

MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Thursday, November 10, 2016
7:00 p.m.
Middlesex Town Offices
Middlesex, VT

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Dick Alderman, Larry Becker, Seth Coffey, George Longenecker, Lee Rosberg, Dave Shepard

Commissioners Absent: Heather Katz and Charlie Merriman

Town Forest Stewardship Subcommittee: Steve Juiffre

Guests: Mike Fraysier – ANR Lands Administrator, Vermont Department of Forests Parks & Recreation (FPR); Diana Frederick – State Lands Stewardship Forester, FPR and Karen Bates – Watershed Coordinator, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

Project Reports

a. Shady Rill Park

As the guests for this meeting were present to discuss the Shady Rill Park the order of the agenda was shuffled to put this item first. Shady Rill Park is located on land owned by the DEC and is a part of the Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area. Oversight of this park by the DEC has mainly consisted of managing and funding a contract for basic maintenance of the facility including mowing and annual pumping of the vault toilet. The DEC wishes to discontinue the annual maintenance contract and met earlier in the year with the Middlesex Select Board to discuss the potential for the Town of Middlesex to operate the park. The Town expressed interest in managing the park initially on a trial basis, and various options exist for how this might be accomplished including a lease or potential fee ownership by the Town in the future. The State is interested in a balance between recreational use and restoration of the riparian area and protection of the stream corridor. Lee noted there are a number of eroded streambank sections and potentially moving the main picnic area further from the stream.

Karen said that that a DEC staff member has visited the park and prepared an assessment report of the stream and the stream corridor. A key issue is how to accommodate recreational use while also allowing the stream to move within its corridor. The report differentiated two reaches of the stream within the park and made a number of recommendations including the following:

- Excavation of portions of a berm that has been built up along the stream to allow the stream to access its floodplain
- Restoration of the riparian buffer
- Movement of picnic sites away from the immediate stream bank
- Definition of specific stream access points
- Discontinuance of the southern section of the park road

Financial support for the project could come from an ecosystem restoration grant program funded through the DEC. The town could enlist an organization such as the Winooski Natural

Resources Conservation District or Friends of the Winooski River to oversee the project. The project would be divided into two grant applications. The first would be for the design of the project and the second for implementation. Either the town or a group the town was working with could apply. Any match the town could provide in either money or in-kind service would likely help make a stronger grant application.

The current annual cost for the maintenance contract is \$10,000. The likely arrangement for next year would be a license agreement for the town to operate the park. The Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC) will need to discuss the maintenance contract with the Select Board.

At the conclusion of the Shady Rill Park discussion the meeting returned to the original order of the agenda.

Administrative Operations

a. Approve minutes of October 6th meeting

George noted one grammatical correction. With this correction George moved to accept the minutes with a second from Seth. The minutes were approved.

b. Treasurer's Report

Current balances were reported as follows:

- General fund 2017 = \$455.30
- MCC Fund = \$864.06
- Conservation Fund = \$4026.51
- Town Forest Fund = \$40.32

Additional expenses not yet deducted from the general fund are annual membership in the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC) and registration fee for the AVCC Conservation Summit attended by Lee.

c. Correspondence

No correspondence has been received.

Project Reports (continued)

b. Middlesex Town Forest (MTF)

- Trail Standards: No change since the last meeting, work will be ongoing and comments are welcome at any time.
- Trail Scouting Trip: A trip to the MTF will take place on Friday, November 15th with the goal of viewing the latest changes to the flagline laid out by Seth and to assess the summit of Chase Mountain as the terminus of the trail.
- Boundary Survey: Bill Rossmassler has contacted Mike Patterson to check on the status of the map. No map has been produced yet.
- MTF Management Plan Update: Bill Rossmassler is planning on completing a draft by the end of the year; any comments should be directed to Bill.

c. Hunger Mountain Headwaters Project

The project to conserve forest lands adjacent to Putnam State Forest lands near Mt. Hunger has expanded to include several parcels in Stowe. An informational meeting will be held in Worcester on November 28th.

d. Proposed Zoning Regulations

The Select Board will discuss the latest version of the proposed zoning regulations at their next meeting and may decide to approve the regulations without holding a town vote.

e. Train Station

Someone has picked up the lease on the train station so the immediate threat to the survival of the structure is at least delayed. The lessee may be interested in purchasing the building.

f. Three Mile Bridge Road Parcel

Dave reported that at a recent Select Board meeting the Board expressed concern that the parcel was becoming overgrown with weedy growth. Dave inquired whether the town's contract for roadside mowing could include making a few passes through this narrow parcel to keep the growth under control and the Select Board was interested in this possibility.

g. AVCC Conservation Summit

Lee attended this annual meeting and noted there was an interesting keynote address on how geomorphology has shaped the development of Vermont. He also learned that Bradford has a cabin located in their town forest and had a chance to talk with members of their conservation commission about management issues with their cabin and their town forest in general. The forest has grown incrementally over time, logging has been carried out and there is a developed trail system. There was also a talk about bees and how to attract them to your yard.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, Secretary