

MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Thursday, October 14, 2021
Meeting Conducted Via Zoom

Minutes

Commissioners Present: George Longenecker, Matt Schley, Ross Lieblappen, and Jon Udis
Guests: Michael Levine

1. Administrative Operations

a. Minutes of September 2, 2021 Meeting

George moved approval of the minutes of the September 2, 2021 meeting of the Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC) with a second from Jon. All voted in favor and the minutes were approved.

b. Treasurer's Report

No quarterly financial report this month. The MCC annual operating budget was discussed and George moved to request the same \$500 budget as last year. Ross seconded. All voted in favor. George volunteered to bring the request to the Select Board. Although it does not need to be requested at this time, the Conservation Fund appropriation via special article at town meeting was discussed. Ross moved that we return to asking for \$5,000 as we historically have (except for last year) to accommodate the variety of project asks there have been in recent years. George seconded and all voted in favor. Michael Levine asked if there could be maintenance money in the budget for priority trails identified by the Trails Group. Ross answered that the MCC could consider such requests and there likely would be some funds available.

c. Correspondence

Adrienne Magida submitted a letter of interest in joining the MCC. She is a member of the Trails Group, and has a long history of being active in town, including serving on the school board. Ross moved to support her nomination as a commissioner on the MCC and was seconded by George. All voted in favor. Matt will forward the nomination to the Select Board. Jon reported that Mary Nealon is not interested in serving on the MCC at this time.

Matt volunteered to post future MCC meeting agendas 7 days in advance on Front Porch Forum.

2. Project Reports (point person shown in parentheses)

a. Middlesex Trails Group Update (Jon, George and Dave)

George reported on a recent walk of Davy road, which runs from the drivable portion (branching from East Hill Road) and connecting to Lower Sunny Brook Road. George reported that it was in good condition relative to many of the Class 4 roads previously walked, and is a popular hunting spot. Ross clarified that this road is actually a Legal Trail (LT 3), and not a Class 4 road. Michael added that the purpose of this project is to get a feel for the Class 4 roads (and legal trails) that are good for walking.

b. Middlesex Town Forest (Dave and Ross)

i. Trail maintenance

George reported that he and Dave did sidehill benching work on the Chases Mountain Trail on September 18th. They stopped at a couple of spots, making it about 2/3 of the way to the top. Michael Levine expressed gratitude for their work.

ii. Forest management plan

Ross reported on a site visit of the Middlesex Town Forest on September 21 with Robert Nelson, the new Washington County Forester. Ross and Robert walked about 1 mile up the Chases Mountain Trail before heading southeast, and then circling back to the old road leading to the cabins. This covered a good portion of Stand 3 and a small part of Stand 5 in the Middlesex Town Forest Management Plan. Robert mainly wanted to get a general sense for the property and the goals of the MCC in updating the timber management plan, but shared that he is currently overloaded with other work. He likely will not be able to complete a full survey until spring 2022. He did share his initial observations that there was indeed timber worth harvesting, with the primary challenge being access to the stands. Ross will follow with Robert this spring.

c. Shady Rill Park and Wrightsville (Matt and George)

Matt reported that the project at Shady Rill Park is complete except for tree planting. The pathway is in, stairs are in, and seeding is done. Remy Crettol with Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCD) is planning a tree planting for October 19. Matt believes this will be mostly willows along the bank.

George reported that he raised the concern of sanitation at both Shady Rill Park and Wrightsville boat launch with the Select Board at the October 5 meeting.

3. New/Other Business

No new/other business.

Jon moved to adjourn the meeting with a second from George, and the meeting adjourning at 7:57 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Ross Lieblappen, MCC Treasurer