

MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Thursday, December 3, 2020
Meeting Conducted Remotely via Zoom

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Larry Becker, Heather Katz, Ross Lieblappen, George Longenecker, Dell McDonough, Lee Rosberg, Dave Shepard and Jon Udis
Guests: Michael Hill, Dave Lawrence, Michael Levine, Sandy Levine, Rita Ricketson

1. Administrative Operations

a. Minutes of November 12, 2020 Meeting

Michael Hill noted a couple of corrections. His last name is “Hill”; it was recorded as “Hall”. The offer on the Manosh parcels on South Bear Swamp Road made by the neighborhood group in October 2020 was \$500,000 for the entire 396 acres or \$301,000 for the 64 acre parcel. The offer for the entire parcel included a commitment to public access for at least 200 acres of the property. George moved to approve the minutes of the November 12th meeting of the Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC), with the corrections; a second was provided by Jon and the minutes were approved.

b. Treasurer’s Report

There were no updated financial numbers to report. The annual budget request of \$500 was approved by the Select Board. The Select Board inquired about funding for the Conservation Fund. George, who was in attendance at the meeting, told them the MCC would decide on the request of funding at the December MCC meeting.

c. Correspondence

2. Project Reports (point person shown in parentheses)

a. Manosh Property

There has not as yet been any direct contact between the MCC and Howard Manosh; such contact should go through the realtor. Michael Hill feels an agreement could be worked out with Fountains Land to conserve 200 acres for public access. Sandy said the subdivision application for the property will be taken up by the Planning Commission at their December 16th meeting. The application, as it stands, may be deemed incomplete. Michael Hill said the 77 acre parcel may be under contract and the 64 acre parcel has been sold subject to the subdivision being approved. He mentioned the potential significance of the portion of former road that divides two of the parcels.

Lee has contacted the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) about the property who told him, given their priorities and limited resources, the forest would have to be exceptional for them to be able to assist in conserving it. He said the MCC should reach out as well to the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and a land owner he is aware of in Waterbury. Lee asked if there was consensus among the MCC to pursue these options and support was expressed. Dave will contact TPL and Lee will check with the Waterbury landowner. Jon will reach out to the Vermont Association of Snow

Travelers (who have a section of trail on the property).

b. Middlesex Trails Group update (Dave, George, and/or Jon)

Jon said the next meeting will be on December 14th and the group will be focusing for the time being on existing public rights of way. Group member Mitch Osiecki is looking into possible funding sources. Ross showed a map of Middlesex with locations of all class 4 roads and legal trails.

c. Middlesex Town Forest (Dave and Ross)

Dave stated that side hill construction on the Chases Mountain Trail will need to wait until next spring. Lee reported the bootleg trail from Waterbury that he had brushed out where it connected to the Chases Mountain Trail near the summit has reappeared and is now closer to the north view point. Dell visited the MTF on November 11th and observed that some additional signage at the parking area could be helpful. Previously, there had been a map posted at the Fish & Wildlife Department (FWD) kiosk that showed the location of both the Wildlife Management Area and the MTF; perhaps a similar map could be prepared and posted again FWD is amenable. Trail signs have been completed and are ready for installation. The box for the trail register is installed and will just need register sheets and a clip board to hold them. Dell will follow up with this.

There was a report of damage from a fallen tree to the cabin further in from the road that the Steed family has retained the use of.

d. Shady Rill Park Riparian Restoration Project (Heather)

The contract for the restoration work has been amended and awarded to the same company that originally won the contract. Work can't commence until after July 1st.

3. Other business

Funding for the Middlesex Conservation Fund (MCF) was discussed. Heather noted that recently there have been several projects that might have sought support from the MCF. George made a motion to request the Select Board warn an article to provide \$2500 for the MCF with Jon providing a second. In further discussion Heather stated that given the need for the fund has not decreased, she would like to retain the ability to seek the usual \$5000 in future years. The funding request for \$2500 was approved. Lee will draft a funding request to the Select Board with the explanation that the MCC is seeking reduced funding for 2021 in response to the economic challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. He will provide this for review by the MCC.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, MCC Secretary