

TOWN OF MONTGOMERY
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CONSERVATION COMMISSION (MCC) MEETING (unapproved draft)
WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2022

Meeting was called to order at the Public Safety Building by Matt Paggi at 5:07 p.m.
Attendance: Susan Baker, Patrick Calecas, Joan Hildreth, Parma Jewett, Lynn Locher, Matt Paggi. Absent: John Kuryloski, Karen Stanley, Carissa Stein, Sue Wilson.
Visitors: Mariah Keagy - Sinuosity, Jeff Parsons - Arrowwood, Lindsey Wight -UMATR
Additions/Deletions to Agenda – None.
Minutes 6/1/22– Lynn made a motion, seconded by Patrick, to approve the June minutes. The motion passed unanimously; June 2022 minutes were approved.
Treasurer’s Report – Not available

Presentation/Discussion of Town Forest (TF) findings, recommendations, and Conceptual Trail Design (CTD)– UMATR Grant:

Jeff Parsons presented an overview of his findings from the Natural Resources Assessment and Winter Wildlife Assessment which he completed, and answered questions raised by members of the MCC. In summary, there were no major concerns identified which would necessitate special restrictions on TF trail use, assuming that the guidelines of the CTD were followed. Mariah then presented a draft of the CTD. The draft design reflects the fact that walking and educational uses were identified by members of the community (via a survey conducted in the Fall of 2022) as priority uses for the TF. She also noted that, given the relatively small size of the property, there would not be the space for trails intended for faster activities such as mountain biking or Nordic skiing. She provided an overview of the types of soils on the property and identified erosion concerns which should be addressed, particularly where an old logging road crosses a stream. A map of proposed trails was provided as well as an overview of the characteristics of each trail. Included in the CTD were viewing points which could be good spots for benches. All agreed that the CTD provided a great starting point. After discussion, Jeff and Mariah suggested that a key question for the community to answer is “What do you want the ‘feel’ of the Town Forest to be?” The answer could affect the Forest Management Plan (FMP) for the property. As such, it was agreed that the MCC should discuss the CTD with Charlie Hancock and review the FMP with him. Also, Mariah will share with the MCC the GPS map with the proposed trails delineated so that MCC members who are interested and available can take a walk at the TF, getting a better sense of the recommended trail locations and features.

Discussion with Lindsey Wight of UMATR re: River Concerns:

Lindsey offered support re: any river issues/concerns which the MCC might have identified. There was discussion about many concerns related to the use of the swimming holes in town. Specifically, a lot of trash is left at them and parking/crowding is a concern. Lindsey reported that this is a common problem identified in the other area towns as well. She said that some towns in the Eastern U.S. have started river steward programs which have had some success. There are some different models for this. She

thought that it would be preferable to have paid river stewards, if possible, and there has been some exploration of funding sources. The Adopt-a-River volunteer model is another idea. Lindsey also asked the MCC to think about new ways to help connect members of the community to the river and asked that we let her know our thoughts/ideas re: this.

Planned Events/Projects:

-Beekeeping with John Little Mid-July- Lynn has been in contact with John and reported that he would be available Saturday, July 23rd at 1:00. There would be room for 10 people. All agreed this sounded great. Because of the limited number, a sign up in advance will be required. If there is enough interest for a second day, John could apparently do this again in late August.

-Farmers' Market MCC Table: Sign-up Sheet for 7/16, 8/20, 9/10 – Patrick has the banner and laminated map and plans to be at the table on 7/16. Matt plans to be there on 8/20 and is putting together info about the TF to have available at that time. It was agreed that the sign-up for September could occur at the next MCC meeting on 8/3.

-Three Holes and Mill Trail and Reflection Bench – Susan B. has contacted an abutting landowner for input and is still awaiting a response. The MCC will discuss further at another MCC meeting.

-Montgomery Town Library Collaboration and Book Trail –Lynn and Carissa had met with the Town Librarian, Marlene about this idea and all agreed that Bear Paw Pond would be an ideal location for the book trail. Lynn contacted Rolf Anderson of Hazen's Notch Association and he is fully supportive of the idea. There was discussion re: possible timing for this. Lynn will discuss further with Carissa and Marlene to figure out the best time/date (either during the summer or soon after school is back in session).

Discussion:

Birding 101 Discussion: Joan reported that the Birding 101 Walk led by Annette Goyne and Todd Marlow on June 4th was excellent and well attended. When asked about payment for leading the walk, both Annette and Todd had declined, instead preferring to volunteer their time and expertise. However, when asked if they would agree to a donation to a conservation-related cause as a thank you, they did accept that idea. They said that the Richford Conservation Commission (RCC) had created a fund called the "Eastern Meadowlark Fund" in order to advocate for this species and to have funds available to pay farmers to cut their hay later when nesting birds are reported. They suggested that any donation which the MCC chose to make could go to that fund. After discussion at the meeting, Matt made a motion, seconded by Parma, that the MCC donate \$50.00 to the Richford Conservation Commission for their "Eastern Meadowlark Fund" in appreciation of Annette and Todd volunteering to lead the June 4, 2022 Birding 101 walk. The motion passed unanimously. Joan will forward this information re: the donation to the Town Treasurer, Erin Kopacz.

Lynn made a motion, seconded by Patrick, to adjourn at 7:03 p.m. Passed unanimously.
Respectfully submitted by Joan Hildreth