Franconia Conservation Commission Meeting,

Date: 5/9/2017 8 am

Members present: Mary Grote, Kim Cowles, Ginny Jeffryes, Chris Nicodemus by phone

Guests: Ed Rolfe

Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund Profile Lake project - Ed Rolfe

Ed requested today’s meeting to update FCC on recent events regarding the proposed Profile Lake Project and request support for his alternate project.

Per Ed: There was a Select Board Meeting 5/1/17 with Tom Rose, NH DRED, about the Profile Lake Project. Mr Rose and state architect Mr Mansfield told Ed that Ed’s alternative proposal looked good, and there would be a delay in the approval process. About 25 people spoke against it at the meeting. Yesterday Mr Mansfield said they welcome public comment still, especially from Select Board and FCC. He also thinks a meeting with OMMLF might be good. One person from OMMLF whom Ed spoke with since is strongly in favor of the original proposal.

Ed’s walked with David Govatski twice on the western side for his trail engineering and forestry experience. Dave knows the historical context of the area, as well as specifics of trail building, and they know where the 1890s Profile House trail is on the west side of the lake. Ed has developed a Plan A/Plan B comparison map. Ed’s Plan B would be 650 feet ADA compliant pathways, and they would include a view point of Eagle Pass with a platform. That’s the development he would like to encourage State and OMMLF to adopt. Gorgeous view, along the old historic trail, and consistent with the “please don’t disturb the fishermen” sign that Profile House used to have. Fishing has long cultural history at Profile Lake, and remains the primary use.

Pemi Trail used to be called Profile Lake trail on 1899 maps. It used to be nearly like a sidewalk.

This would also be consistent with the White Mountain School of painting Edward Hill’s 1840s painting of Eagle Pass. Dave thinks some of the clearing out work could be done with a volunteer youth crew in one day. Possible AMC trail crew hired could then build parts of it. Could be brought to Universally Accessible Standard, 1600 feet of it with benches, etc. OMMLF mission is not trails, but they might embrace this from a historical context. Function should follow form.

He’d like to see an observation platform at the south outlet where Edward Hill sat to do his painting, perhaps a historical sign. Only 3 lakes in New England have lakeside trail that long with gorgeous view of escarpment. Proposal B will be the most beautiful trail in the western White Mountains.

On Friday Mr Mansfield and the head of OMMLF Mr Fowler are meeting at lake with Ed and David Govatski to review the idea on site. And on May 19 the OMLF board is meeting. OMMLF money will sunset by next year.

Ed Rolf would like our support.

Going to the western side would not affect the scenery or natural beauty of this 13 acre lake. No good documentation that we need ADA trail there. And the goal of putting tourists at the boat launch creates conflict with fisherman, also climbers. The eastern shore is noisy. And, creating 2 new observation decks that everyone will love on the western side is a boon to tourism etc. Decks would last at least 30 yrs. He’s taken some flack from friends of OMMLF for his position. There was a political component to this project in Concord. State Park’s first mission is to Protect and Preserve of the State Parks. And this is a National Natural Landmark – the wetlands permit got this wrong. Franconia Notch was set aside in 1971 as a National Natural Landmark. Profile Lake is the Centerpiece. Wetlands permit said not a natural landmark and not eligible, in error. Ed verified by speaking to them in Boston.

Discussion ensued that we agree, similar to last meeting, that we do not support the State/OMMLF proposed trail on the eastern side. We like Ed’s proposal for all his reasons above. Chris offered to go to Friday’s trail walk with Ed/DRED/OMMLF/Dave. Ginny moved that Chris will go to Friday’s meeting as the Conservation Commission representative. Mary seconded. Unanimous vote in favor.

Discussion of the letter which we voted last meeting to send to State re the project, w/ ccs to our State Reps, Gov, Exec Council. It should be short and simple, to say we do not support the current proposal being considered and hope the State will deny the proposal. Ginny will write it.

Meeting adjourned 9 a.m.