

Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC)

Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2020

Opening

The first regular meeting of the Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC) was called to order at 6:33 pm on September 15, 2020 via Zoom by Annette Lynch.

Present

Annette Lynch, Jay Ummel, Fra DeVine, Peter Smith, Philippe Crane, Mark Zelis, Philip Leonard, Fred Garrow, Jim Corven

Approval of Agenda

The proposed agenda was accepted by consensus.

Approval of Minutes

As this was the first meeting there were no minutes to approve.

Open Issues

Annette welcomed all participants to the first meeting of the newly formed commission and provided an overview of the role and responsibility of the conservation commission. The legal status of conservation commissions is defined by Vermont statute 24 V.S.A.

(<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/fullchapter/24/118>). The role of the MHCC will include supporting the Select Board and town Planning Commission with revising the Town Plan, updating resource information (i.e. Arrowwood Report), and other projects that are identified. One purpose of this first meeting is to designate a chair, clerk and how we will define our operating policies and procedures (charter).

New Business

Discussion followed on the initial priorities for the MHCC and there was general agreement that our first steps should be the following:

1) Develop a **mission statement and charter** by first reviewing those of other town CCs and the VT statute defining conservation commissions. J. Corven volunteered to request charters from other town CCs via the AVCC Google Groups (VTConservation) and will provide results before the next regular meeting. Fra DeVine offered to contact Weston, Philippe Crane offered to contact Shrewsbury, and Mike Zelis offered to contact Warren regarding their CC charters.

2) Members agreed to hold **monthly regular meetings** on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. This allows the commission to have a report, if needed, ready for the regular Select Board meetings on the second Tuesday of each month. The next regular meeting will be held, via Zoom, on Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

Francis DeVine was nominated and agreed to serve as **acting chair** of the MHCC and Jim Corven agreed to serve as clerk for this and the next meeting.

There was an open discussion about the MH **town plan** and the role that the MHCC might have in providing information to the Planning Commission currently charged with preparing a revision of the current plan. A. Lynch and P. Smith provided historical details about the current and previous town plans.

J. Corven informed members about several resources available to conservation commissions and suggested that all members consider joining the **Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions** (AVCC) Google Groups to stay updated on the activities and resources available from the state and other conservation commissions. Upcoming online training events and the AVCC Annual Summit meeting (online) for conservation commission members in September and October were announced and recommended. Links to all of these are available on the website of the AVCC at <https://vtconservation.com/>.

Members were also informed that **Jens Hilke** of VT Fish & Wildlife Community Wildlife Program is available to support the establishment of the MHCC and has offered to provide an online workshop about conservation commission operations. J. Corven will contact Jens to invite him to join our next meeting or organize a future workshop.

It was agreed that the MHCC should have a presence on the Mount Holly (unofficial) **website** that would provide information regarding members, meeting schedule and agendas, meeting minutes, and other updates. Fra DeVine offered to contact the Town Office to make arrangements. It was also agreed to request inclusion of meeting dates in the Chit Chat.

Mike Zelis expressed his interest in having the condition of **Star Lake** as a priority for the MHCC and there was general agreement that this is an important issue for the town which the commission should explore further.

Jeff Chase, Select Board member sent word that he is organizing an online training session for the monitoring of ash trees in town to watch for **Emerald Ash Borer** (EAB). Members were asked to express their interest directly to Jeff for the training.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of MHCC will be on Tuesday, October 6 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. The agenda will be provided by Fra Devine.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm by Fra DeVine.

Minutes submitted by Jim Corven, acting clerk.