

Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC)

Meeting Minutes

January 4, 2022

Opening

The regular meeting of the Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC) was called to order at 7:05 pm on January 4, 2022 by Annette Lynch. It was held by Zoom only.

Present

Annette Lynch, Fra DeVine, Philippe Crane, David Martin, Philip Leonard, Fred Garrow, Jim Corven, Peter Smith.

Approval of Agenda

The meeting agenda was accepted with the note that by-laws should be included.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the December 12 minutes was approved. Jim Corven urged that minutes be distributed soon after meetings to remind all of Action Items.

Reports as per Agenda

Fred Garrow reported regarding finances. He said he had an informal meeting with David Johnson with no clear outcome. Phil L. said he had some information about our current year funds from a conversation with Jennifer Matthews. Annette said we should work up a budget process. Phil Crane reported his having made a submission, at the request of the Select Board, a \$1500 request in support of the Shade Tree Plan, and said that this information constituted his report on that item of business. There was discussion of MHCC funding, including an indication that Brigid Sullivan has supported an increase for the next budget year.

Phil Leonard said that he will continue with the bottom barrier application introduced at last month's Select Board meeting, to be voted on at the next one.

Fra DeVine said he has been unable to connect with Steve Schild, and that as a result he has little to report regarding mapping and Forest Fragmentation.

Jim Corven indicated that he had made an annual iNaturalist report to be printed in the ChitChat, and that this is a slow time of year for observations.

Annette indicated that the disruption accompanying her recent move has slowed publication of inventory news beyond the distribution of the historical to MHCC members. The next item to be addressed is an archaeological inventory. Annette will distribute the inventory materials she has to the rest of the members.

Organizational Matters

Annette Lynch spoke of four things regarding her service to, and view of, the Conservation Commission. She prefaced these by saying that she is willing to assist the MHCC in its future efforts.

- She praised the work of members during the first 15 months of the Commission's existence.
- She spoke of her involvement, dating from about 2003, in Mount Holly conservation efforts. These include asking the Select Board to form a Conservation Commission, and seeking to fill its membership. She views conservation as involving three entities, the MHCC, the Planning Commission and the Conservation Trust, with the MHCC having a role in identifying what (scenic views, for example) needs to be conserved.
- She said that our involvement requires taking a very broad view, aiming at what gets conversation started. Our role can be likened to that of a statistics gathering group within a public health agency, providing data that can guide decision makers.
- She said that Commission members are "enthusiastic generalists" needing access to science-based expertise. This argues for having ready access to environmental evaluation, and for having an ecologist on retainer. Annette suggested the engagement of Kathy Doyle, formerly of Arrowwood, in this regard.

Jim Corven spoke about the Municipal Planning Grant [which Mount Holly has received] and the role of the commission in its implementation. Annette gave some particulars (an initial town amount, more to be determined regionally with an emphasis on septic, water and housing) and indicated that the next Select Board meeting will likely see the launching of grant implementation, to include a RFP for consulting work. [Subsequent to our meeting, Jim has circulated the Municipal Planning Grant application material to MHCC members.] Annette stressed the need for people to think broadly as implementation proceeds.

Phil Leonard suggested, then requested, then moved, that Fra DeVine and Phil Crane serve in a bridge capacity to coordinate planning and agenda distribution for our next meeting. The motion was seconded by Dave Martin and approved by vote.

Action Items

- Proceed with Star Lake proposal and permit application.
- Work on questions and approaches to using Chit Chat.
- Speak with Dennis Devereux about overlap between MHCC and the mission of the Historical Museum.
- Members review draft of proposed amendments to by-laws.
- Study the Municipal Planning Grant document.
- Think about leadership.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of MHCC will be on Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 7:00 pm. The agenda will be provided in advance.

Adjournment

After expressions of thanks to (and from) Annette, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Phil Leonard, clerk.