

MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Thursday, February 2, 2017
7:00 p.m.
Middlesex Town Offices
Middlesex, VT

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Larry Becker, Seth Coffey, Heather Katz, George Longenecker, Charlie Merriman, Dave Shepard

Commissioners Absent: Dick Alderman and Lee Rosberg

Guest: Greg Western, Executive Director – Cross Vermont Trail Association

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair George Longenecker.

1. Guest Introduction and Discussion

Greg Western with the Cross Vermont Trail Association (CVTA) attended this meeting of the Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC) to describe the mission of the CVTA and seek support for a major trail project they are embarked upon. By way of background, Greg stated that CVTA was started in the early 1990's by several Plainfield residents who were interested in the trail potential of the abandoned Montpelier and Wells River Railroad bed. The goal of the CVTA is to make connections across 90 miles of Vermont between the Winooski River Valley and the Wells River Valley. The trail is currently a mix of off-road trail and designated on-road segments with the eventual goal of an entirely off-road route. In support of this project CVTA is also a land trust and has acquired several parcels of land. CVTA is sometimes involved with other trail projects in proximity to the route of the CVT and can be of assistance to towns and other groups working on trail projects.

The major project they are currently in the midst of is to construct a bridge across the Winooski River to allow 2.75 miles of trail to be opened between Montpelier and East Montpelier including a connection to existing trails at U-32 High School. This project would move the trail from a section where it is on the shoulder of Route 2, currently considered to be the most problematic on-road segment of the entire route, onto a dedicated off-road trail. This project has been underway for years and much of the necessary funding has been raised from a combination of sources. The final push is to raise the local match for federal funding to carry out the construction. Montpelier has offered to give \$1 per capita if the U-32 towns will do the same. CVTA missed the deadline to petition to have this request put on the Town Meeting Warning for Middlesex in 2017 but will be seeking to complete the petition process for 2018. The route of the CVTA does pass through Middlesex where it utilizes Three Mile Bridge Road passing by the town owned parcel by the bridge.

In order to help publicize this effort the MCC agreed to include information about the bridge project with the MCC display at Town Meeting.

2. Administrative Operations:

a. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the January 5th Meeting

There was a motion by Heather to approve the January 5th minutes with a second from Seth. The minutes were approved without discussion.

b. Treasurer Report

Heather reported that the MCC operating budget has \$368.83 remaining. She has learned that there are some funds, totaling over \$2000, whose origin and purpose are uncertain but they may be conservation related. She will continue to research this matter.

c. Review Correspondence

George received an email from Holly Krenier from the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District about a potential delay in applying for grant money for the potential riparian restoration project at the Shady Rill Park discussed during the November MCC meeting. No one present was sure who Holly is so further investigation is warranted.

d. MCC Display for Town Meeting

Members viewed the current material presented on the display and discussed other topics that might be rotated onto the display in place of some of the current items. The Middlesex Town Forest should remain with some updated information and possibly some new photos. The Wrightsville Trail and/or Salamander Migration might be switched out for new topics such as the Winooski River Clean-up Day and the Three Mile Bridge parcel.

3. Project Reports

a. Middlesex Town Forest

- Trail Standards

Dave noted that the current draft trail standards are a start but may need to cover some additional aspects and any comments or suggestions are welcome.

- Cabin Clean-up

Discussion involved an appropriate date for the clean-up day and that access to some sort of vehicle, probably an ATV, would be helpful for hauling out trash. A date in mid to late May would likely be appropriate, the actual date will be determined later.

- Survey Maps

There was no update on any survey maps. Larry has talked with Dan Currier, who does GIS work for the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), and learned that towns are entitled to 12 hours of free GIS time from the CVRPC and after that it is \$40-\$60/hour depending upon the staff member performing the work. The CVRPC will have access to new topography produced from LIDAR mapping technology that will provide great detail for mapping features in the Town Forest.

- Town Forest Management Plan

There was no update.

b. Shady Rill Park

The Middlesex Select Board has appropriated \$5000 for maintenance of the park for the coming season. On a related matter, it was noted that the lack of any sanitary facilities at the Wrightsville Boat Launch is a potential health concern. Seth noted that the U.S. Forest Service has rented a port-a-let for around \$300 for the season at one of the recreational areas they oversee.

c. Hunger Mountain Headwaters Project

No additional information was available on this project, the MCC assumes the proponents are awaiting the ranking of this project on the national level for Forest Legacy funding.

d. Town Zoning Regulations

No one at the meeting was certain of the status of the amendments to the zoning regulations. A check of the Select Board minutes should clear up where these stand.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, Secretary