



**VERMONT BOARD OF LIBRARIES
MINUTES OF MEETING**

February 3, 2015

10:00 a.m. – noon

Midstate Library Service Center
Berlin, VT

**SPECIAL MEETING: Public Hearing
Petition for “Prosperity Peak” in the Town of Groton**

Members present: Bruce Post, Chair; Josh Fitzhugh; Anne Lezak; Lucy Comstock-Gay; Martha Reid, State Librarian; and via phone: Deborah Granquist, Vice Chair; Jim Gish; and Regine Ewins. **Also present:** Brittney Wilson, Department of Libraries; Jeremy Hansen, citizen (Berlin); Ben Eastwood, citizen (Montpelier); Gwendolyn Hallsmith, citizen and spokesperson for petition (Montpelier); David Spencer, representing the Groton Select Board (Groton); Nancy Spencer, citizen (Groton), Jim Hogue, citizen (Calais); Barry Kade, citizen (Montgomery); and Scott Hess, citizen (East Montpelier).

Call to Order: Post called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.

Public Hearing: Post reviewed the [state statute](#) which pertains to the Board of Libraries' authority for geographic naming. Post then opened the public hearing for citizen testimony regarding the geographic naming petition that was submitted to the Board of Libraries on September 17, 2014 by Vermonters for a New Economy to name a mountain located in the County of Caledonia, the Town of Groton and in the Groton State Forest, at coordinates 44° 12.967' N / 72° 18.833' W, as “Prosperity Peak.” Post opened the floor first to the spokesperson for the petition, Gwendolyn Hallsmith, Executive Director of Vermonters for A New Economy. Hallsmith spoke to the importance and beauty of Vermont’s mountains and expressed her belief that the name “Prosperity Peak” would honor the traditions and history of wellbeing that comes to Vermont citizens and communities as a result of hard work in a rural landscape. She also mentioned how the name “Prosperity Peak” would provide a sense of hope to Vermonters. Hallsmith provided some history about landowners in this region of the state, and about the creation of the Seyon Lodge State Park, located near the unnamed mountain. Hallsmith said she consulted with a Native American friend who lives in the

area who had no knowledge of any name historically or locally used for the mountain. When asked by Fitzhugh if she had come across any local names for the mountain, Hallsmith said no, and indicated several other mountains in the area which are named.

Lezak and Granquist asked Hallsmith about the use of the word “prosperity” as it related to the naming criteria included in the state statute and expressed concerns that the name would not meet statutory guidelines.

Lezak asked Hallsmith if they approached the Town of Groton before submitting a petition. Hallsmith said that she did not, choosing to follow the Board’s Geographic Naming petition procedures. Martha Reid mentioned that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names strongly recommends that states get input from local communities in which a feature to be named is located, and asked the Board to keep that in mind.

Other citizen testimony in favor of the petition:

- Ben Eastwood said the name would honor early Vermonters who came to Vermont looking for wellbeing and prosperity.
- Scott Hess said that the concept of “Prosperity” indicates hope and is representative of the spirit of Vermont.
- Barry Kade
- Jim Hogue

Other testimony:

- Dave Spencer, representing the Groton Selectboard, asked the Board to delay any naming decision until the Town has had time to discuss the issue and provide a recommendation.

Testimony in opposition to the Petition:

- Reid read into the record two written citizen testimonies that she received in opposition to naming the mountain “Prosperity Peak:” from Paul Donovan (Montpelier, and an employee of the Department of Libraries), and June Bascom (Montpelier).

Post closed the Public Hearing and invited comments, questions and discussion by Board members:

Granquist stressed the statutory criteria and the need for the Board to adhere to the geographic naming guidelines. Post read from the policies of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names as evidence of the leanings of geographic naming at the federal level.

Fitzhugh stressed the need for the Department of Libraries to provide ample time for warning geographic naming hearings and the need to have clear procedures for notifying all interested parties. The Board agreed.

Reid reported that Louis Bushey, from the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation had been notified and sent an email stating that they had no objection to the name "Prosperity Peak."

Lezak expressed concerns about naming a feature in response to a group philosophy and any precedent this would set. Granquist questioned whether choosing a name that represents a "concept" would be wrong, given the guidelines included in the Vermont statute. Post added he objects to any geographic naming that reflects an agenda of a particular group. Comstock-Gay noted that no petition signers were from Groton and also expressed concerns about naming in response to a group's agenda or viewpoint.

The Board discussed what is meant by the statute language "interested parties" and the role of local constituents. Fitzhugh said preference should be given to those who live in the local community.

Action Item:

Fitzhugh made a motion "for the Board to recess in order to get input on the proposed name of "Prosperity Peak" from the Town of Groton and to reconvene this hearing at the next Board meeting, scheduled for April 14." Granquist seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m

Next meeting:

Tuesday, April 14, 10:00 a.m. – noon, Midstate Library Service Center, Berlin.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martha Reid".

Martha Reid,
State Librarian and Secretary, Board of Libraries