

MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Thursday, February 1, 2018
7:00 p.m.
Middlesex, VT

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Larry Becker, Heather Katz, Ross Lieblappen, George Longenecker, Lee Rosberg, Dave Shepard

Guests: Mitch Osiecki - Middlesex Recreation Director/Zoning Administrator, Ira Shadis, Greg Western – Cross Vermont Trail Association

1. Minutes of January 4, 2018 and December 7, 2017 Meetings

George moved to approve the minutes of the Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC) January 4th meeting, Dave seconded the motion. There was discussion regarding a few typographical corrections. The minutes were approved with corrections.

Lee moved to approve the minutes of the December 7th meeting with a second by George. The minutes were approved.

2. Hubbard Park to C.C. Putnam State Forest Trail Proposal

Ira Shadis from Montpelier presented the concept of a hiking trail that would connect Montpelier's Hubbard Park with the Hunger Mountain Trail in the C.C. Putnam State Forest. He walked a potential route and believes there is a feasible trail crossing moderate terrain. He has spoken to Hubbard Park officials and Greg Western with the Cross Vermont Trail Association (CVTA) who were all supportive of the concept. Almost the entire trail would be in Middlesex. Ira's next step is to begin contacting landowners along the potential route to assess their interest in having a trail cross their property. His priority would be to check with owners of larger parcels first. Greg emphasized the importance of personal contact with landowners. Greg said CVTA could help with landowner agreements as this is something they have experience with. A question was raised about potential liability for landowners and both Ira and Greg noted that Vermont has very good protection from liability for landowners who allow public access to their property. Another question raised was whether the proposed trail route might conflict with hunting. Ira responded that he was not aware of trails conflicting with hunting. Trail groups often notify trail users about hunting season and recommend wearing blaze orange if on the trail during hunting season.

3. Treasurer's Report

Heather stated there aren't updated financial statements for this meeting. She noted that one reimbursement request has been processed.

4. Road Salt Discussion

Lee reported on a discussion at a recent Select Board meeting concerning applying road salt to Shady Rill Road. Road salt has been applied occasionally to Shady Rill Road since about 2009.

It is only used when conditions are such that it will be effective. No salt is stored at the Town Garage; it is obtained as needed in an amount that is used up with no need for storage. Lee explained to the Select Board some of the potential concerns with road salt, including the potential to adversely impact wells and surface water. Road salt came up as a topic mainly because of a move to include it in the town budget as a specific item which hasn't been done previously.

5. Display for Town Meeting

Lee showed the current MCC display board and noted some updates are needed. Discussion followed of potential items to include for the 2018 Town Meeting. The trail project on the Middlesex Town Forest (MTF) was suggested as were any pertinent photos that Commissioners might have. Having Commissioners present at the display, particularly in the hour before Town Meeting begins, would be desirable.

6. Middlesex Town Forest

a. MTF Management Plan – no update.

b. Trail Project – Lee reported that staff from the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps can be hired for a reasonable fee (approximately \$50/hr) to assess a trail route for necessary structures that would likely require the work of a trail crew. This assessment could be used in the preparation of a future grant application for trail crew assistance. Money from the MCC operating budget could be used for this service. The MCC could also check with Seth Coffey, who has been instrumental in laying out the trail route, about his interest and availability to perform this assessment. Mitch mentioned that, as Recreation Director, he has several hours of donated time from a trail design and construction professional to be used on as yet undetermined trail projects. Lee suggested a work trip in mid-April to early May to finish cutting the flagged trail route.

b. Cabin – The former Ott cabin on the MTF is in better shape after this past years cleanup of the structure and site but it could still use some additional cleaning such as removing the rodent damaged insulation.

c. Maps – Larry presented the most recent versions of maps of the MTF produced by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission that utilized LiDAR mapping data. There was agreement to request a few revisions to one of the maps that could be included on the MCC display for Town Meeting.

d. Educational Walks – Lee reported on the recent successful wildlife tracking and habitat walk led by John Austin and attended by 10 individuals. Ideas were floated for additional walks including: wild edibles, vernal pools, wildflowers and geology. Ross suggested a good goal would be a themed walk each season. George will be leading a Green Mountain Club snowshoe hike on the MTF on February 25th.

7. Shady Rill Park Ecosystem Restoration Grant Project

No update on this project.

8. Martin's Brook Ecosystem Restoration Grant

The Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District asked for support from the Town for a grant application to address stormwater issues impacting Martin's Brook along Shady Rill Road in the vicinity of Rumney School. The MCC and the Select Board have provided letters of support for the grant application.

9. Hunger Mountain Headwaters Project

No update for this meeting.

10. Three Mile Bridge Road Parcel Management Plan

No update for this meeting.

11. Green-Up Day

The annual Green-Up Day poster and essay contest is underway and there has been good participation from Rumney School students. This may lead to encouraging participation on actual Green-Up Day as well.

Meeting adjournment: George moved and Heather provided a second to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, Secretary