

TUG HILL COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MEETING

January 24, 2022

Via Zoom – <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83393368741> Meeting ID: 833 9336 8741

Chairman Bogdanowicz opened the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

Opened

Commission members included Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Boxberger, Scriber, Yerdon, Maciejko, and Mdms. Cheresnoski and Ritter. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, and Jennifer Harvill. Circuit riders Angie Kimball, Paul Baxter, and John Healt. Guests included Joshua Lumsden Fort Drum intern, Sandra March, C2AE; Norm Paradis, Worth councilmember; Joe Rowlands, NOCCOG associate circuit rider and Lee Willbanks, counsel.

Attendance

On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon members approved the agenda as presented.

Agenda Approved

On a motion made by Commissioner Maciejko and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon members approved the minutes of December 13, 2021.

Minutes Approved

Chairman's report followed.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Bogdanowicz welcomed everyone to the meeting. He would like to schedule an annual review for Mrs. Malinowski at the April board meeting. He asked for volunteers to be on the committee. Commissioners Scriber, Yerdon, and Maciejko agreed to be on the review committee. The committee will meet via zoom meetings to work on tailoring a template. Mrs. Malinowski will forward the annual review that was done four years ago to members.

Welcome

Executive Director's report followed.

Executive Director's Report

Mrs. Malinowski reported remote meetings have been extended by legislation and remain in effect until the pandemic is over. Communities are continuing to use the commission's Zoom account for virtual and hybrid meetings.

Administration

The 2022-23 Executive budget (handout via email) shows full time equivalents (FTEs) remain at 15. DOB added a \$50,000 increase for personal services this year due to cost-of-living increase and Mrs. Waterbury's retirement payout to accommodate those costs. It makes it look like a reduction of \$50,000 for next year, as it was a temporary increase. There are no concerns we are exactly where we were last year.

Barbara Rice is leaving her position at the executive chamber and will become executive director at Adirondack Park Agency (APA). Terry Martino is retiring as executive director at APA. A new person out of New York City will be replacing Ms. Rice. Mrs. Malinowski will reach out to introduce herself to our new contacts.

Mrs. Harvill's promotion paperwork is at DOB and awaiting signature. Paperwork for the two projects specialists is also working its way through the system in Albany. We are hoping for a February 2 start date. We had a limited group of applicants for the planner position. We did interviews and made an offer to one candidate from New Jersey; however, it was declined. We have decided to wait until April and advertise again.

Oswego County legislator Herb Yerdon has corresponded with the commission regarding the town of Richland having interest in joining the region. The **Outside Region Policy** (handout via email) was briefly reviewed. The primary theme is that the focus of the commission's work is the region. The boundary of the region has not changed since Forestport and Remsen were added decades ago. On occasion, we do get involved with projects and technical assistance outside the region. Mrs. Malinowski suggested the possibility of Richland joining Salmon River Council of Governments to receive commission services and has not heard back from Mr. Yerdon. A discussion took place. Commissioner Scriber had concerns with the commission having limited staffed and if a change was made the commission should be reimbursed and supported. Circuit riders and staff would have more work. Assemblyman Barclay and Senator Ritchie should advocate for this in our budget. Commissioner Yerdon shared that this has been a problem in past and agrees legislation needs changing. Chairman Bogdanowicz suggested looking back at the enabling legislation from 1972 or 73 and then in 1991 when he thinks the legislation expanded the area geographically. A change in legislation is a time-consuming process. Mrs. Malinowski will look for previous documentation and share with members.

Richland

The annual dinner for October 2022 will be held at Zero Dock Street in Carthage. Entertainment will be provided by the Cincinnati Creek band, which Joe Rowlands is a member of. The Community Recognition award will be presented.

Annual Dinner

The COG Chairs meeting will be held via Zoom on January 31.

COG Chairs Meeting

Headwaters annual report is in progress and due to be out in March.

Headwaters

Painting and carpeting of the remainder of the Watertown office will be done soon.

Office Updates

We continue to have conversations with bill sponsors, Senator Griffo and Assemblywoman Gunther, and we will be staying with the statewide bill A326/S3825. This is a priority for Assemblywoman Gunther to get additional assembly members on the bill and work with partners to get this bill moving forward. This may be more important this year, due to offer from Avangrid Renewables to make potential improvements on Flat Rock Road, which is currently an MMR and snowmobile trail. The town of Martinsburg is considering accepting the offer to pave the road. Mrs. Malinowski has been in contact with Martinsburg Supervisor Terry Thisse, and shared a map of the area on her screen with members.

MMR

Lewis County has put together a snowmobile action committee in support of the snowmobile trails and work on issues such as securing trails and safety. Mrs. Harvill attended their first meeting.

**Lewis County
Snowmobile Committee**

The former Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper property owned by Corrigan is process of being sold to Bluesource Sustainable Forests Company. The property is 30,000 acres. They are carbon focused based on their website information and there is also mention of the nature conservancy. Mrs. Malinowski will try to get more information.

EBFC

We continue to work with the GIS data from the field inventory ECC Technologies completed. We are receiving more final information for Oneida and Herkimer counties. The Adirondack Central School district has had issues with internet since remote learning since the pandemic began and they reached out to us. We met last week with Frontier regarding the issue, and they are willing to work on solutions once they get more information on the problem.

Broadband

The Local Government Conference will be held at Turning Stone April 19. We are starting to receive registrations and sponsors are signing up. Mrs. Malinowski introduced Fort Drum intern Joshua Lumsden.

LGC

CFA grants were announced, and awards published in Tug Hill Times. Our communities did well. A snowmobile trail groomer and several wastewater projects were funded.

CFA

The Recreation Guide has been very popular. We are currently out of copies and our four county partners are also out. We would like to do another print that would include 22 waterfalls to the guide. Thousand Island International Tourism Council (handout via email) was provided. Mrs. Malinowski asked for members to allocate \$10,000 toward the reprint.

Rec Guide

On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Chereshnoski members approved the amount of \$10,000 for reprinting of the Recreation Guide.

NorCOG/SRCG – Mr. Baxter reported that there are two new supervisors for NorCOG and SRCG. Both have prior government experience. The town of Parish has a new highway superintendent. People have expressed interest in the LGC.

COG Reports

NOCCOG – Mr. Healt reported four communities have new supervisors. Hearing positive feedback for LGC from communities. Mark Trnchik retired, leaving vacancy for director on the executive board. LGEC decided in November to dissolve. MVEDD is considering taking it over. The commission is working with NOCCOG on broadband issues for ADK Central School

CTHC – Mrs. Kimball reported the top priority is finding an associate circuit rider to replace Karleigh. Meeting coverage is needed.

RACOG– Mrs. Malinowski shared that RACOG is working to get LED lighting completed. Communities are taking advantage of utilizing the website. There are three new supervisors.

The financial report (handout via email) 2021-22 statement shows we are in good shape. The new laptops have been received and should work better with remote access.

Finance Report

Commissioner Bogdanowicz opened the floor for public comment.

Public Comment

Commissioner Ritter shared that there is Cannabis confusion with communities and opting out. A discussion took place with members. Mrs. Malinowski shared a Cannabis conversation will be offered online.

Commissioner Bogdanowicz noted that the recent local conversations about people hearing the state is trying to eliminate wood burning stove is not true. Mrs. Malinowski shared an article was in the Tug Hill Times.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon members adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Adjourn

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger

Secretary