

Mount Holly Conservation Commission
Meeting of April 1, 2025
Draft Minutes

Opening

The April meeting of the Mount Holly Conservation Commission was held at the Town Office and by ZOOM on Tuesday, April 1, 2025. Phil Crane called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Attending in person were Phil Crane, Jean Fitzgerald, Sue Presson, Dave Martin, Peter Smith, Alex Yuster and Phil Leonard. No ZOOM attendees.

Phil C. mentioned that Megan Litwhiler has resigned from the Commission, leaving us without a valued member, and creating the need for someone to serve as treasurer.

Agenda and Minutes

The agenda document was approved. Minutes from the March 5 meeting were amended (name spelling and minor rephrasing) and approved.

Discussion

Alex said she has confirmed that we have a 2-year membership in the Vermont Association of Conservation Commissions. She has looked into their “best practices” material, and noted that the Shrewsbury CC is engaged in work toward maintaining wildlife corridors. She expressed interest in learning more, and plans to attend a Vermont Coverts training about forest and wildlife management. Discussion around this included the role of the Mount Holly Conservation Trust and the inventory maps that the MHCC had dealt with in its first year or two of operation.

Discussion of Star Lake planning began with the Commission giving approval for Phil L. and Jeanmarie to proceed with preparation for a permit application to allow mechanical harvesting. This would be a limited effort aimed at providing pathways for canoes and kayaks on the lake surface. Phil C. and/or Phil L. will request agreement to proceed at next week’s Select Board meeting.

We then discussed having (possibly more than one?) public meetings to present our ideas about possibilities for Star Lake and the park at its southwestern tip. Plans will be affected by responses to grant applications (expected in May) and permit approval.

Alex suggested a “meeting subcommittee” and, in the end, agreed to be the MHCC point person to coordinate with other entities (Conservation Trust, Community Association). Sue agreed to help, and Dave suggested Jon McCann as the Conservation Trust contact person. A public meeting for presenting the Ecological Assessment commissioned by the Conservation Trust is in order, and the MHCC needs to engage in public discussion about Star Lake planning and possibilities.

Action Items

- Secure Select Board approval to apply for harvesting permit, and submit the application.
- ChitChat piece to focus on public meetings and recruitment of volunteers.
- Continue work on Star Lake planning, including a Lake Wise Action Plan as needed for permitting.
- Plan for Public Meeting(s), with cooperation of Community Association, Conservation Trust and other organizations.
- Resume ash tree treatment when conditions allow.

Next Meeting

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 6, at 6 pm in the Town Office.

Adjournment

Adjournment occurred at approximately 7:10 pm.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Phil Leonard, Clerk.