

MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Thursday, March 4, 2021
Meeting Conducted Remotely via Zoom

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Larry Becker, Ross Lieblappen, George Longenecker, Dell McDonough, Lee Rosberg, Dave Shepard and Jon Udis
Guests: Michael Hill and Nancy Wood

1. Administrative Operations

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m.

a. Minutes of February 4, 2021 Meeting

Ross made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2021 meeting of the Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC) with a second from Jon. The minutes were approved.

b. Treasurer's Report

Lee has received financial numbers from the Treasurer. The numbers for the Conservation Fund don't reflect the recent received private donations of \$1520. The MCC's request for a \$2500 appropriation from the Town was approved at Town Meeting. Lee will post a thank you on Front Porch Forum.

c. Commissioner Transitions

Sorsha Anderson has informed Lee that she will be unable to continue as a member of the MCC due to work commitments.

Lee asked if there was interest in anyone filling the role of MCC Treasurer on an interim basis until the election of officers in June. Ross volunteered to serve. Lee made a motion to appoint Ross as interim Treasurer until election of officers in June; a second was provided by George. The motion was approved.

There was discussion of recruitment of new commissioners to fill the two current vacancies on the MCC. Suggestions included checking with members of the Middlesex Trails Group, Sarah Birgé and a new property owner on East Hill Road.

d. Correspondence

Larry contacted Russ Bennett to indicate the MCC could provide a letter of support for the grant application the Town will submit for trail work on the Camp Meade property. It turned out the MCC found out about this grant application too late to provide the letter.

2. Project Reports (point person shown in parentheses)

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

A new resident in town has expressed interest in joining the Group. Jon said the next meeting will focus on Group members' experiences on Class 4 road and legal trails in Middlesex. Other topics will be criteria for assessing the recreational potential of these roads and trails and potential sources of funding.

b. Manosh Property Update

Lee began a discussion to define the MCC's role in the Manosh property transactions moving forward. It was noted that the MCC's role is to allow the parties involved to negotiate their outstanding offers outside of the MCC. Any MCC discussions or emails involving the MCC are public information. To this end, a town email address for the MCC will be set up.

The MCC views the property as having significant natural resource value. Larry said the MCC can make our collective knowledge available to property owners. Ross offered the MCC can work with adjoining landowners with similar interests to bring them together. Michael Hill presented a proposal from a non-profit group to potentially purchase a portion of the Densmore parcel. Nancy Wood indicated that she was not prepared to discuss the non-profit's proposal.

c. Middlesex Town Forest (Dave and Ross)

- Trail Maintenance: Dave said it might be helpful to perform spring trail maintenance as soon as practical. There was discussion over closing the trail during mud season and what specific dates would be appropriate. Due to the relatively low elevation of the Chases Mountain Trail relative to higher elevation trails and the typical closure dates of April 15th to Memorial Day weekend for those trails it was agreed the closure dates would be April 1st to May 15th. A sign indicating the closure status and dates will be posted on a stake at the beginning of the trail and it can be posted on Front Porch Forum. Dave also said the Green Mountain Club Montpelier Section had asked if he could provide a short article for their spring newsletter about the Chases Mountain Trail. This will provide another opportunity to provide notice of the trail closure dates.

- Parking: No updates on parking.

- Forest Management Plan: Dave reported that a forest management plan prepared by a consulting forester for a family property that is about a third as large as the MTF cost about \$750. Checking with the Chittenden County Forester and a couple of consulting foresters are other possible means of obtaining an estimated cost for a forest management plan for the MTF.

d. Green –Up Day Planning

Dell has looked into what the town coordinator duties entail. She will check with Sorsha about any guidance she may have from her experience in the past several years. Competitions were suggested as part of the event. Dave mentioned checking in on the cost of tire disposal which came up as an after the fact surprise last year. Coordination issues include lining up the town dump truck to be available and the metal recycling dumpster from Bolduc's.

3. New/Other Business

Lee said he wants to remain on the Conservation Commission but upcoming work commitments will mean he will need to step down as Chair after the June meeting.

Lee made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ross and the meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, MCC Secretary