

**MOUNT WASHINGTON COMMISSION**  
**JANUARY 21, 2022 MINUTES** *(Approved on 03/04/22)*

A regular meeting of the Mount Washington Commission (MWC) was held at Franconia Notch State Park HQ.

**Call to Order.** Chairman Bradley called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m., with a quorum present. PRESENT were Sen Jeb Bradley/Senate, Ed Bergeron/for Public, Dir Phil Bryce/Div Parks and Rec, Derek Ibarguen/WMNF, Paul Ingersoll/for Public, Jack Middleton/MWObs, Wayne Presby/Cog Railway, Drew Scamman/Townsquare Media, Chris Thayer/AMC, and Howie Wemyss/Auto Road. Paul Fitzgerald/for Public and Rep Karen Umberger/House were excused. Several members of the public, summit partners and state employees were in attendance.

**Master Plan.** The Harvard Negotiation and Mediation Clinical Program (HNMCP) final report was discussed, including the key findings and recommendations. The MWC decided to schedule regular meetings of the full commission to continue the master plan work, rather than through a subcommittee. They discussed using a facilitator to help keep the discussions on track and productive. They discussed potential candidates, funding, and how contracting would work. Attendees discussed having a clear scope of work, goals and public involvement. RSA 227-B:6 identifies six topic areas that can serve as a starting point for discussions. December 2022 was targeted for completion of a draft master plan.

Other topics discussed were carrying capacity, the vision for the summit for the future in 10, 20, 30 years out, capital investments, visitor experience, natural resource protection, economic drivers, seasonal operations, and indicators of success. Answers to the topic areas will depend upon the vision for the summit. Members and attendees are to provide a one-page, bulleted list of their vision for the summit of Mount Washington in the foreseeable future, due by Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> to Ms Tango-Lowy. Mr Brooks offered to assist with the compilation of the comments.

Members discussed the dates for the next meetings and agreed that it would be beneficial to meet at the facilities of the various partners to better understand each partner's operation. The next meetings were scheduled for Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at the Mt Washington Cog Railway maintenance facility and on Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at the AMC Highland Center. The main agenda item will be the master plan work, but any updates and operational items can be brought forward at the meeting.

**Minutes.** Mr Middleton MOVED to accept the minutes of October 29, 2021; SECONDED by Mr Presby. The minutes were APPROVED as written.

**Capital Improvements.** Mr Hummel provided a brief update on the sewer treatment plant and water system upgrades projects. The bid package is near completion with construction starting in June and completed by October 2023. Parks will be hiring a waste-water treatment plant operator.

**State Park Report & Operations.** Mr Hummel shared a short clip of the NH-PBS "Sidetrek" episode featuring Mount Washington State Park that aired in December. He and the staff are in winter operations: completing repairs and maintenance work and preparing for the next season. Commissioner Stewart said that DNCR and the Cog are still discussing the Cog track extension project.

**Partner Reports.** AMC. Mr Thayer said that John Judge is retiring, and Susan Arnold will serve as Interim President/CEO. Their Annual Summit on Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup> will be held virtually. There were 62 search and rescue calls last season. Hut reservations are on pace and trail work is being scheduled, including accessibility improvements to the Cardigan trail.

Auto Road. Mr Rechert reported that winter operations are going well, especially for snow activities.

Cog Railway. Mr Presby said they are in their second season of winter operations to Waumbek Station. He gave an update on the improvements to the shop facility and the track replacement project.

MWObs. Ms Dunn said that they are in winter mode, but were able to keep COVID off the summit. She reported on the recent extreme weather statistics. They are preparing for next season, including retail operations and the hire of a new communications director.

Townsquare Media. Mr Scamman said that they are doing maintenance work and thanked Parks for the assistance provided.

WMNF. Mr Ibarquen reported that with winter operations, there is no slow period but they are planning for summer season and trail work. Many of the staff are still teleworking, but the visitor centers are open and the Avalanche Center is operating.

**AOB.** Meetings are scheduled for Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at the Mt Washington Cog Railway maintenance facility and on Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at the AMC Highland Center.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

*Submitted by T. Tango-Lowy, MWC clerk.*