

MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Thursday, December 7, 2017
7:00 p.m.
Middlesex, VT

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Dick Alderman, Sorsha Anderson, George Longenecker, Lee Rosberg, Dave Shepard

Town Forest Stewardship Committee: Steve Juiffre

Guests: Mitch Osiecki - Middlesex Recreation Director/Zoning Administrator, Kate Wanner -Trust for Public Lands, Ross Lieblappen

1. Hunger Mountain Headwaters Update

Kate Wanner with the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) provided an update on the Hunger Mountain Headwaters project. On December 22, 2017, TPL will be acquiring more than 1800 acres in Middlesex, Worcester and Stowe (763 acres in Middlesex) on the slopes of Mt. Hunger, White Rock Mountain and the summit of Burnt Mountain with the aim to transfer the land to the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to add to the C. C. Putnam State Forest. TPL is looking for funding to support this purchase from the federal Forest Legacy Program; funding in 2018 appears unlikely so TPL has also applied for 2019 funds and should know the result of the application by March 2018. TPL will be seeking funds from the Towns of Middlesex, Stowe and Worcester and private donors to help offset the closure costs of the land purchase and the costs of holding the land until funding is secured to reimburse TPL for the 2 million dollar purchase cost of the land. TPL estimates their costs, not counting the actual purchase price, to be around \$650,000 (including a stewardship endowment to the State of at least \$75,000) of which approximately \$197,000 has been raised so far.

The financial support TPL is seeking could be anytime over approximately the next one and a half years. The Town Conservation Fund balance is currently around \$9000 and could potentially be tapped for Middlesex support. The Middlesex Conservation Commission MCC will review the Conservation Fund Guidance Document with this in mind. The MCC may be able to help with local fundraising as well.

2. Administrative Operations:

a. Minutes of the November 2nd MCC Meeting

Lee moved to approve the minutes of the November 2nd meeting with correction of the spelling of Charlie Merriman's name. The motion to approve with correction was seconded by Sorsha and the minutes were approved.

b. Treasurer's Report

Financial reports have been received from the Town and showed the following fund balances:

- MCC Operating Budget = \$500
- Conservation Fund = \$9028.09
- MCC Special Fund = \$864.36

Lee has submitted the annual dues for membership of the MCC with the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions but this charge has not shown up yet in the operating budget balance.

c. Correspondence

Bill Rossmassler has contacted Lee about following up on several Middlesex Town Forest issues including the boundary survey and the management plan.

d. Commissioner Terms

Lee provided the current Commissioner terms:

- Dick and Larry – 2019
- George, Sorsha, Dave and Heather – 2020
- Lee - 2018

Lee said that Ross Lieblappen is interested in joining the MCC and Ross briefly described his interest in the Middlesex Town Forest and some of the skills he could bring to the MCC including GIS and mapping.

e. Town Report

Dave made a motion to approve the MCC report of annual activities that Lee drafted for inclusion in the annual Middlesex Town Report. George seconded the motion and the motion passed.

3. Project Reports

a. Middlesex Town Forest (MTF)

- MTF Management Plan

Bill Rossmassler has been in contact with Lee to indicate he plans to pick this project back up and move forward.

- MTF Trail:

Lee noted that the State Trails Grant for 2018 required a pre-application for which the deadline has passed. It may still be possible to apply for a grant from the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps.

- Educational Walk:

Dave checked with John Austin about potential dates for a tracking/wildlife habitat walk and John tentatively suggested January 20th or 27th. The MCC expressed a slight preference for January 27th.

b. Shady Rill Park

No update on the date for the stakeholder meeting for the Ecosystem Restoration Grant.

c. Planning Commission Survey

A copy of a draft of the Planning Commission's survey they plan to distribute to inform the update of the Town Plan was reviewed. Lee attended the Planning Commission meeting on November 29th and provided comments at that meeting. A summary of suggestions raised at this meeting follows:

- Add a question about the Town having input on the siting of renewable energy projects.
- Add a part B to question #7 to ask what recreational resources residents would like on the MTF.
- Add agriculture, forestry and resource extraction to the list of activities in question #2.
- For questions #9 and #10, ask the respondent to fill in "why" whether the response is "yes" or "no" rather than only if the answer is "no".

d. Three Mile Bride Road Parcel Management Plan

Lee noted that the Select Board plans to have this property brush hogged next year as part of the roadside mowing contract.

4. Lee moved to adjourn the meeting with a second from Sorsha. The meeting adjourned at 8:43.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, Secretary

DRAFT