

Mount Agamenticus Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Day: Wednesday, May 19, 2010
Location: Grant House, York, Maine
Time: 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.
Chair: Doreen MacGillis

Members Present:

Conservation Coordinator, Robin Kerr
GWRLT, Darrell DeTour
MDIF&W, -----
The Nature Conservancy, Parker Schuerman
Town of South Berwick, Sharon Brassard
Town of York, Mike Sullivan
York Land Trust, Doreen MacGillis
York Water District, Don Neumann
York Water District, Gary Stevens

Public Present: John Branagan, South Berwick Resident
Roger Clements, York Resident & Mt. A Friends Director
Richard Bartlett, York Resident
Susan Morse, Reporter for the York Weekly

Chair: Doreen MacGillis

Minutes taken by: Darrell DeTour, transcribed by Robin Kerr

Approved minutes from previous meeting: 04/21/10

Minutes were approved as written.

Public forum: *No public input at this time*

Correspondence/ presentations/ requests:

Site Review-sledding/rope tow proposal- *After introductions, all present went outside and walked the area of the proposed rope tow and sledding hill.*

Discussion item:

sledding/rope tow proposal review- *JB discussed reasons why he is not in favor of proposal noting that there are plenty of other natural winter activities offered that already exist and are free. Doesn't think it is in the Town's long-term interest for the area or part of the overall goal, it would require a significant change, and it is not needed here as there are other places nearby that available that offer that type of recreation. RB noted that he'd rather see it free so as not to denote selectiveness of user population. RK went to Powderhouse Hill in South Berwick to meet with the area's managers and gather information. It was an eye opener and they answered questions she didn't think to ask. PHH's sledding area is similar in size to this proposal's entire area and one difference is that they are at the base of a hill while this site is at the summit. PHH is run by 35 volunteer families and need at least 5 people per shift when open. PHH recommends separating sledding & skiing and the major concern is safety. Rescue personnel is just 3 minutes away at PHH vs. a much longer response time here. A rope tow for sledding hill would require using standardized sled type for attaching and emergency release. Additional comments- see Robin's notes regarding summary of visit to PHH. David Tibbetts, York Conservation Commission had recommended a wildlife study be conducted prior to any disruption. Blanding's turtles are known to be in this vicinity and possibly Black Racer snakes both listed under MDIFW T&E species. DT also noted the plants found at the summit are typical for subalpine, cautioned about erosion, and suggests looking at lower areas first. GS agreed with JB and that it doesn't seem to fit up here. Also believes there would be more to it than predicted. RC wondered about increased runoff to Ring Trail below and if that*

Mount Agamenticus Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

would be an issue but would have to look into it. DN/YWD board is not opposed necessarily, but they are not in the business of recreation and would be held harmless. Doesn't believe it goes along with current conservation effort here on the top of the mountain. SB noted that it takes so much to run PHH and it is a big effort and volunteer coordination and believes it may be ~\$8k to cover insurance in SB. RB asked if a sled area with no rope tow would be better received. PS noted that a sledding area exists already and if it would add any value to winter use of area? The proposal includes building a ramp to make the new site more conducive to the activity. TNC does not see ecological problem with 2/3 acre of habitat loss (turtles, snakes, vegetation), but why duplicate what exists 15 miles down the road? MS from recreation standpoint is not concerned about running/operations. Likes the community building aspect and though PHH is not far, no one wants to go out of town. Access during snowstorm- when most people would want to be up there- could be a problem and doesn't believe it fits with what effort at mountain. MS will do what he can to find an alternate location and is committed to work w/RB on a new proposal. DM would like to help as well and if we think about Nordic skiing it expands possibilities as well. RB believes new landfill area won't work as there is no parking and not enough slope. Summary of concerns by the Committee: believe it will take more than we are understanding right now; doesn't seem practical; sensitivity of the area; not in recreation business; complexity added; can summit handle it; and may tend to undermine conservation effort on summit. All members unanimously opposed the proposal on the table. RB wanted to see what kind of response he'd get from the idea, but would still like to pursue. MS will forward the proposal along with SC recommendations to the York Parks & Recreation Board. Once they review, they will be able to make a recommendation for or against and both will be forwarded to York Selectmen.

Gary Steven's report:

- n/a

Coordinator's report:

- Robin discussed new office work (cleaning, painting, wiring for workstations, furniture hunting)
- Timberland expects to bring 80 people on June 15th from 1-4 PM for a volunteer work afternoon. Robin plans to have them move lots of rock with buckets and wheelbarrows. Timberland comes with experienced trail crew and some funding

Discussion item (cont.):

learning lodge- (tour)

sneak peek community event June 12th -plan partner displays- Roger discussed type and placement of partner display for sneak peek event. Committee will use existing table top displays for each organization and will have a representative from each available throughout the event. Doreen suggested the group think about a more long-term display, but for now what about enlarging a display board introducing the Steering Committee and mounting on foam and display on an easel. Could have this at entrance rather than separate displays for stakeholders. Mike would like to see one whole wall dedicated to telling story of all the non-profits & towns and the conservation initiative. Group would like to brainstorm for ways to present story of the partnership on June agenda.

Budget update: n/a-review hand out

New business item: Mike briefly discussed new tower proposal submitted by the State. They will be presenting the proposal to the town manager and selectmen and are requesting to have a zoning change in order to allow a new tower. Committee must discuss at next meeting if would like to forward a recommendation to be considered.

Adjourn 3:00pm

Next meeting scheduled for May 19th at 1:00 p.m.
Location: Mt. Agamenticus Lodge, York, ME