

Mt A Steering Committee

March 22, 2023

Grant House; 10:30am

Members Present:

- Conservation Coordinator, Robin Kerr
- Great Works Regional Land Trust, Jordan Kelley
- Great Works Regional Land Trust, Jill Crosbie
- Maine Dept Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, Josh Matijas
- Town of York, Pete Murray
- York Water District, Super Intendant , Gary Stevens
- York Water District, Zach Mein (Resource Protection)
- Kittery Water District, Bob Gray
- Kittery Water District, John Perry
- York Land Trust ED, Amelia Nadilo
- Town of South Berwick, GWRLT Board Member, John Branagan
- Mt A Outreach and Education Coordinator, Naomi Densmore
- Trails, Grounds, and Facilities Supervisor, Ben Jankowski

Opened Meeting: 10:35am

Minutes: Motion to Approve by Bob, Approved by Gary, All in Favor

Opening:

- KWD: Submitted MOU and \$5,000 Contribution for the Year.
- Introductions

Public Forum:

- Maine Trails Bond: Legislation LD 1156. New initiative for grant funding for Maine trails. \$30 million in grant funding over four years for design, development, and maintenance for multipurpose trails (motorize and non-motorized). Looking for support from organizations and municipalities.

Discussion:

- Parking/Restroom/Use Fee Update:
 - Parking project still ongoing. Reviewed history of project with Committee. Most of summit ledge removal is complete. Need to bring in some fill material and bring construction on restrooms. Funding approved in 2020, estimates done in 2018, major cost changes and material delays. Select Board approved additional ARPA funding to go toward ledge removal. Parking area seems to be on track but restrooms may take longer, discussing timeline with contractor.
 - Use Fee – select board approved implementation of use fee on the access points that they oversee (base, AP along access road, and at summit). Fee structure: \$2/hour rate

for non-resident and non-permit pass holders. York Residents who have permit pass (\$40) can access. Approved seasonal use pass (\$100 for non-residents and \$70 for South Berwick residents). Lots of pushback from SB residents since York pass is \$40 and SB is \$70. JB – we should be mindful of implementation costs. PM – technology will be App based system (scan QR code). JC – what town’s police force responds to incidents? Discussion ensued on town feedback from South Berwick and York. Looking at use fee vs parking violations.

- Review FY24 budget & partner pledges:
 - o Reviewed budget again. Ben and Naomi’s positions will come from Parks & Rec’s operating budget. If split evenly among partners, Mount A Conservation Program cost would be \$5,127. State doesn’t contribute, only as sponsor and served as fiscal agent from prior grant (Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund). Direct check is not likely. May need to look at MOHF again to get funding for culvert on Cedar Trail adjacent to AWC Swamp – but would want to group it with a variety of other things, ex. timber harvest. GWRLT could increase contribution in next year’s budget. YWD will look to increase their contribution.
- Shared Resource Officer:
 - o Gary discussed history of patrolling problem in 1999 at YWD. Great success, partnered with PD for training to become Police Officer. At same time, KWD asked if Gary would patrol their property too in 2004. PD paid GS to patrol Mt A. in addition to WD land. Patrolling weekends and evenings. It has grown significantly and GS wants a purposeful transition. Zach has background in Natural Resource management and passion in the woods. Police training is the key part.
 - o Don N. is speaking with Chief Davis. Looking at a shared position if entities would contribute to full time PD officer (1/2 of week in Mt. A. area and other ½ of week would be harbor master/animal control). Should dedicate 20 hours for patrolling.
 - o Next Steps: Gary to send a proposal with job description, management area, salary, amount requested from each entity, outline of time spent on different entity properties.
- Public Access & Trail Plan:
 - o Still a draft version so input is requested now by our next meeting. Most changes related to identified projects and long-term proposals.
 - o Need to review Access Point signs (all logos and simple rules). Will need updating.
 - o Map: Southern Maine Planning – helped with map updates with limited funding and time. Still some outdated parcel layer. Question is where are they pulling their data from as State Conservation layer is not up to date. Town needs to submit to state conserved parcels as well.
- Mt A. Park Rules & Regs:
 - o Summit Guidelines (developed 2009 for use). Recommendations and not official and doesn’t grant enforcement. Rules for the property beyond town property.
 - o Ordinance for each Town of York Parks and they are looking at rules and regs for each park.
 - o Took guidelines and put in Mt. A Rules & Regs that the town will vote on. Would like Mt A. Steering to review it (cannot vote). Town has voted that Mt A Summit is a park.

- Note: visitors don't see boundary lines, they see it as a management area as a whole and we manage it collectively as one. Want to make sure Summit Guidelines and Mt. A Rules & Regs are aligned. Question: would this new Mt A Rules & Regs document supersede the Summit Guidelines since this becomes a park ordinance?
- Robin seeking feedback as this is still a draft. Becoming more directive.
- Need cohesive rules and regs across the properties. Ex. dogs on leash. What Town Rules expand into outer lands and align with patrolling?
- Reports:
 - Stewardship Update: January Ice Storm hit Mt A hard. 180 hours of crew and volunteers cleaning down trees. Some can't be cleared because of overhead hazards. Volunteer Workday Schedule is advertised for the year. Earth Day is trash clean up on hedgehog cliff (all on state land). Can state get dumpster? Full registration for trash clean-up. Public Works did access road but not dirt road for tree work. Hiring seasonal crew (1 returning, 2 new – increased rate and offering bunkroom housing in the lodge). Have \$4,000 from Friends of Mt A for Cedar Trail improvements. Shifts focus for the season. Friends coming up with Raffle to fundraise for educational signs needed. Friends and YWD have funded support for interpretive panels.
 - Outreach/Education Update: School groups reaching out, preparing for lodge season – major clean up required. Setting aside time July-October for drop in guided hikes by donation. Friends of Mt A designing exhibit about pollinators. Improving promotions on work day efforts, divert people to first hill area. Focusing on follow up posts and highlight number of hours spent on work days. Center for Wildlife programs are set up for the year. Center for Active Listening walks and hikes. Imagine a Day without Water with YWD and YSD and elementary schools. Upcoming: developing content for kiosks and signage. Redesign teacher's packet.
 - Gary Stevens:
 - No further reports. Zach's second day on the job
 - Land Conservation Efforts:
 - Zetterberg: Doreen had spoken with him and he won't sell for less than \$95,000. Property is worth much less than that. Liz met someone out on Third Hill interested in buying the property and building out there. Was told he would have access and could build. Town took dilapidated cabin off the tax record. All need to keep an eye and ear out for further inquiries or plans to build
 - ATV Impact Repairs: YLT is working on addressing ATV impact area out on Great Marsh Trail in the Third Hill area. We will be putting Spring Trail closure signage on the southeast unsanctioned trail.
- New Business: Public Access Signs Next Time
- Adjourn at 12:24pm

Next Meeting, Rescheduled for Wednesday May 17th 9:30am.