

Minutes

Hogback Preservation Commission

Marlboro, Vermont

The March 10, 2014 Regular Meeting of the Hogback Preservation Commission was called to order at 5:05 p.m. at the Marlboro Town Office by Hal Himmelstein, Chair.

Members Present: Christine Colella, Hal Himmelstein, Lauren MacArthur, Ed Metcalfe, Mike Purcell, and Jim Tober.

Members Absent: Bob Engel.

Also Attending: Bob Anderson, President HMCA, and Diana Todd, HMCA board member.

The minutes of the January 13, 2014 Regular Meeting were accepted as distributed.

Election of Officers: Hal Himmelstein was elected Chair, and Bob Engel was elected Vice-Chair, both by unanimous consent. The office of Secretary is rotated among commissioners on a pro tempore basis.

Reports

Chair's Report

The Hogback endowment funds currently totals approximately \$126,300.

A Stihl FS 130 brush cutter was purchased for trail clearing and maintenance projects. It will be housed at HMCA headquarters.

The chair will schedule a meeting this spring to plan future activities at the Bishop Homestead with archaeologist and historic preservationist Elise Manning-Sterling.

The Marlboro Select Board approved the commission's request to change its Rules of Procedure to convert the Planning Commission and Conservation Commission liaison positions to regular positions of three-year terms. HPC will distribute the minutes of its meetings to the chairs of the Planning Commission and Conservation Commission and will ask the chairs to apprise HPC of any matters under consideration that may impact the Conservation Area.

HMCA Report

HMCA held a meeting on January 30, 2014. The HMCA board approved the purchase of a plaque honoring the memory of HMCA board member Jason Saltman; the plaque will be installed at a site off the north portion of White's Loop overlooking a major vernal pool at which Jason conducted amphibian research.

An effort will be made to expand the list of volunteers to work on HMCA's trail committee.

Diana Todd has designed and posted official updated Conservation Area trail maps on HMCA's web site (www.hogbackvt.org). These maps, available in color and black-and-white versions, can be downloaded from the web site. Black-and-white copies of the map will be available for the public at the trailhead kiosks shortly. The commission asked Diana to please add labels for the Museum/gift shop, Quonset hut, and Ski Patrol Building to the maps.

HMCA plans to put a tarp over the roof of the ski patrol hut (aka "The Castle") to keep out precipitation and to commence repairs on the hut as time permits.

Southern Vermont Natural History Museum Report

A tracking event on March 1, 2014, sponsored by the Museum and HMCA and led by professional tracker George Leoniak, was a great success. The event attracted thirteen participants. The commission approved a \$50 stipend for Mr. Leoniak.

Old Business

A motion to change the commission's Rules of Procedure to convert the Planning Commission and Conservation Commission liaison positions to regular positions of three-year terms, tabled at the January 13, 2014 regular meeting, was taken from the table. **M/S/P 6-0.**

New Business

Motion to amend the Management Plan to include, as an appendix, background material on the Conserving Habitat Variety (ESH) project, with a reference to the project in the body of the Management Plan ("Forest Management/Plant and Wildlife Considerations"). **M/S/P 6-0.**

A request has been made by the Upper Valley Snow Sports Foundation (UVSSF)—a 501(c)3 non-profit organization currently managing the Whaleback Mountain ski area in Enfield, New Hampshire—for the Town of Marlboro to donate two complete T-bar lifts from the former Hogback Mountain Ski Area. Discussion of the request ensued, leading to a broader discussion of the future of the T-bar lifts in the Conservation Area. Issues raised regarding the T-bar infrastructure included (a) safety concerns related to the

condition of the cables and tensioning on the counterweights, and possible strategies to ameliorate those concerns; (b) cultural importance of the lifts as artifacts forming a powerful link to local historical memory; (c) environmental impact of heavy machinery needed to remove the lifts; (d) value of having the equipment put to good use at another small ski area; and (e) monetary value of the metal if sold for scrap. The commission felt it prudent to begin a serious information-gathering process, in cooperation with HMCA, that will help us respond to Whaleback's request for the equipment, and aid us in charting a clear path forward regarding the presence of these Hogback Mountain Ski Area artifacts, both T-bars lifts and associated ski area buildings. An information-only meeting with UVSSF/Whaleback representatives at the Conservation Area will be scheduled, to include HPC commissioners and HMCA board members.

HMCA board member Diana Todd presented a proposal to formally adopt a management policy for four designated backcountry downhill ski runs in the former Hogback Mountain Ski Area: Sugar Slope, Ripperoo, Razorback, and Meadow. The policy includes a maintenance plan that will discourage hikers and mountain bikers from using these trails by effectively managing vegetation during non-winter months. The plan is synergistic with the ESH project. These ski runs will *not* be listed as trails on the official trail map. Reference to this policy will be included in the Management Plan.

M/S/P 6-0.

Commissioner Ed Metcalfe sought input on whether to include the Conservation Area in a brochure he is preparing for his gift shop, museum, and distillery. His current brochure indicates there are "600 acres of hiking trails." The commission felt that this needed clarification. It suggested that the section of the brochure describing the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum should note that the museum is "adjacent to the Hogback Mountain Conservation Area and its numerous hiking trails."

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Colella
Secretary pro tempore