

Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC)

Meeting Minutes

February 1, 2022

Opening

The regular meeting of the Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC) was called to order at 7:08 pm on February 1, 2022 by Fra DeVine. It was held by Zoom only.

Present

Fra DeVine, Philippe Crane, David Martin, Philip Leonard, Ryan Metcalfe, Jim Corven, Peter Smith, Stephen Michel (guest).

Approval of Agenda

After brief conversation, the meeting agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the January 4 minutes was passed, with the understanding that they should be modified to include the correct date for the February meeting.

Organizational Restructure

Commissioners began discussing language about officers (chair, treasurer, clerk, others as needed), and soon decided to precede addressing these (and elections) until after dealing with proposed *Policy and Procedures* amendments. [At the end of that discussion (see next heading) the Commission decided by vote (following a Phil Crane motion) to postpone elections until the March meeting.]

Policies and Procedures

The commission discussed changes proposed by Jim and Annette, who worked from suggestions made in our previous meetings, to the *Policy and Procedures* document. Jim noted that, except for the open meeting laws, the statute allows for flexibility.

Dave Martin said he would add a few things to section III, namely, “advice to the Select Board” and “prepare materials ... “. The question of mentioning climate change was raised, received support, and Jim and Dave agreed to write up suggested wording for its inclusion.

Fra DeVine suggested that in section IX a simple majority should suffice. The question of vice- or deputy-chair was discussed, and the group asked Jim to write something up for a vote next time. Other items addressed were that of a fund (sections III f. and VIII- Dave favoring a “may establish...as appropriate” wording) and whether membership in the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (section III g.) should be included.

Shade Tree Plan update

Phil Crane provided an update about the Shade Tree Preservation Plan, referencing his email of earlier in the evening. There is a draft plan; much of the detail will be in an Appendix [a draft of which is in

an email of February 2]. There is uncertainty about just which town-planted trees should be included. The group is planning to hold a public presentation, perhaps near the middle of March.

Star Lake update

Phil Leonard reported that the Select Board voted to support application for state permission to install two bottom barriers in Star Lake. He added that he has spoken with the permitting official, and that things are proceeding well toward a completed application for this permission.

Plans for completing Resource Inventories

As Fra DeVine began the discussion, Phil Crane asked about the interface of our work on the inventories with the priorities of the Planning Commission.

Fra first discussed his efforts toward showing what changes have occurred, over the past 5-8 years, to deer habitat areas in Mount Holly. His collaborator lacks the Arrowwood maps, so that project still needs to be completed.

Fra brought up the spreadsheet Annette had begun, and said he would like to restart the inventory project using that, with modifications he has made for the sake of consistency.

Ryan spoke of his efforts to overlay the approximately 1500 acres involved in mast stands, citing a need for “having a standard” for doing this work. He has enjoyed walking the land and would like to know how to evaluate them. Discussion followed: Fra spoke of overlaying these areas with satellite maps, Jim mentioned consulting with other conservation commissions, Peter suggested consulting Vermont Fish and Wildlife. Ryan said he could do that via their Springfield office.

Discussion turned to the formation of teams to continue work on inventories. Dave indicated an interest in recreation, and Phil L. agreed to join him in that. Contiguous/core forest areas will be treated by red, Ryan and Fra. Jim opted for science and education, with Phil C. joining in that. Peter and Phil L. will work on old buildings, schoolhouses (Stephen said there is a map in the blacksmith shop), cellar holes and such. Fra also agreed to talk with Jon McCann about the priorities of the Planning Commission

Other and New Business

Dave Martin brought up his interest in having a list of Mount Holly walks, perhaps using a survey that would ask people “Where do you like to walk?” Dave is interested in Class 4 roads, and has found listings of these in Mount Holly.

Action Items

- Teams work on their Inventory tasks.
- Fra to liase with the Planning Commission.
- Members prepare for vote on changes to Policies and Procedures.
- Members prepare to elect officers.

Next Meeting

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

Adjournment

Fra DeVine declared the meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Phil Leonard, clerk.