

Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC)

Meeting Minutes

December 7, 2021

Opening

The regular meeting of the Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC) was called to order at 7:07 pm on December 7, 2021 by Annette Lynch. It was held in the Town Office before a live audience.

Present

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

Approval of Agenda

The meeting agenda was accepted by consensus.

Approval of Minutes

After discussion, the minutes from the previous meeting (November 2) were approved. (Moved by Fra DeVine, seconded by P. Crane) A. Lynch indicated that she found the paragraph about the Plan unclear and said she would send her remarks for the Select Board and the Planning Commission to MHCC members. [NOTE: Annette's comment was correct. The minutes have been modified in an effort to address it.]

General Discussion and By-Laws

J. Corven mentioned some issues to be addressed regarding by-laws, for example reconciling our having 9 members with the 3-5 indicated in the by-laws, and whether to include membership in the VT Assoc. of Conservation Commissions as part of our function. A draft, with suggestions given in RED, exists and should inform future discussion of these matters. This will be part of our January meeting. At this time (see item 10. in the agenda) Annette indicated that she will be relocating to Middlebury soon, with the consequence that she will need to depart from the MHCC.

Treasurer's Report

F. Garrow said that there was no change regarding funds, and that he would speak with David Johnson about establishing procedures for handling treasury matters.

Agenda Items

P. Leonard reported that the request for the town to apply for the use of bottom barriers in part of Star Lake will be on the agenda of the December 14 Select Board meeting. Phil will present the request. J. Corven asked that he also request information about the previously approved coliform bacteria testing and offer MHCC assistance if that would be helpful. F. DeVine added water sample testing as an area where information is needed.

J. Corven said that his annual iNaturalist report will appear in the next Chit Chat. There have been 2810 observations by 156 people, with 923 species identified, 23 of them threatened or endangered and

125 invasive or nonnative. He stressed the importance of reporting multiple observations of the same species. D. Martin brought up the question of measures to deal with invasives, with special reference to helpful vs harmful actions along roadways. We also discussed the importance of working with important habitats for endangered species.

F. DeVine discussed progress toward updating Core Forest inventories. On December 2 the group met with Steve Schild, GIS manager and Transportation planner with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. They learned about correlating 911 addresses when comparing maps, about laser mapping and about having access to maps via a MHCC account (something other conservation commissions might find interesting). The meeting opened up several possibilities for carrying out the work at hand. The group plans to contact Arrowwood as well.

P. Crane provided a **Shade Tree Plan update**. He expects that a draft will be available by mid-January, to be introduced informally to the Select Board in February. Then will come public response, followed by approval in March or April. The Plan itself will be general, and will be accompanied by a very detailed Appendix which will be amenable to modifications over time. He expects to ask or help with grant writing in the future.

Inventories

Following these reports we bypassed agenda item 7. and moved to a brief discussion of the Historical Resources inventory that was distributed in advance of the meeting. This was followed by considering January's (somewhat related) topic of Architectural Resources. We examined the Mount Holly section of a 1976 book detailing architectural resources in Rutland County, one of two such books, the other covering Addison County. Among topics mentioned were the locations and status of Mount Holly's one-time 13 schoolhouses, and the question of how best to handle our work on these inventory areas cooperatively with the Community Historical Museum.

Other Business

No other business was brought to attention.

Action Items

- Present Star Lake proposal to Select Board and proceed to 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.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of MHCC will be on Tuesday, January 4, 2022 at 7:00 pm. The agenda will be provided in advance.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned by vote (moved by F. DeVine) at 8:53 pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Phil Leonard, clerk.