

GUNSTOCK AREA COMMISSION MEETING
July 26, 2022 at 10am
Gunstock Mountain Resort: Historic Lodge
APPROVED MINUTES

GAC: Peter Ness (Chairman), David Strang (Vice Chairman), Doug Lambert (Secretary), Jade Wood

Chairman Ness called the meeting to order at 10:06AM. Commissioner Wood led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ACTION

Motion: Chairman Ness made a motion to move into a non-public meeting according to RSA 91-A:3

Second: Vice Chairman Strang

Discussion: Commissioner Wood read a statement as follows: During my appointment hearing last September, I vowed that I would facilitate transparency and honor the mission of working toward a financially self-sustaining recreation area that we can proudly entrust to future generations. The Gunstock Area Commission is appointed by the Belknap County Delegation with the responsibility of managing Gunstock Mountain Resort as a financially independent self-sustaining organization. At the time that I was sworn in, I signed an ethics policy asserting that my office would be used for public good, that I would be independent, impartial and fair in my judgment and actions. The Preamble of said policy states that the citizens and guests of Gunstock Mountain Resort are entitled to have a fair, ethical and accountable commission, one worthy of the Public's full confidence for integrity. Additionally, Commissioners deliberations should be conducted openly in an atmosphere of respect and civility. The purpose of the commission is to operate, maintain, develop, improve and promote Gunstock. Commissioners shall work for the common good of the public. The commissioners shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges and verbal attacks upon the character or motives of the other commission members, staff or the public. Commissioner Lambert and I have been here every day since staff resigned and have dealt with emotions and the gravity of 600 people not working. I will not agree to go into non-public until this public is heard.

Chairman Ness thanked her for her comments and asked Secretary Lambert if he had comments. Secretary Lambert read the following statement: There are times in life that one is presented with very hard decisions that when made, seemingly have no good personal outcome on their face. The initial human response might be a desire to simply run away. When one has accepted responsibility, and gone to the level of swearing an oath, it adds a dimension that must be considered, and a path that must ultimately be taken. In the oath I signed on April 13 of this year, I solemnly swore and affirmed that I would faithfully and impartially perform the entire duties incumbent on me as a Gunstock Area Commissioner, to the best of my abilities, agreeable to the rules, regulations, and by-laws of the Commission, the Constitution, and the laws of the State of New Hampshire, SO HELP ME GOD. After spending the last five days here on site, and meeting with the exceptional staff who have been still working to hold the place together, and continuing to get a grasp on the many multiple parts required to all mesh together and make Gunstock Mountain work, I have come to the conclusion that to even begin to attempt to construct the necessary leadership team required to get this facility open for winter, is an impossible task. When considering the many loyal and dedicated employees, the countless customers and their children and grandchildren, and

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the area businesses that depend on this mountain, my responsibility to fulfill my oath becomes even more personal. I just cannot fail to consider any and all options to make sure that it continues as a viable and OPEN ski and recreation area. I have spoken several times with Tom Day, the former president and general manager, and he has agreed that he and his team will immediately return with the resignations of Commissioners Strang and Ness. While some might view this as a capitulation, I can only stand before you and disagree- it is a solution to the very dire circumstances placed before us today. There is no other viable way forward. So therefore, I am asking them to do just that.

Commissioner Wood presented Chairman Ness and Vice-Chairman Strang with resignation letters to sign.

Secretary Lambert continued his statement- a person might wish to not have to take the cup placed before him, but an honest and forthright one cannot simply make it pass. I have agonized over this decision, but I will place my head on my pillow tonight and sleep well, knowing I made the right choice. Thank you to all the employees I have met with the last few days, your kindness is special to me.

Vote: Secretary Lambert- no
Commissioner Wood- no
Vice-Chairman Strang- yes
Chairman Ness- yes

Motion fails.

Chairman Ness attempted to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Wood reminded the Chairman that the meeting can't adjourn without a motion. Chairman Ness asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wood responded "I am prepared to stay in open meeting until hell freezes over or the mountain opens".

Secretary Lambert respectfully requests that they make use of the podium for public comment at this time.

Chairman Ness reminded the commission that there was a motion on the floor to adjourn the meeting. Asked for a vote again.

Vote: Secretary Lambert- no
Commissioner Wood- no
Vice-Chairman Strang- yes
Chairman Ness- yes

Motion fails.

Chairman Ness asked to supplement a motion to move to public comment by limiting the total time to 30 minutes with each person limited to 2 minutes. Secretary Lambert agreed that 2 minutes per person is reasonable given the amount of people in attendance but would like to keep it organized and be able to hear from as many people as possible.

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ACTION

- Motion:** Secretary Lambert made a motion allow for public comment at 2 minutes per person for as long as people want to speak.
- Second:** Commissioner Wood.
- Discussion:** Vice-Chairman Strang stated that there are emergency measures that need to be addressed in a non-public session. Commissioner Wood told Vice-Chairman Strang that he had 6 days to come to the mountain and this is his first day on site and they are going to listen to public comment and that she votes in favor of the motion on the floor. Mickey Valliere called out and thanked Secretary Lambert and Commissioner Wood and his supervisor. Vice-Chairman Strang asked Commissioners Wood and Lambert when they would like to meet to discuss the emergency concerns. Secretary Lambert replied that there is no greater emergency. Commissioner Wood announced that they will stay as long as it takes and asked the public to “Please stand with me in calling for the immediate resignation of Commissioners Peter Ness and David Stang for violations of confidence in competent leadership and the aforementioned breaches of ethical conduct.” Chairman Ness asked to amend the motion to 60 minutes total time for public comment. Secretary Lambert replied that his motion stands to allow as much time no matter how long it takes.

- Vote:** Secretary Lambert- yes
Commissioner Wood- yes
Vice-Chairman Strang- no
Chairman Ness- no

Motion fails.

Chairman Ness stated that it is the appearance of the Chair that the meeting is not moving forward and as the Chair he is motioning to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Wood reminded Chairman Ness that a second is needed for discussion and “hell will freeze over before this meeting closes”.

Terese Grinnell from the public stood and asked the GAC if the audit has been published. Commissioner Wood reminded Ms. Grinnell that they are not in public comment.

Vice-Chairman Strang stated that there is a need to buy special supplies, including paint, for Soulfest preparations and Citizen’s Bank will not allow the purchase online. If Dan Carbonneau, Snowmaking and Grooming Manager, purchases the supplies will he be reimbursed.

ACTION

- Motion:** Vice-Chairman Strang made a motion that Dan Carbonneau be able to get the supplies and be reimbursed.

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Second: Chairman Ness

Discussion: Secretary Lambert stated that the paint is important for safety regulations.

Vote: All in favor. Motion passes.

ACTION

Motion: Secretary Lambert made a motion to begin public input for 2 minutes per person for as long as it takes for them to speak.

Second: Commissioner Wood.

Vote: Vice-Chairman Strang- no unless there is a time limit.

Secretary Lambert-yes

Commissioner Wood- yes

Chairman Ness- there is already no approved motion and he encourages Lambert to put a time limit. Secretary Lambert re-stated his motion. Chairman Ness said he would vote in favor if it ends at 11:45am.

Chairman Ness says no and motion fails and moves to adjourn the meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding adding a time limit to public comment. Vice-Chairman Strang stated that he knows there are people in the room who think if the former senior management team is rehired that everything will be ok and based on what they know from the audit and ongoing legal matters they can't go back to that situation. Discussion ensued.

At 10:44am Vice-Chairman Strang and Chairman Ness exit the meeting.

Public comment

Rick Zach (Gilford)- stated that he is a former Gunstock employee as an IT Support Technician. There are key people at this mountain with institutional knowledge and they are not replaceable including the current Network Systems Administrator who could leave tomorrow and double her salary somewhere else and there goes all that knowledge. If the snowmaking manager leaves the mountain is screwed without his knowledge. In regard to the audit, Gunstock has always gone through an audit and it happens by an outside CPA firm.

Gary Kiedaisch (Meredith)- Thank you Commissioners Wood and Lambert for the work you have done this past week. You have opened your eyes and hearts to the people. Having been a president and vice-president and CEO over the years I can tell you that Commissioner Strang is not qualified to serve on a board of commissioners and that level of arrogance does not belong here. If we don't go to work tomorrow morning with all the work that needs to be done, we will not open for the winter and we can't open without the former management team in place. Thank you for coming out today in support.

Emily Rowe (Gilford)- I am the daughter of Robin Rowe and Patrick McGonagle and this place has been my home and I am not giving up on this mountain and they are grateful you are all here today.

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Denise Sleeper (Laconia)- I am a seasonal employee with the Outreach department, which normally starts coordinating now for the winter. Thank you, Commissioners Wood and Lambert, for sitting here and learning every day and thank you for calling for resignations of the obstructionists. All these meetings they talk and don't want to hear the public so thank you for hearing us today.

Susan Gray (Ctr. Barnstead) with Reese Burke- Our families became close because of this mountain, and I want to thank the leadership team for creating this gem. My daughter has had the opportunity to come here and experience the recreation area and I don't have the time or money to be able to bring my daughter somewhere else. Thank you, Commissioners Wood and Lambert, for standing up. Anyone who won't listen to reason and honor the oath they took and appreciate the people working to keep this mountain open should not be a member of this commission.

Dee Vlatas (Gilford)- I have worked in the ticket office for 6 years and this place has been family to me. My boss is the best boss and he just handed in his resignation and in turn I gave mine, and if this doesn't get resolved then more will follow suit. The management team is the best that I have ever worked for and if they come back, I will come back too.

Elise Ronan (Belmont)- I grew up skiing here and my 6-year-old son is skiing here and it will break my heart if this mountain closes. I hope that Commissioners Ness and Strang resign and if not, then the representatives need to get involved. If this mountain closes, then we are done. The whole area will be affected. I wish they could put their egos aside for the best of the mountain. Full disclosure my father is Doug Lambert.

Rep. Mike Bordes (Laconia)- I want to apologize to Commissioners Wood and Lambert and will sign any document I need to for removal of Commissioners Ness and Strang. Thank you to the public for being vocal and standing up for Gunstock and Belknap County.

Bob McLean (Gilford)- I have been an instructor at Gunstock for 10 years. This is a special place for all and to think it may not be possible to ski here anymore is impossible. I am running for state representative, and I came to this meeting to emphasize that we can run Gunstock. I love the signs and get out there and keep the pressure up.

Ned Crystal (Alton)- I am a ski instructor and zip guide at Gunstock. We can all go on how fantastic this mountain is and how well run it is but after returning to the Lakes Region and reading the minutes of the last few years the rubber stamping that has been going on needs to change. Make our voices hear at the primary because we can't stand for this level of incompetence.

Becky Herrmann (Loudon)- I have a 133-day countdown to skiing on my phone. My family has a lot of history here and Commissioner Ness and Strang need to remove themselves to allow the mountain to open.

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Joe Wernig (Gilford)- It's impressive to see the people and employee's here and this is just the start. We appreciate the support from Commissioners Lambert and Wood.

Steve Vanni (Gilford)- I am an employee here (I think) and Soulfest starts in 10 days and the staff are dedicated to making that happen, but I encourage you not to let it happen even if there is a breach of contract. If it goes as planned, then it can be said it was a success and that we don't need the former senior management team back. It is a huge liability. If the lift fails and we have to a lift evacuation, we are missing a big part of the team that helps with that. We aren't done yet and there is more ahead of us.

Denise Conroy (Alton)- I came to NH from Atlanta 3 years ago and I love it here, it is a reasonable community. I attended my first GAC meeting last Wednesday and I was appalled at the damage being done. Commissioners Strang and Ness drove the team out and are causing liability for the mountain. Go out and vote on 9/13 for reasonable people.

Ali Kenyon (Gilford)- I am a senior at GHS and my family has been skiing here since the 80's. This is where I hang out with friends because we don't have time or money to go somewhere else. Losing the mountain would cause the town to lose money. Thank you.

Meg Jenkins (Gilford)- I am not a skier but this has been my backyard since 1985. I applaud Commissioner Lambert even though we have gone back and forth before I appreciate the civil discourse today. There is an absolute gem out there and has run without big issues since 1959, even through COVID and lack of snow. From top to bottom this community has a treasure. We can't sell to Vail and the top management down to the weed pullers need to be hired back without punitive financial issues. We need to save Gunstock.

Welden Bosworth (Gilford)- I commend you both for your fortitude. By doing these interim approvals you are losing approval with the delegation and if it all stopped it would give them leverage. Also, what is the strategy if the delegation agrees to remove the other two commissioners? Secretary Lambert replied that it would be his hope that they could then rehire Tom Day and the rest of the staff.

Rick Hassler (Gilford)- I am a local businessman. Are the numbers bad? No. Are the employees not happy? No. Are their customer complaints? No. So what's the problem? They are doing a phenomenal job and when you don't know what the problem is you lose your team, and not for another job. So the person who says "I run Gunstock" is the problem.

Gretchen Casey (Gilmanton)- Read the statement from the remaining management and employees that was presented to the GAC on Monday July 25th and posted online.

Rep. Richard Littlefield (Laconia)- As an emotional person the outpouring of pure emotion is something I was ready for. As a delegation member I signed Rep. Harry Bean's pledge to never vote or advocate for privatizing the mountain and I will keep

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that promise. I am not a skier, but I was born in Laconia. I have fished in the pond here and I will do everything I can so that no one loses their job and bring the former senior management team back.

Rep. Tim Horrigan (Durham)- It is a total disaster that the facility is closed, even for a short time. I am not a skier, but I understand winter prep has to start soon and this is not just affecting Belknap County but the whole state. This mountain is the closest to the Boston area and I support the effort to reopen. There is the need to get the staff back on board because something can be destroyed a lot quicker than it was built.

Unknown member of the public- I am full favor of removing Commissioners Strang and Ness.

Alex Deluca (Gilford)- I am an employee and resident. I know I have been feisty, and I am sorry, and I thank you. The team is fantastic, people are friendly, conditions are smooth, and we need to keep a good thing going. If we remove the two commissioners, then we will be in good shape.

Cindy Creteau-Miller (Meredith)- Thank you to Commissioners Lambert and Wood, I was skeptical, but I am not anymore. You are taking the consideration of the community. There is a real gem here and I have skied around the country, and you can't get a better management team and better snow and grooming conditions.

Louise Jagusch (Gilford)- The word gem and jewel has been used a lot and we do have it and we had it in the team. My loyalty is to the cause. This similar situation happened with Market Basket a few years ago and the people rose and believed.

Dan Carbonneau (Belmont)- Thank you for hearing the message we have delivered and for your support.

Susan Gray (Ctr. Barnstead)- For public record there was no support in this room for the two commissioners who left and 100% support for removal.

Robert Lemire (Gilford)- For 58 years this has been my neighborhood. Thank you both for standing up for what is right and get out and vote, so this never takes place again. I am the Deacon for the Vineyard Church (recited from 2 Chronicles 7:14).

Denise Sleeper (Laconia)- A record number of seasonal employees are due back soon and we are not coming back if things aren't fixed and the team is not back in place.

Jen Karnan (Meredith)- I am the Marketing Manager here at Gunstock. Thank you to my fellow staff that have hung in for the past week and fighting everyday and listening to each other. It's easy to develop misconceptions about people, I had it with you (Commissioners Lambert and Wood) and with the GAC as whole. I want to thank you for coming in and learning about us and we in turn have learned about you. It's difficult to be at the helm of marketing during a time like this and I hope to see the team come

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back, both the senior and middle management who have risked everything for a cause. Get out and vote and think for yourselves.

Susan Gray (Ctr. Barnstead)- I don't know about the political message that can be put out by the mountain but is it allowed to use money to put out who to vote for or show support for certain candidates? Secretary Lambert replied that it is public money and the same delegation that appointed us (Wood and Lambert) appointed the others and I am a different person than I was when I joined the commission.

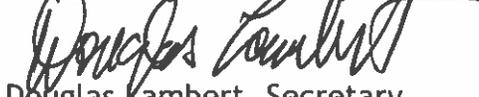
Steve Howe (Sanbornville)- I have been the race department manager here for 17 years. I have 33 years total experience including with the Gunstock Ski Club, of which I am still affiliated. From the Ski Club, they are in support of management and the employees. The livelihood of the GSC depends on Gunstock's success and they will be issuing their own statement of support. Thank you.

Catherine Stowe - Gunstock Nordic Association. Senior management has helped us train and build a program. I train 6 days a week here year-round, and I don't know what I would do without Gunstock and I worry about the younger skiers who are coming up who have the same dreams as I do. I hope everyone can grow up and do what they are supposed to do.

Commissioner Wood announced that they will move to recess if no one else would like to speak. A member from the public asked about the appointment for a 5th commissioner. Secretary Lambert replied that we must operate according to the 1959 Statue and that he would assume there would be a meeting called for the Belknap County Delegation for replacement of Gary Kiedaisch and they (Lambert and Wood) would hope that there are delegation members who are dedicated to reopening the mountain as soon as possible.

Meeting went to recess.

Respectfully Submitted,



Douglas Lambert, Secretary
Gunstock Area Commission