

MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Thursday, January 5, 2017
7:00 p.m.
Middlesex Town Offices
Middlesex, VT

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Larry Becker, Seth Coffey, Heather Katz, George Longenecker, Lee Rosberg, Dave Shepard

Commissioners Absent: Dick Alderman and Charlie Merriman

Guests: Collin O'Neal, Manager – Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area

The meeting agenda was rearranged to take up the Shady Rill Park first since Collin O'Neal was in attendance for that topic.

Project Reports:

a. Shady Rill Park

The Town of Middlesex is considering a one year trial for operating the Shady Rill Park under an agreement with the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (DFPR). To that end, the Select Board has drafted a letter to the DFPR requesting a cost estimate for the annual maintenance of the park. This topic will be discussed at the next Select Board meeting. Collin said he believes there is an old document from the Army Corps of Engineers that may describe management requirements for property associated with the Wrightsville Reservoir Dam. If this document exists it may indicate if the state has any financial responsibilities for the maintenance of the property.

The Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area (WBRA) is interested in managing the Shady Rill Park in the long-term as part of the overall WBRA. The Shady Rill Park is not currently included in the facilities that the WBRA operates. Collin feels that the WBRA could manage this facility and implement improvements over time, potentially contracting the mowing and basic maintenance as the state has been doing.

There is a question of funding for whatever entity might be responsible for operating the park as neither the WBRA nor the Town currently have extra funds to take this on. There was discussion of the possibility of the state gradually reducing its financial support over a number of years giving another entity some time to develop funding for the park. While the MCC supports the need for a riparian restoration plan for the property it may be too much to take on for this year while the details of operating the park and the longevity of any arrangement haven't been worked out yet.

Heather noted it might be helpful to have a meeting with all of the interested parties.

Administrative Operations:

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 10th and December 1st Meetings

There was a motion to approve the November 10th minutes by George with a second from Seth. Minutes were approved. For the December 1st minutes there was a clarification that Lee was not unsure if there should be a work day to clean up the cabin on the Town Forest but rather whether it should be during the winter. With that clarification added to the minutes and the correction of one typo there was a motion to approve from Seth with a second from Larry. The minutes were approved.

b. Treasurer Report

Heather hasn't received the financial reports as yet but will continue to try to get updated numbers. Lee has been reimbursed for his expenses.

c. Review Correspondence

No correspondence was received since the last meeting.

Projects (continued):

b. Middlesex Town Forest

• Trail

Seth envisions the next steps as fine tuning the flag line for the trail and cutting out the corridor. The intent will be to complete those steps during the 2017 field season and be in a position to apply for a grant for trail crew time to handle the heavier construction needs during the 2018 field season. It was noted that the cabin could be made available for trail crew housing during the construction period and that could be applied toward the town's match for a grant. The MCC should also track our time spent on this project for potential in-kind service.

• Cabin Clean-up

There is need for a work day to clean up the cabin; early spring would be a good time. Lee has access to a truck to take trash from the site to the landfill. It will likely be helpful to line up an ATV to move material for disposal from the cabin site to Lee's truck. Lee noted that the Girl Scouts have expressed interest in using the cabin for a camp-out.

• Survey

There was no update on the status of mapping of the Town Forest boundary. Larry reported that a new map, produced with mapping technology known as LIDAR, will be available soon and will likely include the area of the Town Forest. This will offer very accurate topography and would be useful as a basemap of the Town Forest on which to depict various features including trails.

• Town Forest Management Plan

No update was available.

c. Hunger Mountain Headwaters Project

There was no update on this project as the proponents are currently awaiting the ranking of this project on the national level for Forest Legacy funding.

d. Town Zoning Regulations

George said the Select Board is having a hearing as part of their meeting on January 10th. It's likely that any proposed changes to uses in the Mixed Use District will be tabled until after the Town Plan is updated. He wasn't sure about the status of proposed changes for uses in the Industrial District. The numerous "house keeping" changes to clarify and organize the regulations may go forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, Secretary

DRAFT