

GUNSTOCK AREA COMMISSION MEETING
January 19, 2022
Gunstock Mountain Resort, Gilford Public Library
APPROVED MINUTES

GAC: Gary Kiedaisch, Peter Ness, Rusty McLear, Jade Wood

Gunstock Personnel: Tom Day, Cathy White, Becky LaPense, Kristen Lodge, Peter Weber, Robin Rowe, Patrick McGonagle

Vice Chair Kiedaisch called the meeting to order at 6:03PM with the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Ness called a point of order stating that under the GAC bylaws, the Vice Chair may not unilaterally assume the role of Chair, which he seemed to do in a prior email correspondence. Commissioner Wood read from the bylaws which state, "A Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary shall be elected at the first regularly scheduled meeting following the swearing in of members duly appointed by the Belknap Delegation." Vice Chair Kiedaisch stated the bylaws give him authority to act as Chair in the absence of a Chair and that he has authority to run the meeting. Commissioner Wood asked to clarify that Commissioner McLear would continue to act as Secretary until the next election of officers. Vice Chair Kiedaisch agreed.

Minutes

The minutes of the November 17, 2021 Gunstock Area Commission public meeting were reviewed.

ACTION

Motion: Vice Chair Kiedaisch made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Second: Commissioner McLear.
Roll Call Vote: Wood - Yes
Ness - Abstained, did not review them prior to meeting
McLear - Yes
Kiedaisch - Yes

The minutes of the December 4, 2021 Gunstock Area Commission public meeting were reviewed.

ACTION

Motion: Vice Chair Kiedaisch made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Second: Commissioner McLear.
Roll Call Vote: Wood - Yes
Ness - Abstained, did not attend the meeting
McLear - Yes
Kiedaisch - Yes

Financial MD&A and Executive Summary

Cathy White, Chief Financial Officer, reported out on the December financial results for overall operations and by department. She did not review November's results because they were already distributed but would welcome questions on it if they came up. Commissioner Wood asked about uniform purchases and rebranding of the new logo. Vice Chair Kiedaisch asked Cathy for a brief history of Gunstock's financial payments to Belknap County and their source

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of funding. Tom Day, President & General Manager, spoke about the current season's performance and crowd management efforts. He explained their strategy for managing ticket sales noting that management has demonstrated they can generate more revenue even with limited ticket sales because guests are more comfortable and spend more time and money during their visit. Vice Chair Kiedaisch referenced recent news on Vail Resorts' operations as an example of the difference between good management and absentee management. He thanked the GMR team for their efforts and congratulated them on their results.

Old Business -

- a. *Legislation Update (HB 1078)* - Commissioner Wood reported that a public hearing is scheduled for January 31st in Concord. The bill would require the GAC to submit their annual budget proposal to the Belknap County Convention 90 days prior to start of their fiscal year and restricts expenditures not approved by the County Convention. She said the GAC recently passed a motion to oppose HB 1078 on a 3-2 vote, and that is the official position of the GAC but if you have questions about those votes to refer to the minutes of that meeting.

- b. *Master Plan Next Steps* - Vice Chair Kiedaisch asked that the GAC vote to approve the master plan as proposed so the plan can move ahead to the "gating" phase, which examines the cost, revenue/profitability, and financing options for each pod. This information will enable the GAC to prioritize each phase of the development. He briefly reviewed the master plan schematic presented in the December 4th public meeting. Tom commented that the current proposal is a long-term plan that assures the future sustainability and security of the resort and that ski areas that invest in development thrive, while those that don't, don't. Vice Chair Kiedaisch said he is committed to responsible development without commercialization that maintains the pristine setting of Gunstock's natural surroundings.

ACTION

Motion: Vice Chair Kiedaisch made a motion to approve the master plan proposal in its current form for the purpose of moving to the next phase of the plan, which is a gating process to analyze each phase and the return on investment.

Second: Commissioner McLear.

Discussion: Commissioner Wood said it's important to be thorough and if the motion is to move forward, she would like to have confirmation that the right hand of the GAC is working with the left hand for open communication. Vice Chair Kiedaisch said the gating process is necessary to help the GAC make the right decisions on the investments. Tom explained that he would be working with the SE Group and other engineers for accurate bids and cost estimates to be presented to the GAC for decisioning.

Roll Call Vote: Wood - Yes
Ness - No
McLear - Yes
Kiedaisch - Yes

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New Business

- a. *Opinion Letters* - Vice Chair Kiedaisch read aloud from recent op-eds published by Belknap County Commissioner Taylor and Steven J.P. Dionne. There was discussion about Brian Gallagher's resignation and ongoing public discourse about GAC and BCD relations. After discussion, Rep. Sylvia said he did not hear a motion to enter the letters into the record. Rep. Howard said the letters were just the opinions of two men who do not know what they are talking about and that if it wasn't for the diligence of the delegation, Gunstock would be in the same position it was 20 years ago.

ACTION

- Motion:** Vice Chair Kiedaisch made a motion to enter the opinion letters into the official record.
Second: Commissioner McLear.
Roll Call Vote: Wood - Yes
Ness - Yes
McLear - Yes
Kiedaisch - Yes

Vice Chair Kiedaisch invited Rep. Hough to speak directly about his proposal for reduced ticket pricing for Belknap County residents, as presented in his opinion letter. There was discussion about the affordability of skiing, jobs in the Lakes Region, and recent changes in the NH ski industry.

- b. *Rep. Hough Proposal* - Vice Chair Kiedaisch invited Rep. Hough to speak about his proposal that the GAC consider special \$35 ticket pricing for Belknap County residents to help make the sport affordable for them. Discussion ensued on current discounts and specials such as the Outreach program, seniors and youth pricing, and Belknap County Days "two for one" tickets. Vice Chair Kiedaisch said its difficult to keep the business going if you try to use 1980 retail pricing with 2022 costs but agreed to look into mid-week options with GMR management. Rep. Hough said the Belknap County residents should be part of the equation and it is important to a lot of people.
- c. *Notice of Removal Hearing* - Vice Chair Kiedaisch read aloud from the most recent Notice of Removal Hearing provided to him by the BCD, and prepared responses to the charges being made. Rep. Sylvia said he shared the grounds rules for the hearing with the GAC, noting that time would be allowed for a response to the charges. Vice Chair Kiedaisch said the 30 minutes being allowed is not enough time for due process and debate. Rep. Sylvia asked if Tom Quarles drafted the responses and Vice Chair Kiedaisch said they were not written by Tom Quarles, they were written by Commissioners and Gunstock Personnel who were present during the events being discussed.

ACTION

- Motion:** Vice Chair Kiedaisch made a motion to accept the responses read aloud as the GAC's official response to the delegation's charges for removal.
Second: Commissioner McLear.

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Discussion: Commissioner Ness asked if Attorney Quarles has provided written confirmation that he is not representing Vice Chair Kiedaisch. Kiedaisch said he is not representing him personally, that he has his own attorney for that, but he can request that letter from Attorney Quarles.

Roll Call Vote: Wood - No
Ness - No
McLear - Yes
Kiedaisch - Yes

Motion fails.

- d. *GAC Vacancy* - Rep. Sylvia reported that the hearing to select the new Gunstock Area Commissioner has been scheduled January 31st at 7PM. He made a correction to the notice published in the *Laconia Daily Sun* stating that applications must be received by, not postmarked by, 3PM on Friday, January 28th. Vice Chair Kiedaisch asked the delegation to consider his suggestions for more stringent candidate qualifications as he believes the Enabling Statute is weak in that regard. Rep. Sylvia said that would require an amendment to the Enabling Statute. Vice Chair Kiedaisch said he was aware of that and would revisit the topic during the hearing on January 31st.

Miscellaneous

- a) *2022 Tentative Meeting Dates* - The March meeting date was moved to March 23rd.

Public Comment - Vice Chair Kiedaisch opened the meeting for public comment.

Rep. Ploszaj asked to have minutes updated to reflect his comments made during the November 17th meeting. He noted he has still not received a copy of the letter that was emailed to the delegates.

Rep. Howard commented on the MOA document on the GAC website noting it was more propaganda than truth and that it should be removed since the MOA doesn't exist any longer. Vice Chair Kiedaisch agreed that the document is outdated and should be removed.

Al Rollins asked the GAC not to do any further work on the Weeks property portion of the Master Plan because of the conservation easement in place. He doesn't believe NH has ever broken a conservation easement so thinks it would be waste of time and resources to pursue it. Vice Chair Kiedaisch said he and Tom have met with the Conservation Commission and the easements allow for non-commercial, recreational use. The Conservation Commission is looking into whether the proposed development would be considered "commercial". He acknowledged that it is an issue that needs to be resolved before taking any action and asked Mr. Rollins for his contact information so he could follow up with him on his concerns.

Rep. Sylvia said he still hasn't seen any financials to go along with the maps of the Master Plan. Vice Chair Kiedaisch responded that the GAC has approved the conceptual layout, and the vote tonight allows them to go to the next phase of costing it out and putting real numbers to each pod. Tom noted that cost estimates were provided during the public presentation on December

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4th and the entire project would take 5-10 years to complete. Discussion ensued around continuity for planning as Commissioners and personnel changes happen.

Al Rollins said the last two years have been successful for Gunstock and asked Vice Chair Kiedaisch what the GAC has done to generate those results. Vice Chair Kiedaisch said more effective marketing and tighter management controls. Discussion ensued about the need for future expansion and crowd control.

Pam Morin said she has lived here her whole life and appreciates that some people can't afford to ski. She supports the idea of keeping Gunstock for the people as well as for the business. She wants to see more space for the public without locked gates that you can't get through unless you ask permission.

Rep. Bordes asked for the average cost per skier. Tom said they have that number, but it is not something they want to share in a public forum due to competition.

Vice Chair Kiedaisch closed the public comment portion of the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn.

Adjourn

ACTION

- Motion:** Commissioner McLear motion to adjourn the public meeting of the Gunstock Area Commission at 8:33PM.
Second: Vice Chair Kiedaisch.
Vote: All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rusty McLear, Secretary
Gunstock Area Commission