage is following our rules if you will of staying on the trails and responsible maintenance of the trails and that kind of thing those are the kinds of parameters that we expect in a partnership with the snowmobile clubs. So we fully would expect to enter into those kinds of arrangements on the Jensen parcel and the Roberts track those are the two that have snowmobile use. Hertell doesn't have any snowmobile trail at present and that's why you see the slightly different wording here. We're

going to be, I would certainly expect us to be perfectly happy to consider some proposal if it turns out that that parcel can become a key joiner of and linkage for solving of a problem that may occur in some other portion of the network. Glad to consider that. We can't sit here today and say absolutely we'd say yes because its so dependant on the circumstances but

Loring Carr

I know, I understand

Tom Howe

We're absolutely receptive to that because snowmobiling is again part of the multiple use and enjoyment by the public that we philosophically support and believe in and want to enable to happen. Same with hunting. Its one of those things that we view it as a traditional use and interest and right and we want to continue to allow as long as it's safe. There may be certain areas that where it really isn't appropriate given the volume of people that are there. We may have set backs or safety zones or limitations but fundamentally we are absolutely supportive of peoples ability to hunt on open land and want to continue to see that happen

Russ Wilder

And your Morse Preserve allows hunting

Tom Howe

Yes, yup

Loring Carr

Anything from the board

Dave Hussey

I'm all set

Loring Carr

Is this a public meeting or public hearing or what?

Russ Bailey

No, it wasn't notified as that, it's up to you how you want to run it

Loring Carr

OK

Dave Hussey

Will we be meeting again for public?

Russ Wilder

I think we had the public meeting we ran that we were required to do

Dave Hussey

OK

Russ Wilder

And I think the agreement was as long as the Selectmen were happy with how these read then you would authorize the release of the check to the Forest Society the \$230,000. So as far as getting this done without a lot of effort I mean if Tom re-does that language and gets it back to Russ. Do you need to or have to meet again with that to authorize the check to be released?

Loring Carr

I don't think so. If we go ahead a put it on the table we can review it

Marc DeCoff

We can authorize the release as long as that documentation is changed

David Hussey

Sessler is probably going to write the language

Loring Carr

Take a look at it

Tom Howe

OK, great. We appreciate your support soon simply because we are trying to schedule a closing on the Hertel track. And it's probably going to be next Tuesday/Wednesday.

Russ Wilder

It is not going to be this Friday

Tom Howe

Correct. It's not going to be Friday just from logistics standpoint. But if you have the ability to wire funding its extremely helpful so that we can work that into the closing. If that's not easy we can accommodate a check. But that's very helpful if we can get it to work.

Russ Wilder

I think we gave it to you. Did you get the instructions didn't you Russ for the Merrimack Savings Bank?

Russ Bailey

No

Tom Howe

We can work with a check if you are not accustomed to wiring

Russ Bailey

We do wiring. If you're willing to move forward then you would need to have a motion approving these agreements with the amendments that you've asked for and then authorize the Conservation Commission to go forward with their use of the conservation fund as authorized by the Town Meeting.

Dave Hussey

So moved

Loring Carr

So moved

Marc DeCoff

Wow, yeah, what do they get the three tracks. I motion that we approve the three tracks for the Hertel land for 455 acres, the Jensen property for 100 acres and the Roberts property for 75 acres and with the contract being updated with the changes we want to authorized the Conservation Committee to send the check for \$230,000

Tom Howe

One correction if I may. The acreages have actually changed because of surveying.

Marc DeCoff

OK

Tom Howe

Um. Just for the record. The Hertel parcel has been surveyed and I provided a copy of the survey with these materials. But the acreages are also imbedded right in these documents. Hertel is like 468, the Jensen track is, I believe it is 106 or 107

Loring Carr

106.89

Tom Howe

The Roberts track we don't know yet the exact acreage. The surveying on that is still pending. That's the one of the three that's farther out in the future in terms of a closing. I think we have it scheduled to close by next April. So one of the questions back to you is what kind of form of commitment would you like from us to ensure you get that public access easement for that track. Given that you're providing your full funding now. We're happy to accommodate whatever sort of form of commitment you'd like about that. Our president can write you a letter confirming that the commitment of the organization is to provide this contingent of course on our acquiring the property. And we would convey out at the same time to you this interest. We

can make that; I can include a board authorization for that to happen. Tell us what you want and we will try to accommodate you.

Marc DeCoff

So there's no guarantee that we're going to get that 75 acres?

Tom Howe

Not a guarantee because we have to acquire it first. And until the title and survey work gets done, you know those are contingencies in our contract with Dave Roberts but what we can say is contingent on our acquiring ownership we can guarantee that we would convey this interest to you immediately thereafter. And we will tweak the wording to fit the issues that we talked about tonight on that

Marc DeCoff

Are you going to need more funding to acquire that?

Tom Howe

Not from the Town

Marc DeCoff

You don't have the funding now to acquire that?

Tom Howe

Not yet, no

Marc DeCoff

So if you don't get the funding

Tom Howe

If we don't get the funding we don't buy it and therefore we can't convey to you that interest, so

Dave Hussey

So you're saying that we may be ending up with two tracks of land instead of three

Tom Howe

If we can't raise all the funding ah, yes that would be our position

Loring Carr

But the owners talking to you at this time

Tom Howe

Well we have a contract with the owner. We have a contract for him to sell and us to buy. But that contract has a contingency of our ability to raise the funds to do that. So

Dave Hussey

I just hope the public wasn't lead to believe we are getting three parcels and all of a sudden we end up with two

Tom Howe

It's all contingent on our fundraising. If you haven't contributed yet, I'd be remiss in saying send your contribution today.

Russ Wilder

It's going well though. The fundraising has been going well

Dave Hussey

Yeah but you're asking to release \$200 and some odd thousand dollars on a possibility

Earl Bagley

That may be something you want to get an opinion on

Dave Hussey

I know and that's the only thing and something that scares me. I didn't realize that third parcel wasn't definitely guaranteed. If we release \$225,000 now I think I would need some type of guarantee.

Tom Howe

We can only give you the guarantee that reflects,

Dave Hussey

That you might get it

Tom Howe

Well, I would say we are in a stronger position then that. I mean we have a binding contract on ourselves and Dave Roberts to do the transaction

Dave Hussey

You have the cintract, but if you don't come up with the funding

Tom Howe

Right

Russ Bailey

But I think in consideration, is the other two parcels especially, which one is the trail head? Jensen

Earl Bagley

Roberts

Tom Howe

Roberts is the one adjacent to the parking lot

Russ Bailey

But you're getting over 500 acres with the other two

Marc DeCoff

When is the trailhead one supposed to be closed by?

Tom Howe

I believe its April 17th.

David Hussey

And that ones a definite?

Marc DeCoff

No

Tom Howe

Well we have contracts on all three of these parcels. All of those contracts are contingent on our ability to raise the funds by that closing date, so

Dave Hussey

How much money do you have?

Tom Howe

We have raised, I think the total as of a week or so ago is \$940,000 total combined for both organizations. We have a total campaign goal of 1.8 million. We have a lot of requests that are outstanding including one before the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program for \$240,000. I'm sorry \$340,000 and we have some other funders that are probably going to wait until they see the outcome of the LCHIP decision. Which we will know, we will hear the LCHIP decision probably by the 20th or 21st of this month and we have to stay mum about it per their orders until I think it's January 2nd or 3rd when that will become public information. But the point is that we have a number of other things that are outstanding that are going to make a serious dent in the remaining portion of the campaign to be funded.

Russ Wilder

Just another point is the \$1.8 million includes a fairly large endowment for trail maintenance and stuff in the future. So \$1.8 million is considerably more actually than the actual purchase prices are. They can actually do the acclamations short of the goal but they really want to do the whole thing in order to do the maintenance later on

Earl Bagley

The three parcels, what's the total purchase price for the three parcels?

Tom Howe

I would have to do a little bit of math if you'll bear with me here. I don't have that in my head.

Russ Wilder

You will have to take out Gage's part of that.

Tom Howe

It's essentially the direct purchase cost; sorry one more, missing one. It's about one million fifty thousand in the direct real estate purchase price/cost, something like that. We have tremendous other costs on this project. All of these tracks have needed to be surveyed none of them have had surveys. All the title work, the legal expense, the research that has been involved in trying to figure out boundaries and ownerships and so on. This has not been a small undertaking at all.

Loring Carr

Well, if you can work on that language by Friday

Tom Howe

I'll work on it tomorrow. On the deeds the documents?

Loring Carr

Yes. Add the input

Tom Howe

The two different places where we'll add required consultation with the Alton Conservation Commission. I will be working on this tomorrow morning. So I would hope that maybe, I would have to talk to with others internally to make sure that we are good to go, and then I have to run it by our attorneys but he's usually able to turn stuff around very quickly. So I think with any luck by the end of the day I should be able to get stuff to Russ. At least that would be my hope and expectation.

Loring Carr

Ok. Well are we satisfied adding stuff to the contract?

David Hussey

Loring I'm not satisfied. I need to think about this a little bit. I don't like the not knowing we're getting the third parcel.

Marc DeCoff

Well they're pretty close to funding. He's got \$900,000 now.

Dave Hussey

Well I would like to know; guarantee it. I would like to know about it. I haven't got a good feeling that all of a sudden the tax payers I have to go back and tell them, oops, we didn't get it. I will not vote on this tonight until I at least think about it and look at it.

Loring Carr

But, they're under the gun to close on the other ones

Dave Hussey

I know you're under the gun but at the same time I know personally me buying a piece of property, I wouldn't do that. So why would I tell the citizens of Alton we are going to take a chance, you may not get a piece of property. I can't do that in good faith.

Tom Howe

We have been, I think it's fair to say we have been successful and have closed on every major project that we have ever committed ourselves to. I think that's a pretty safe statement unless I'm forgetting something. And we don't embark on these all hands on deck kind of projects unless we think we can be successful. We don't want to fail either.

Dave Hussey

I'm sorry. I have an obligation to the town people. I believe in this project, don't get me wrong. I believe in this project the only thing that makes me nervous is saying to the people we are getting three pieces but we might not get three pieces. I'm a realist I know things happen. So I'm not going to vote on this tonight.

Loring Carr

Alright

Dave Hussey

Ok, I will abstain

Marc DeCoff

I'm pretty confident that we will get that third piece

Loring Carr

Do we have a motion?

Marc DeCoff

Ok, I motion that we approve the purchase of the Hertel/Jensen property with a guarantee from your president about the Roberts property. When they do buy it in the future that we will get the access and all the grantors and everything in the contract and authorize the Conservation Commission to send a check of \$230,000

Loring Carr

Second

Any further discussion?

All in favor

The vote was 2 in favor of the motion; R. Loring Carr and Marc DeCoff; 1 opposed to the motion, David Hussey.

Police Grants

Ryan Heath approached the Board regarding the grants for Digital Cameras, Laptops and Software System for the Police cruisers. These are the Highway Safety Grants from the state and are 50/50 matching grants. We already have the majority of the money from the asset forfeiture funds that we have received to cover the town's 50% and the benefits would be tremendous to the department and the town.

The shortage for the town's portion is approximately \$9,200.00 which would be necessary from the operating budget. The amount from asset forfeiture is \$38,803.78. I also contacted the vendor and they will give us an additional discount of \$600.00 per unit. This money is in this year's budget.

R. Loring Carr made a motion to approve the police grants for cameras, laptops and software and authorize E. Russell Bailey to sign the grants and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Special Event Application, St. Katharine Drexel 5K Race

E. Russell Bailey requested that item #6 under New Business, St. Katharine Drexel 5K Race be moved to accommodate concerns that the Chief had.

Chief Ryan Heath voiced concerns regarding the need for police coverage at the race and safety for the participants.

R. Loring Carr made a motion to approve the St. Katharine Drexel 5K Road Race contingent upon them having adequate police coverage and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Emergency Management 911 Notification System

Todd MacDougall, Lieutenant Alton Police Department, and Deputy Emergency Management Director; he presented a handout to the Board and provided a demonstration regarding the 911 Emergency Notification System which allows town's to join in to obtain emergency messages to be sent out to residents. This message automatically goes to land lines but there is a need to sign up for notification to cell phones and emails giving only the information you choose to provide. Nothing will go out unless the board agrees and is briefed.

E. Russell Bailey would like to get the word out to the public regarding the system and put the information on the website for people to sign up their cell phones.

There is another system available called Nixle for non-emergency type of things which provides information for free, with an upgraded version for a fee.

The goal is to get information out to the residents during certain incidents and would need an okay from the Board to start publicizing the Emergency Notification System. Residents only need to provide the information that they want to provide such as phone number, email address etc.; it is strictly voluntary and up to the resident, landlines are automatic. All information is confidential and documented for backup.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve advertising on our website for people to start signing up for the Emergency Notification System and R. Loring Carr seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Website Upgrade Status

We have been working on updating the website and within next two (2) months we hope to have samples of changes to the home page; making it easier for residents with automatic generation for notifications, upon signing up of agendas, meetings etc. We will also improve the forms and applications to become more interactive as possible and we are reviewing different sites for other ideas and examples. The meeting videos are now available on the website.

Transfer Station Bid Agreement

The low bid for the Transfer Station to finish the roof was approved about a month ago in the amount of \$40,200.00 and needs authorization for E. Russell Bailey to sign Russ to sign the proposal and acceptance of the contract.

David Hussey made a motion to approve E. Russell Bailey to sign the proposal and acceptance of the contract and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Fire/Ambulance Budget

One of the major changes moving forward is to expand the hours available for ambulance calls to seven days a week during prime hours. Within the memo from the Fire Chief, major work had to be done on the Ambulance and it was previously approved to only expend out of the Ambulance Fund; in order to finish up the year for shift coverage they would need approximately \$7,500.00 to \$8,000.00 which is available in the fire budget which has a line item for the Ambulance. The Chief is asking to continue the per diem coverage through the end of the year and this is built into the budget for next year.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the use of the funds from the Fire Operating Budget to offset the per diem for the Ambulance Account to finish out the year and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Marc DeCoff inquired about Mt. Major and would like to know much it has cost the town for services for the past year and noted that if there is no transport then the cannot get charged for the services.

The Board would like to possibly establish an RSA regarding illegal activities at Mt. Major and to recoup money. E. Russell Bailey will check into this matter and get back to the Board at a later date.

New Business:

Vote to approve Land Use Items as recommended by the Town Assessor

R. Loring Carr made a motion to approve the 2013 Tax Abatements for Map 59 Lot 1A and Map 29 Lot 75 in the amount of \$2,052.00 and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

R. Loring Carr made a motion to approve the 2013 Administrative Abatements for Map 39 Lot 45, Map 71 Lot 229, Map 12 Lot 49, Map 9 Lot 11, Map 2 Lot 20-5 and Map 2 Lot 20 in the amount of \$41,630.05 (noted: they are all for the Town of Alton) and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

R. Loring Carr made a motion to approve the 2013 Excavation Permit for Route 28 Construction and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

R. Loring Carr made a motion to approve the 2013 Timber Warrant for Map 6 Lot 15 in the amount of \$61.14 and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Housing for the Elderly, Payment in Lieu of Taxes

This is the annual agreement for Spruce Street, the Alton Housing for the Elderly; they pay for just the town portion of the tax rate and would need the Board's approval to accept.

R. Loring Carr made a motion to accept the Payment in Lieu of Taxes for the Housing for the Elderly and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Special State Primary Election

Special State Primary Election; January 21, 2014 due to the passing of Executive Councilman Burton, there is now a vacancy for his position. There will be a Special Primary Election on January 21, 2014 at Prospect Mountain High School and an extra ballot at the March 11, 2014 election. The additional cost to us will be approximately \$720.00 which was not in the original budget.

Jones Field Bridge

The Mt. Major Snowmobile Club in the past has been putting plywood down over the Jones Field Bridge to protect it; we just re-planked it. For budgetary purposes they have stated that they are not able to cover the deck this year. We feel that the bridge will need to be blocked and need the Board's authorization.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to block off the Jones Field Bridge from December 1, 2013 until the snowmelt with a large rock and R. Loring Carr seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Special Event Applications, Big Lake Half Marathon

This Big Lake Half Marathon is an event that is held every year and the Police and Fire have no issues.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the Big Lake Half Marathon for a setup date of May 9, 2014 with the actual event on May 10, 2014 and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Special Events Application, St. Katharine Drexel 5K Road Race

Note: This item was moved to earlier in the meeting.

Public Input II

Raymond Howard voiced concerns and disappointment regarding the Asset Forfeiture money from the Police Department and that the money belongs to this town. The taxpayers support the Police Department and that is not money that they have earned to keep or spend however they like. There was an Article last year that was already voted down in reference to the cameras and felt that this was a backdoor move. E. Russell Bailey interjected that there was an Article for a cruiser with a camera which was turned down and DRA was consulted and there is no issue with this and it is not a backdoor. Marc DeCoff noted that Asset Forfeiture has restrictions that need to be adhered to.

Barbara Howard voiced her personal concerns regarding the 911 Notification System and does not want phone calls from the Police Department; she doesn't approve of it and doesn't like it and thinks that the new system is perpetuating the problem and is not a solution. She also doesn't agree with the laptops. She agrees with the intent which is for safety and wants to know how to opt out on a landline. E. Russell will look into the issue of opting out. Barbara inquired about the cost of the system and; there is no cost to the town and is a service that has been offered to the town for emergencies only. She feels that 911 has turned into a multi million dollar process.

R. Loring Carr made a motion to enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA91-A:3,II(a) personnel (c) character/reputation and (e) claims/litigation and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary K. Jarvis
Mary K. Jarvis
Recording Secretary

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

R. Loring Carr, Chairman

Cydney Johnson, Vice-Chairman

David Hussey, Selectman

Marc DeCoff, Selectman

Robert Daniels, Selectman