

Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC)

Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2022

Opening

The regular meeting of the Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC) was called to order at 7:03 pm on April 5, 2022 by Fra DeVine. It was held by Zoom only.

Present

Fra DeVine, David Martin, Philip Leonard, Ryan Metcalfe, Jim Corven, Dave Martin, Peter Smith, Fred Garrow, Stephen Michel (guest).

Approval of Agenda

The meeting agenda was approved by vote.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the February 2 minutes was passed. (There were no March minutes as the meeting convened without a quorum.)

Policies and Procedures

The restated *Policies and Procedures* document (version circulated by email by Jim Corven) was considered. After clarification of one point in the draft document, adoption of the whole was moved by Dave, seconded by Phil L., and approved by unanimous vote.

Elections of Officers

Without opposition (with nominator and seconder noted) the following were elected as officers to serve until the October 2022 Annual Meeting:

Treasurer: Fred Garrow (Fra/Dave)

Chair: Fra DeVine (Fred/Dave)

Vice Chair: Philippe Crane (Fra/Fred)

Clerk: Philip Leonard (Fra/Dave)

Shade Tree Plan update (provided by P.Crane prior to the meeting)

The STPP is making progress but not as quickly as I had hoped. We are collecting feedback on our draft from several sources including Jeff Chase of the Selectboard, and the Planning Commission. We are considering how best to insure support from the general public as well as the Selectboard. We plan to hold a public meeting in the next couple of months and need to lay the groundwork. Also as the weather improves, we will start our inventory of trees again.

Star Lake update

Phil Leonard said the barrier permit is proceeding. He also said that he would enroll the Conservation Commission as a member of the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC) as required by item III (j) of the restated *Policies and Procedures*.

Updates about Resource Inventories

Subcommittees gave updates about their work on documenting town resources, as follows:

Recreation (Dave/Phil L) Dave has produced a document to which others contributed. He asked if, in addition to tabulating resources, we should produce a guide to them.

Core Forest and Mast Stands (Fra/Ryan/Fred) Fra reported that the subcommittee conveyed the Arrowwood maps to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission and, aided by their 911 maps, traced changes from 1992 to 2019, each member reviewed in detail 1/3 of the town. They noted significant new buildings on the Barlow Road and on Paradise Lane. There has been some loss of core forest and mast stands in Mount Holly during this period. In discussion, Jim suggested “no net loss” as a goal, especially for agricultural and forest land, pointing out that AVCC Google groups have info on that idea. Peter is skeptical about this, given the way land use policy tends to work in Mount Holly. Ryan spoke about having something quantitative rather than the simple “no net loss” terminology. Jim said it is an idea or concept that should be stated and public. Dave asked what the town might do toward encouraging people to think in this direction.

Scientific and Educational (Phil C/Jim) Phil C had reported that the scope of these categories is still being defined. Jim mentioned that he has prepared a draft. The two have not finished coordinating their efforts. In discussion, Jim said he has inquired about how other conservation commissions are handling inventories and found their efforts are modest, leading him to wonder if we are diluting our efforts by tackling inventories so extensively. Fra responded that we are “laying foundations” rather than diluting efforts.

Historic and Scenic (Peter/Phil L) Not much progress has been made here. Better weather will help. Peter would like to photograph cellar holes of former homes, shops and school sites.

Other Business

Steve suggested that the Blacksmith Shop has data on former schools and their sites, and that we should work with the Museum board on historical matters. Jim asked about including cemeteries as historical resources. Dennis Devereux could be a resource in this regard.

Action Items

- Teams continue work on their Inventory tasks.
- Fra to consult with Planning Commission about Town Plan status.
- Phil L to coordinate proposal for AVCC Tiny Grant (deadline is Friday, April 8).

Next Meeting

The next meeting of MHCC will be on Tuesday, May 3, 2022, at 7:00 pm. The agenda will be provided in advance.

Adjournment

Fra DeVine declared the meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm. *Minutes submitted by Phil Leonard*