

Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC)

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 3, 2022

Opening

The regular meeting of the Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC) was called to order at 7:04 pm on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 by Fra DeVine. It was held by Zoom only.

Present

Fra DeVine, Philippe Crane, David Martin, Philip Leonard, Fred Garrow, Jim Corven, Peter Smith, Susan Presson, Stephen Michel (guest), Barbara and Lloyd Conley (guest), Brigid Sullivan (guest).

Approval of Agenda

After brief conversation, with proposed additions assigned to **Other and New Business** the meeting agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from April 5 meeting approved with addition of Fred Garrow as attendee. Motion to accept : Dave Martin. Second: J. Corven. Unanimously approved

Welcome to Susan Presson

New member Susan Presson joined the meeting and was welcomed by the Commission as its newest member. She spoke of her living in Mount Holly since 1984 and of her community involvement as Library president and on an earlier commission related to conservation.

Shade Tree Plan update

Phil Crane provided a Shade Tree Plan update. Fra asked if we are doing things in a different way than other towns. Phil said that we are, because the trees we want to protect go beyond what is mentioned in the statute. He has been working with Shrewsbury counterparts. He mentioned that Middlebury has a full-time tree person. Jim asked if recommending specific trees would be welcomed; Phil answered in the affirmative. Peter asked about the town rights of way, and we discussed current tree removal by the telephone company.

Star Lake update

Phil Leonard reported that the bottom barrier permit is out for public comment until May 16. Fra suggested, and Jim urged, that we use the NewsFlash to encourage comments about the project. We discussed issues regarding use of the Mount Holly website (unofficial). Jim brought up coliform testing; this was deferred and placed under **Other and New Business**.

Reports about Resource Inventories

Regarding recreation, Dave suggested that townspeople be asked to add input to the inventory. Fra asked each inventory team to provide a draft definition of what its category encompasses. Regarding

asking for input from townspeople, we again discussed the town site and, in particular, the email address for the MHCC that appears there but that is not fully functioning.

In the discussion about core forest/mast stands. Susan asked for background, and terminology and scope were explained.

Jim spoke about scientific and educational resources, saying he is looking at institutional, rather than natural, ones. He said he has put up lists using Google, sharing this with commissioners, though just how this is working is not yet clear. Phil C asked about the audience for category inventories, particularly for this one. Fra suggested it would include the Selectboard, the Planning Commission and the people of Mount Holly. Phil C would like further clarification of this matter.

Peter spoke about his efforts to photograph cellar holes, to include school sites, and of looking at locations of chair factories, lumber mills and ancient roads. Susan mentioned a school site out toward the Yale Forest. She could join the team for his inventory category. Jim said that inventories for all categories should be well mapped.

Other and New Business

Jim had brought up pushing for having the health officer test Star Lake weekly for coliform bacteria. Fra will speak with Jim to prepare for presenting the issue to the Select Board. Brigid Sullivan said she would bring the issue up with the Planning Commission.

The Commission discussed the use of the (valid but unlinked) email address on the Mount Holly site. Jim had determined the status. The MHCC should use this email. Perhaps a team of two commissioners should be formed to monitor the inbox so that emails to the Commission can be handled effectively. This issue will be pursued before the June meeting.

Jim gave a brief update (now updated as of May 5, 2022) on the Mount Holly Biodiversity Project

- There have been 2,856 observations submitted by 159 volunteer observers.
- Volunteers have identified 931 species of plants, animals, & fungi in Mount Holly.
- All species are recorded & mapped so we know what, when, and where each observation occurred.
- We have identified over 23 threatened or endangered species and 125 introduced species.
- The maps show where invasive species have been found and critical habitats for threatened species.

Action Items

- Phil L to put “Public Comments” info out on Mount Holly NewsFlash.
- Teams to work on draft definitions related to their various categories.
- Jim to assist us in opening up document sharing using Google.
- Work on making the MHCC email address become a usable entity.

Next Meeting

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

Adjournment

Fra DeVine declared the meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Phil Leonard, clerk.