

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

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Larry Becker, Heather Katz, Ross Lieblappen, George Longenecker, Dell McDonough, Lee Rosberg, Dave Shepard
Guests: Mitch Osiecki – Middlesex Recreation Director/Planning Commission and Dawn McConnell

1. Administrative Operations

a. Previous Meeting Minutes

Lee made a motion to approve the minutes of the Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC) January 10, 2019 meeting with a second from George. The minutes were approved.

Lee made a motion to approve the minutes of the MCC February 7, 2019 meeting with a second from Heather. The minutes were approved with the correction of two minor typos.

b. Treasurer's Report

Heather reported there were no updates to the fund balances or operating budget since the figures presented at the February meeting that were as follows:

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

Lee reported that the Conservation Fund request of \$5000 was approved by the voters at Town Meeting.

c. Correspondence

Bill Dorrigan has indicated interest in serving on the MCC. At present there are no vacancies but the terms of both Larry Becker and Dick Alderman expire this year. Larry is interested in continuing to serve; the MCC is uncertain whether Dick wishes to continue. If Dick does not wish to continue as an MCC member, an option would be for him to serve as MCC liaison with the Planning Commission.

2. Project Reports

a. Emerald Ash Borer

A date for a training session in use of the app and procedure that can be used to map the locations of ash trees will be held at Lee's house on March 30th from 10:00-12:00.

b. Middlesex Town Forest (MTF)

A work day was scheduled for April 27th to remove metal from the cabin site so that it can be recycled on Green Up Day. A second work day will be needed for more thorough cleaning of the inside of the cabin, likely in late May.

Lee brought up a small grant program (\$250-\$600) offered through the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC). After some discussion, cabin clean-up or trail signage and information kiosk were named as possibilities. The consensus was the trail signs and kiosk would be a better fit and Lee will proceed with the application. The MCC will need to ensure our membership in AVCC is in good standing by June 30th.

c. Rumney Gully

Gianna Petito with the Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District (WNRCD) the February 26th Select Board meeting to discuss the 30% design for the gully that has opened up across from Rumney School. Work on the gully would likely occur in the 2020-2021 time frame. Another stakeholder meeting will be held after Stone Environmental has completed the design work funded by the current grant.

d. Shady Rill Park

At the Select Board meeting referenced above, Ms. Petito also discussed the Shady Rill Park project that has been funded by an Ecosystem Restoration Grant. A further grant to fund the construction phase would require a town match. The town highway department isn't really an option for in-kind services because they have a large backlog of highway projects to work through. Ms. Petito has submitted a clean water block grant application; it is uncertain how the town match might be provided but some kind of in-kind service could still be an option.

e. Reclassification of Martins' Brook and Herrick Brook

At the February 26th Select Board meeting, Lee made a presentation concerning the potential reclassification of Martins' Brook and Herrick Brook by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) from B2 to a higher B1 classification for fishing. In order to have these streams reclassified, the town needs to petition the DEC for this change. The Select Board was supportive of the reclassification. The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission can assist the town in preparing the petition.

3. New/Other Business

a. Composting and Recycling Workshops

The Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD) has offered to present composting and recycling workshops for up to eight towns. The workshops will last approximately two hours and can take place on either Wednesday evening or Saturday morning. Commissioners expressed interest in both workshops; George will contact CVSWMD to convey our interest.

b. Vernal Pool Monitoring Project

The Vermont Center for Ecosystem Studies (VCES) is looking to enlist citizen scientists in a project to monitor vernal pools used for breeding by amphibian species. They conducted trainings in various locations on how to conduct this monitoring. The MCC has an interest in assisting in this project but no one attended any of the trainings. Dave will contact VCES to inquire whether the MCC could still participate.

c. Energy Committee

Establishing a town energy committee is a potential outcome of the climate change initiative that was passed at Town Meeting. It could exist as a subcommittee of the MCC. Middlesex did have an energy committee in the past. There is a question as to whether the establishment of an energy committee is something the Select Board wants to follow up on in response to the Town Meeting vote.

Mitch mentioned that an Enhanced Energy Plan (EEP) is an optional element of a Town Plan and can give a town more clout in the siting of commercial energy production facilities. Preparing such a plan could be a task for an energy committee. The Planning Commission is interested in potentially including an EEP in the Town Plan. This would need to be accomplished through a future amendment due to the pressing need to adopt a Town Plan to replace the current expired plan.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, MCC Secretary