

Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC)

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

Opening

The February regular meeting of the Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC) was called to order at 7:04 pm on Tuesday, February 7, 2023 by Phil Crane. It was held in the Town Office and also via Zoom.

Present

Fra DeVine, David Martin, Peter Smith (Zoom), Jeanmarie Fitzgerald (Zoom), Phil Crane, Sue Presson, Phil Leonard, Jim Corven.

Approval of Agenda

The meeting agenda was approved with two additions, ARPA funds (Old Business) and ash trees (New Business).

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the January 9, 2023 meeting were approved as submitted, with a note that there is a missing “)” at the end of the first page. Unanimously approved.

Canopy Grant Proposal

Phil C. discussed the proposal he submitted on December 30 to the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program. The proposal has been declined. The notification included ample feedback about the level of detail looked or in the review process.

Public Outreach Initiatives

Jim had sent a preliminary list of possible subjects for outreach and education activities. He mentioned that the purpose of any such efforts should be tied to our mission to help conserve resources, and that acquainting the community with these resources is an important part of the conservation effort. A few topics were discussed, and additional directions (Master Gardeners, Fish and Wildlife) were suggested to augment Jim’s list. Among items of interest: doing iNaturalist education at the school, organizing bird watching activities, rekindling interest from former Friends of Star Lake people, and learning about parcels that have recently been added to the Okemo State Forest. Fra raised the issue of making sure that liability matters would be addressed in the course of planning our public activities.

Ongoing Programs (6)

We discussed possibilities for a **ChitChat** submission for March. Sue suggested anticipating spring by putting in a piece about seasonal warblers.

Phil L. mentioned having contacted Angie Allen about state input regarding **Star Lake**. This effort, including arranging a public presentation, will be ongoing. Jean indicated that she had reached out to the contact person for the Lakewise program.

Fra shared a large town map showing “habitat connectors”, one of our **Inventories** categories. This was part of the Arrowwood Environmental report. Fra said he would explore ways to highlight the availability of this study on the Mount Holly web site.

Jim updated his report on **Biodiversity**. Dave indicated that there was little to report about **Recreation**. He did speak about **ash trees**, saying that Tim Bickford would be willing to help again this year. Dave suggested that the Commission might want to buy some injectors that could be provided to interested property owners.

Other Business

There was brief discussion of the recommendations made by a citizens’ group regarding allocation of funds Mount Holly has received pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Action Items

- Chit Chat: Sue to look at writing up something about birds in Mount Holly.
- Star Lake: Phil L. and Jean to pursue State and County contacts.
- Fra to explore highlighting the Arrowwood report and maps on the Mount Holly web site.
- MHCC should invite Jon McCann to brief us about ARPA discussions.
- Jim to explore the possibility of iNaturalist education at Mount Holly School.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the MHCC will be on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 7:00 pm. The agenda will be provided in advance.

Adjournment

As members indicated no further items, Phil Crane declared the meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Phil Leonard, clerk.