

TOWN OF MONTGOMERY
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CONSERVATION COMMISSION (MCC) MEETING (unapproved draft)
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2022

The meeting was called to order at the Public Safety Building (PSB) by Carissa Stein at 5:40 p.m.

Attendance: Patrick Calecas, Joan Hildreth, Parma Jewett, John Kuryloski, Lynn Locher, Karen Stanley, Carissa Stein. Absent: Susan Baker, Matt Paggi, Sue Wilson.

Visitors: None

Additions/Deletions/Changes to Agenda – None

Minutes 9/7/22– Parma made a motion, seconded by Lynn to approve the September minutes. The motion passed unanimously; the September 7, 2022 minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report – Not available

Planned Events/Projects:

- Finalization of Town Forest (TF) Grant Deliverables – Joan has been in contact with the Technical Service Providers (TSPs), Mariah of Sinuosity and Jeff of Arrowwood, re: the final steps required to wrap up the portion of the project funded by the UMATR grant. Joan has also kept Lindsey Wight of UMATR updated on the status of the project. It is expected that the TSPs will complete their work by 10/15/22. Mariah had reported that she recently made some alterations to the proposed trails (and flagged those), in an effort to increase sustainability, ease construction efforts, and manage cost of trail building. Everyone agreed that it would be worthwhile to take a walk at the TF soon to check out the changes. Once the TSPs provide their report, the details will be reviewed to ensure that the terms of the grant have been met. Also, Staci Pomeroy, River Scientist, could be asked to assess the proposed trail stream crossing on the property.

- Partnering with Cold Hollow to Canada (CHC), Enosburg & Richford Conservation Commissions (ECC & RCC) on a Presentation by Kiley Briggs, Wood Turtle Expert from the Orianne Society – A site by the school in Richford has been identified as a potential location and one of the following proposed dates in 2023 should be conducive to appropriate conditions: 5/20, 5/21, 6/3 or 6/4.

- Knotweed Control Plan on Town Land: Fall 2022 and Growing Season 2023- Carissa submitted a grant application for this proposed project to UMATR which was due on 10/1/22. A decision re: the grant should be forthcoming in November of 2022. The proposed project is mechanical control (not chemical) and is based on the recommendations of USFWS Biologist Katie Kain and the results of MRBA's "Knockout Knotweed" trials. If the grant is approved, it would allow for having an "invasives event" on the property in the spring as well, with hand pulling in areas where we would not want to mow or brush hog due to native vegetation establishing. Approval by the Selectboard would be needed for any plans.

- Site Visit with River Corridor Easement and Recreation Plan – Carissa spoke about reaching out to Erin De Vries, River Conservancy Biologist, Staci Pomeroy, River Scientist and Lindsey Wight, UMATR's Executive Director for insight and information—it has not been scheduled yet; it would be for informational purposes.

- Floodplain Modeling with Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRCD) – Town Land - Black Falls to Salmon Property – Lauren Weston from the FCNRCD is applying for a Clean Water and Healthy Ecosystem grant in partnership with the Selectboard and MCC to perform floodplain modeling from Longley Bridge to River Walk Park utilizing the services of hydro engineers. The area would be analyzed with hydraulic modelling for any opportunities to explore restoration and flood mitigation alternatives as well as map flood paths and velocity.

- Development of Planting and Material Plan for Spring of 2023, Sourcing Partners and Grants – It was discussed that it would be ideal to create a planting plan (fruit/nut trees as well as various perennial shrubs such as raspberries, blueberries and blackberries) and do it in phases. The acreage to plant is not explicitly known yet due to the flood modelling exploration. An idea would be to start with planting on the highest ground, and the floodplain should essentially “plant itself” over time. Once the planting plan is developed, assistance can be sought. Soil augmentation would be necessary for most species. 350 Vermont offered to give fruit and nut trees (bare root) last year for community spaces, Carissa will reach out to them, with developed planting plan. If the knotweed can be kept in control, box elder and maples should be allowed to naturally thrive. Any plan would require Selectboard approval and could be phased in over a number of years. An overarching question is how to manage the property long-term as a community orchard/perennial garden/agricultural forest.

- Montgomery Invasives Plan – Carissa and Hilary Roberts plan to work on this over the winter and will check with Lindsey Wight re: the idea of partnering with MRBA.

Additional Discussion:

-Enosburg Town Forest Walk; UMATR Infrastructure Grant – A walk at the Mill Trail/3 Holes site with some of the members of the MCC as well as interested community members Bill Hildreth and Gibou Stein occurred on 10/4/22. All in attendance agreed that it would be a project well worth pursuing, and that a UMATR Infrastructure grant would be a much-appreciated source of funds. Any plan would require Selectboard approval. The Enosburg Town Forest walk is currently on hold.

-Line-Up for 2023 Events -

~ Knotweed Management

~ Bioblitz at TF – The FCNRCD has applied for a grant for this

~ Responsible Angling with the ECC

~ Tree Sale

~ Mary Niles’ Farm Visit/Presentation

~ Monarch Butterflies – Education re: monarchs, including how to provide appropriate habitat for them

Patrick made a motion, seconded by John, to adjourn at 7:02 p.m. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Joan Hildreth