

MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Thursday, February 7, 2019
7:00 p.m.
Middlesex Town Office
Middlesex, VT

Minutes

Commissioners Present: George Longenecker, Lee Rosberg, Larry Becker, Ross Lieblappen
Guests: Mitch Osiecki – Middlesex Recreation Director/Planning Commission
Pam DeAndrea – Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

1. Stream Reclassification Discussion (led by Pam DeAndrea)

Pam Andrea spoke on behalf of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) about what is occurring in regards to water reclassification across the state. In 2012, the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) upgraded the Water Quality Standards across the state, which were then approved in 2014. The ANR Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), specifically the Watershed Management Division, is now revising the classification structure for Vermont's surface waters to improve the state's ability to protect, maintain, enhance, and restore surface waters. Previously surface waters could be classified as A1 (highest quality), A2 (public drinking supply), or B. Recognizing that certain Class B waters exhibit conditions that are in the higher range of the Class B scale, the DEC has created a new intermediate class between B and A1, designated B1. The previous Class B rating is renamed Class B2. Further, DEC has recognized that different uses of particular water may classify a water differently, and it is impractical to have one designation for all water uses. Thus, the new classification system will allow designated uses to be independently classified based on their existing conditions. Finally, DEC has proposed an antidegradation rule such that no waters can be continually reduced in quality from their current condition.

As the water quality planner for the Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan, Pam has funding (that runs out in August) to gather interest from the community about reclassifying potential waters that could be upgraded. Here in Middlesex, Martins' Brook and Herrick Brook have potential to be reclassified as B1 for fishing. If we are interested, Pam can help us with the petition form to the state. Pam explained the state may end up packaging several towns together and there would be public meetings with the DEC. However, DEC cannot reclassify our waters without municipal support. Pam also mentioned that this potential reclassification of Martins' Brook and Herrick Brook could help the town planning if we wanted to have data in support of implementing stream buffers.

Lee asked about the impact on adjacent landowners and if the state would have guidance packets for municipalities and landowners to guide management. Larry asked about who would be paying for management and Lee asked about liability. George asked about if there was suggested language for the town plan. Mitch added that the town plan will indeed have a section of interest to the Middlesex Conservation Commission. Pam said she would talk with others at CVRPC and DEC and answer all questions later. We should let her know if this is something that Middlesex might be interested in.

2. Administrative Operations

a. Meeting Minutes from January 10th

Review of January 10th minutes were tabled to our next meeting as we did not have a quorum.

b. Treasurer's Report

Heather emailed Lee an update of the fund balances:

- Conservation Fund = \$4,031.73
- MCC operating budget = \$430.00
- MCC Special Projects Fund = \$864.83

Lee noted \$70 was spent from the operating budget on the gift certificates for this year's Outstanding Conservationists award winners. Lee also noted that the Trust for Public Land (TPL) has indeed cashed our check. Kate from TPL told Lee back in November that they still need to raise about \$40,000 to finish their fundraising campaign.

c. Correspondence

Lee coordinated Pam Andrea's visit to the meeting. Lee also has been in contact with Gianna Petito from the Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District in regards to the Shady Rill and Rumney School Gulley projects (see below)

3. Project Reports

a. Emerald Ash Borer

Lee suggested that we table any further work until at least March when the weather is warmer.

b. Middlesex Town Forest (MTF)

Lee reported that 7 people attended the snowshoe hike that he led on the Chases Mountain Trail on January 26th. The group made it to the summit and enjoyed the views. It was particularly helpful to have Liz Scharf from the Selectboard join as Lee was able to show her the cabin. Mitch asked if What's Next Middlesex has inquired about the cabin. Lee responded that they have not and Mitch will follow up with them. Mitch added that the trails committee from What's Next Middlesex is looking for some projects that they can do and thought that perhaps there is something on the the town forest.

c. Shady Rill Park

Lee has been in conversation with Gianna Petito from the Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District (WNRCD). She mentioned that there are basically two options. We either take a quicker track option that has a deadline of mid February or we complete a 100% design this summer. The quicker track option would involve getting a clean water block grant that supports design and implementation. It requires a 20% match on the \$85,000 project and thus we would need to find \$17,000 of funds. It is unlikely that the roads crew would be able to contribute much. Thus, it makes more sense to pursue the second option and take more time to secure the funds. We could apply for another ecosystem restoration grant for 2020. Lee added that we might be able to get credit for some of the funds that we provide with labor. George mentioned that the town could use some of the discretionary funds. Gianna will attend the next Selectboard meeting on February 26, which Lee plans to attend as well.

d. Rumney Gully

Lee reported on the project launch meeting with WNRCD and Stone Environmental, and all interested parties to define the scope of the project. It could potentially impact 4 adjacent private owners, school property, town garages, and the recreational fields/bandstand. Stone Environmental will do a design once the snow melts and will complete at least two designs. Getting funds is challenging as there are lots of landslides across the region but no money to fix them. Thus, it is imperative to show a serious threat, which for us exists as streams are cutting back into the field and towards the septic. Mitch was interested from the perspective of draining the recreational fields. Lee mentioned that the project is aimed at keeping water on the field and increasing percolation. Lee mentioned that pictures from last year show that the mouth of the gully has moved back about 10 feet.

e. Three Mile Bridge Park

There has been no further news from Greg Western.

5. New/Other Business

Larry inquired about Walt Kelly Park. Mitch mentioned that it currently is access at your own risk to get to the river.

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Ross Lieblappen