



Adirondack Park Agency
OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 17, 2024

Agency Members, Designees, and Executive Staff Present:

John Ernst, Chairperson

Mark Hall, Member

Benita Law-Diao, Member

Art Lussi, Member

Ken Lynch, Member

Zoë Smith, Member

Matt Tebo, Department of State

Dan Wilt, Member

Joe Zalewski, Department of Environmental Conservation

Barbara Rice, Executive Director

Damion Stodola, Counsel

Absent and Excused

Brad Austin, Empire State Development

Local Government Review Board Present

Gerald Delaney, Sr., Executive Director

1. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum of board members being present in person, the meeting was called to order at approximately 9:33 AM and Chairperson Ernst welcomed the public, presenters and staff.

2. WELCOMING REMARKS

Chairperson Ernst welcomed commissioners, staff and public. Ernst noted that on consent of Barton Mines the Agency has extended the public comment period for permit application P2021-0245 through November 6, 2024, and referred the public to the website for public comment.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair recognized Patrick Teague, a resident of North River and Board Member of the Garnet Hill Property Owners Association, who read a letter into the record which expressed concern regarding the permit application for APA Project 2021-0245.

The Chair recognized Alan Belenzs, resident of North River, and member of Friends of Siamese Ponds, who distributed photos while expressing concern regarding the permit application for APA Project 2021-0245.

The Chair recognized Frances Rucker, Co-Owner of Garnet Hill Lodge, who expressed concerns regarding the permit application for APA Project 2021-0245.

The Chair recognized John Pulvermiller, a resident of North River, who expressed concern regarding the permit application for APA Project 2021-0245.

The Chair Recognized Pete Nelson, High Peaks Advisory Group who expressed concerns regarding the policies presented as part of the State Land Master Plan Amendments related to visitor use management.

The Chair recognized Gay Gordon Byrne, resident of North River and part of the Garnet Hill Property Owners Association who expressed her support of the permit application for APA Project 2021-0245.

The Chair recognized Chris Amato, Protect the Adirondacks!, who expressed concern regarding the permit application for APA Project 2021-0245.

The Chair recognized Ron Konowitz, resident of Keene, who expressed his desire to be involved in the State Land Master Plan amendment process, specifically as it relates to trail guidance.

The Chair recognized John Passacantando who expressed concern regarding the permit application for Project 2021-0245, requesting an adjudicated hearing.

4. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 AGENCY MEETING MINUTES

On motion of Mark Hall, seconded by Art Lussi, the September minutes were unanimously approved without modification.

5. RECUSALS

Art Lussi was recused from the Mount Van Hoevenberg Unit Management Plan Amendment discussion and vote.

6. MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Barbara Rice presented the Executive Director Report, highlights of which included:

- Director Rice reported having had productive meetings and tours including: Town of Long Lake, where Rice joined representatives from DOT, APA's Regulatory Programs, and Communications team in visiting the new bridge on Route 28N, which was a project reviewed under the Agency's expedited emergency certificate process; A tour of St. Lawrence County with Commissioner Mark Hall, where they met with the Supervisor for the Town of Fine, toured the SUNY ESF Ranger School, toured a municipal sewer system in the Hamlet of Wanakena, toured Clifton Fine Hospital; and a trip to Canton to meet with St. Lawrence County Manager Ruth Doyle and Chairman David Forsythe.
- Director Rice congratulated Edinberg Supervisor Jean Raymond on her 37 years of public service and her upcoming retirement.
- Director Rice reminded everyone that the public comment period for the State Land Master Plan amendments is open, and the Planning team is hosting three public hearings on October 22, 23, and 29, in addition to those comments being received in writing.
- Director Rice recognized October as Domestic Violence Awareness month in New York State, and the office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) has identified this year's theme as "Financial Abuse in the Digital World." There are a number of events taking place around the state, and the Clothesline Project, featuring and exhibit of t-shirts decorated by survivors representing the effects of domestic violence which is particularly powerful is displayed at the Empire State Plaza.

8. MOTION TO ADJOURN INTO COMMITTEES

On the motion of John Ernst, and seconded by Dan Wilt, the Agency Board voted by unanimous agreement to adjourn to committees at approximately 10:21 AM.

State Land Committee

The committee meeting convened at approximately 10:22 AM.

State Land Committee Members: Ken Lynch, Chair, Benita Law-Daio, Zoë Smith.

Other Members and Designees Present

John Ernst, Matt Tebo (DOS), Dan Wilt, Joe Zalewski (DEC)

Local Government Review Board Present

Gerald Delaney, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present

Barb Rice, Damion Stodola, Megan Phillips, Mitchell Jones,

(1) Planning Division (Megan Phillips)

Megan Phillips, Deputy Director of Planning provided an update on recent Planning Division activities, highlights included:

- Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force recommended public survey to gather information, awareness and attitudes around salt, and its use in private residences.
- The Environmental Notice Bulletin for the 2024 State Land Master Plan Amendments and notice of public hearings have been released as of October 2, 2024. Phillips also reviewed the upcoming dates, times and locations for the public hearings.
- Agency staff have been invited to and will sit on a panel discussion related to visitor use management being hosted by the Adirondack Diversity Initiative as part of their annual symposium, November 12.
- State Land staff are collaborating with DEC and the Office of Parks and Recreation and Historic Preservation on several unit management plans, and with DEC an ORDA on state land consultations.
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team has been working on migrating Agency mapping projects to a new system and preparing to migrate the GIS Server as well as digitizing old print maps and aerial photos.

(2) Mount Van Hoevenberg Unit Management Plan Amendment (Ashley Walden, ORDA, Rebecca Dayton, ORDA, and Mitchell Jones, APA)

Ashley Walden and Rebecca Dayton, ORDA and Mitchell Jones, Adirondack Park Agency presented management actions and State Land Master Plan considerations for the proposed draft amendment to the 1986 Mount Van Hoevenberg Unit Management Plan. Agency staff was seeking authorization to initiate a joint public

comment period with ORDA to solicit input on the amendment and its conformance with the State Land Master Plan.

On a motion of Zoë Smith, seconded by Benita Law-Diao, the committee unanimously recommended this project be authorized for a joint public comment period with ORDA.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Committee Adjourned at approximately 11:26 AM.

Local Government Services Committee

The committee meeting convened at approximately 11:27 AM.

Local Government Services Committee Members Present:

Dan Wilt (Chair), Mark Hall, Matt Tebo (DOS), Joe Zalewski (DEC)

Other Members and Designees Present:

John Ernst, Art Lussi, Zoë Smith, Benita Law-Diao, Ken Lynch

Local Government Review Board

Gerald Delaney, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Barb Rice, Damion Stodola, Megan Phillips, Robyn Burgess

(1) Robyn Burgess, AP Local Planning Assistance Specialist provided the Local Government Services report, highlights of which included:

- Congratulations to Jean Raymond, Supervisor of the Town of Edinburgh on her retirement. Burgess expressed gratitude for the work they accomplished together.
- Local Government Services (LGS) staff have logged in 104 variance referrals and completed 95 of those referrals - 4 of these were reversed by the Agency.

- LGS Staff have also reviewed 5 local land use plan amendments and have approved 3 of those for the Towns of Colton, Queensbury and Westport. The Town of Bolton's amendment is under informal review by the Agency.

(2) Community Planning and Design Projects with Towns of Hague and Keene (Mistaya Smith, APA)

- Mistaya Smith presented an overview of her work with the Towns of Keene and Hague during her internship with the Adirondack Park Agency. Both projects focused on community planning and design initiatives. The Supervisors of Keene and Hague expressed their gratitude to M. Smith and the Agency for the assistance provided as they move forward with next steps of the presented projects.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Local Government Services Committee adjourned at approximately 11:51 AM

Park Ecology Committee convened at approximately 11:52 AM

Park Ecology Committee

Park Ecology Committee Members Present:

Zoë Smith (Chair), Benita Law-Diao, Joe Zalewski (DEC)

Other Members and Designees Present:

John Ernst, Art Lussi, Ken Lynch, Matt Tebo (DOS), Dan Wilt.

Local Government Review Board

Gerald Delaney, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Barb Rice, Damion Stodola, Dr. Elizabeth Schuyler

(1) Park Ecology Report (Dr. Lizz Schuyler)

Dr. Lizz Schuyler, Supervisor – Natural Resource Analysis, provided the Resource Analysis and Scientific Services (RASS) report, highlights of which included:

- RASS staff have had the opportunity to attend conferences in the last month including Adirondack Invasive Species Summit, NYS Adaptation Practitioners Network, and the NYS Interagency Invasive Species Management Working Group.
- Congratulations went out to Casey Young, one of the RASS wetland biologists on her one-year anniversary working in the RASS division.

(2) Update on Moose Research in the Adirondack Park

- Jim Stickles, Big Game Biologist for the DEC, and Jen Grauer, Ph.D. candidate, Cornell University, updated the group on moose research currently taking place in New York, highlighting the ongoing monitoring and field investigations on potential mechanisms causing stagnation in the population. They reviewed the parasite-induced disease pathways, and the impacts of them on the health of the moose population.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Committee Adjourned at approximately 2:20 PM.

The Board returned to Full Agency at approximately 2:21 PM

9. Committee Reports

State Lands (Ken Lynch)

- The State Land Committee reported that they heard a presentation from ORDA and APA staff recommending that a project at Mt Van Hoevenberg which would require an amendment to the UMP to accommodate modifications to the existing venue. On the motion of Ken Lynch, and seconded by John Ernst, the committee unanimously voted to move this project forward to a period of public comment, with the exception of Art Lussi who was recused.

Local Government Services Committee (Dan Wilt)

- The committee received a presentation from Mistaya Smith, the Planning Division Intern who worked with the towns of Keene and Hague on community focused planning initiatives.

Park Ecology (Zoë Smith)

- The committee received a presentation from Jim Stickles and Jen Grauer regarding moose monitoring, illnesses, and movement within the Park.

10. Interim Reports

The Administration, Economic Affairs, Enforcement, Legal Affairs, Park Policy and Planning, and Communications, and Regulatory Programs Committees did not meet this month.

11. Member Comment

G. Delaney noted there are many regulatory agencies monitoring mining operations and Agency staff are not equipped to do that work, and it would be redundant for them to do so. He suggested staff visit a mining operation outside the Park to see how those operations are being monitored.

D. Wilt noted his appreciation for the moose presentation, and particularly Jim Stickles who helped his area with bear mitigation.

Z. Smith added that the road salt issue could potentially be connected to the moose deaths being caused by motor vehicle conditions as the moose may enter the roadway to eat the salt.

12. Old Business

None

13. New Business

None

14. Public Comment

- None presented.

[Link to video and audio recordings of the full Agency presentation to be added.]

Chairperson Ernst noted that the next meeting will be November 14, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned without objection at approximately 1:00 pm.

John Ernst, Chairperson