

City of Auburn JLUS
for
Mount Apatite Recreation Area &
Maine Army National Guard Training Facility

Policy Committee & Consultant Team Meeting
AUBURN TRAINING FACILITY – MOUNT APATITE ROAD

Minutes

December 5, 2012

2-4 p.m.

Introductions:

Kat Beaudoin, IPS Team Project Manager, opened the meeting with introductions. IPS Project Team members included: Beth Della Valle, Jim Cassida of Normandeau Associates and Patty Castonguay. Policy Committee members present included: John Blais and Lane Wiggin of MEARNG, Eric Cousens (City Staff) and Mary LaFontaine (Ward 3 Council Member), Jeff Benson representing the Auburn Suburban Little League, Dana Little representing Androscoggin Land Trust and the Taylor Pond Association, Kevin Norcross representing the Andy Valley Sno Gypsies, Carol Segal representing Mount Apatite Farm, Frank Piffath, a resident on the Mine Road, Mike Peters from a local business (Mac's Grill) and Phil Savignano representing the Auburn Recreation Advisory Committee. Mayor Jonathan Labonte was also present.

Mayor LaBonte welcomed everyone to the Policy Committee and discussed the City of Auburn and noted that while it is only 66 square miles, it contains a mix of business, urban, rural, Federal land and public lands and each with their own issues. He stated that the City just completed its 10 year plan and that this study was part of the plan. He thanked everyone for their willingness to participate in this Joint Land Use Study.

Eric Cousens gave a brief overview of how the study came about. Park * has been in city ownership since the 70's; improved with trails and snowmobile club house in late 70s. Ball fields were built by the Guard in the 80s. Citizens provided grass roots energy to create ball fields. Snow gypsies lease the club house from City.

John Blais provided a brief overview of the Auburn training facility. He noted that of the 170 +/- acres in federal ownership, all but 27 acres can be used. Those 27 acres are currently the ball fields. They have safety concerns regarding civilians interacting with military personnel during trainings; civilians park near road, walk right through the training area to access trails. The military has had a presence at this site since 1926.

A draft contact list was circulated; members were asked to confirm their contact information or add it if it was not included on the draft.

Study Overview:

Kat reviewed a power point presentation with handouts indicating the purpose of the study, the boundaries** of the study area, tasks to be undertaken by the IPS Team, roles and responsibilities and make-up of the two Committees (Technical and Policy) as well as the timeline for conducting the study.

Kat asked if anyone was aware of any organizations that should also be included in the Policy Committee meetings and asked everyone to let her know if they think of any.

Carol Segal showed a copy of a study that was done on Mount Apatite. Eric Cousens said that he will see if he can find a version of it electronically so it can be shared. If not, we will get Carol's copy and get copies for everyone. She also brought some Apatite minerals and other crystals that have come from Mount Apatite to show the Committee.

Role of Policy Committee

The **Policy Committee's** role is to represent stakeholder (Organizations/ Neighborhood/Business Group) interests. Collect and provide relevant information and feedback. Help and refine the schedule and public engagement work plan, help resolve conflict work toward positive outcomes and solutions, press relations, participation in public events, review and comment on draft materials and to recommend the adoption of the plan.

Role of Technical Committee

The **Technical Committee's** role is to provide information and guidance to the study team as it goes through the planning process. They will meet on an as needed basis, no more often than monthly.

Documentation provided to Committee Members

A map of the Study Area and an overall timeline for the JLUS were distributed to all members.

A Board and Committee Appointment Application for the City of Auburn was distributed to all members.

A copy of the letter that will be sent out to stakeholders to inform them of the meetings was distributed to all members.

Communication & Press Protocol

Policy Committee members were informed that if they were contacted by the press to feel free to contact Kat of the IPS team, or Eric at City Hall. Kat will also provide talking points to committee members if they need some background when talking with the press.

Dates for future meetings

Meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of each month tentatively at the Auburn City Hall. A complete list of dates and locations will be provided to members at the next meeting. [NOTE: **The January 9th Meeting will be held at the Auburn Public Library on 45 Spring Street.**]

Presentations to be given at the January 9th meeting:

John Blais –MEARNG

Brian Norcross of the Sno Gypsies

John Blais overview of the MEARNG facility and showed them the access way through it for users to arrive at park. Some members walked to quarries and reviewed the area.

Comments to be noted:

- Frank Piffath asked if the park was considered to be a City Park or an area park. Eric stated that he had no reason to believe it would change from a City Park.

- Dana Little asked if the study would include the Sunderland Drive neighborhood as a lot of them walk from the neighborhood to use the facility. Response was that while they will be impacted, and will be invited to participate in public events for the study, we don't need to change the boundaries of the study. They will receive notices of events so they will be given an opportunity to provide input.
- Frank Piffath lives on the Mine Road. He noted that all the maps provided on-line currently show the Mine Road as the main access road for the park. Access is a major consideration. He said that a lot of schools have sent busloads of kids down that road only to find out that access is closed. He asked if it would be possible to get the on-line maps changed.
- Kevin Norcross stated that he thought the City had considered making an entrance off the Small Road.
- The general consensus was that there is not enough/adequate signage to the area telling people where to go to access Mount Apatite. When this study is done, new maps and signage should be developed to show the access points to the park and designated parking areas and trails.
- Someone noted that years ago they had seen a planning document that even showed a highway running through the Mount Apatite Park.
- It was noted that over the years some hikers have gotten disoriented on Mt. Apatite and come out in a different area than where they entered.
- There are liability/safety issues with ball fields being located on Federal property. The idea of a land swap was brought up; this is not a new idea but it's not clear whether it was seriously investigated.