

TOWN OF MONTGOMERY  
PO BOX 356; MONTGOMERY CENTER, VT 05471  
802-326-4719 <http://www.montgomeryvt.us>  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION (MCC) MEETING (unapproved draft)  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2023

The meeting was called to order at the Public Safety Building (PSB) by Carissa Stein at 5:32 p.m.

Attendance: Joan Hildreth, Parma Jewett, Lynn Locher, Matt Paggi, Karen Stanley, Carissa Stein, Sue Wilson.

Absent: Susan Baker, Patrick Calecas, John Kuryloski.

Visitors: None.

Additions/Deletions/Changes to Agenda – Sue raised the idea of the MCC purchasing its own pop-up canopy tent(s) for events. Joan raised issues related to the Town's Conservation Fund. It was agreed that both topics would be discussed at the end of the meeting. Carissa brought a thank you note to Misty McCartney for all to sign (which was done) in appreciation of her work as Green Up Day (GUD) Coordinator over the years. Misty has recently stepped down from that role.

Minutes 5/3/23– Sue made a motion, seconded by Lynn, to approve the May 3<sup>rd</sup> minutes. The motion passed unanimously; the May 3, 2023 minutes were approved.

Budget/Treasurer's Report/CD Update – Updated balances were unavailable for the meeting. Carissa reported that various invoices have been paid, though, including those for the orchard trees and the tag for the lilac bush for the Montgomery Elementary School (MES) 2023 graduating class.

## **EVENTS/PROJECTS:**

### **PLANNED:**

**- Collaboration with the MES/Franklin County Natural Resource Conservation District (FCNRCD)/MCC for Town Forest (TF) BioBlitz June 8<sup>th</sup> (Rain Date June 9<sup>th</sup>) 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** – Carissa reported that the agenda is all set for the BioBlitz.

There will be various stations set up in the TF, with adults at each station to assist with the process. Included will be an art station with Melissa Haberman. FCNRCD is coordinating the event. Carissa reported that she recently did some TF trail re-routing in preparation. At this point, rain is predicted for both the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. As such, most likely the event will go ahead on the 8<sup>th</sup>; the final decision will be the MES principal's.

**-Community Portion of BioBlitz June 10<sup>th</sup> (Rain Date June 11<sup>th</sup>)**– Most likely this will be on the 10<sup>th</sup> (not the 11<sup>th</sup>) and will be from 10 a.m. to noon. It will be an opportunity for members of the community to add to the inventory developed by the MES students, and to learn more about various species and tools/apps which can be utilized (e.g., iNaturalist, Seek, Merlin).

**-Lilac Planting/Tag – MES 2023 Graduating Class** – No date/time has yet been established for the planting. The MES principal, Sandy Alexander, will be letting the MCC know what would work. Carissa has the lilac bush and the tag was ordered. After discussion, Sue made a motion, seconded by Lynn, to authorize spending up to \$150.00 for the lilac bush, tag, mulch, and perennials to be planted around the bush. The motion passed unanimously.

**- Farmer's Market – MCC booth: July 1, August 5, September 2 –** There was discussion re: whether or not the September date should be changed to the 16<sup>th</sup>, but it was decided to stick with the 9/2 date at this time. Another date could be added, if necessary.

## **PROPOSED/DISCUSSION:**

### **-Town Forest:**

1. Selectboard Adoption – Carissa recently attended Selectboard meetings to provide an overview of the Sinuosity report as well as a summary of the information gathered through the meetings which have occurred with potential trail builders. The Selectboard approved the Sinuosity report and the Forest Management Plan (FMP), as well as the MCC going ahead with the contractor selection process. Carissa also made it clear that this project would be funded by the MCC and/or grants/in kind work, and not by the Town.

2. Contractor Estimates Matt reported that, thus far, there have been site visits with Kory Buck from OTB Trail Builders and Josh Ryan of Timber and Stone, and that both were productive meetings. Matt has not yet received the proposals from either of them with estimated costs. Matt has been in contact with another potential contractor as well. There was discussion re: next steps, including whether or not permits would be required for work done on the trails, most notably bridge(s)/water crossing(s). Next steps: Carissa will seek an answer re: the need for permits, and Matt will check with Charlie Hancock about possible grant options, including those related to funding for recreation.

**- Conservation Section in Library – Additional Funding –** Carissa reported that she had spoken with the Town Librarian, Marlene, re: the library's conservation section. Marlene indicated that there is an interest in expanding the section to include more resources about agro-ecology (e.g., growing one's own food, farming at home, soil health). Marlene was also able to stop by the June MCC meeting to discuss ideas. After Marlene left, there was further discussion, and it was agreed that Carissa would provide a list of recommended books for adults on these topics to Marlene, and ask her for pricing info. In addition, Marlene will be asked to provide a list of DVDs and books for children, along with the prices for those items. Once the MCC has the cost information, a decision will be made re: MCC funds allocation for the purchases. There was also discussion about checking with the MES librarian re: conservation resources at the school's library.

### **- Fruit and Nut Orchard –**

1. Watering System – There was discussion re: the various options which members of the MCC and other community members offered, and everyone was appreciative of the helpful input. Sarita Khan offered a 350-gallon tank which could be utilized as part of a more long-term watering solution, if needed. Sue agreed to check with the fire dept to see if they might be able to help with filling a tank with water, if necessary. Other people have offered smaller capacity tanks which could be useful, too.

2. Tree Protection from "Nibblers" – Carissa shared information, including cost, re: products which can be utilized to keep wildlife (including beavers and deer) from chewing on the new trees. All agreed that her recommendations sounded great and that it would be important to go ahead with these measures. The additional cost of this would still put the total cost for the project, thus far, under the \$6,000.00 figure which had previously been authorized. Therefore, Carissa will order the items.

As an aside, Carissa reported that she had attended the Arbor Day Conference in Randolph, VT, and while there, shared about Montgomery's Fruit and Nut Orchard project. Apparently, there was a lot of interest in, and enthusiasm re: the project.

**- Black Falls Farm with Mary Niles** – Parma has been in contact with Mary and a date/time of Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. has been set for members of the MCC to visit Mary's farm. Everyone was very appreciative of Mary's willingness to allow the MCC to experience her property.

**-Budget & Proposal for Three Holes Trail Improvement and Bench** – Tabled until next meeting.

**-Ideas for Future Events (Autumn):**

1. Ben Maddox "I See Fish People"

2. Ben Kilham – Bear Rehabilitator –

3. Co-creating Montgomery – Sharing What We Experience and Love

All discussion re: the above ideas for events was tabled until next meeting.

**Discussion – Purchase of Pop-Up Tent Canopy for MCC Events** – Sue suggested that it would be worthwhile for the MCC to have its own pop-up tent(s) for events and all agreed that this was a great idea. There was some discussion about getting two tents, but it was agreed that we could start with just one for now (and continue to borrow a second, if needed). After discussion, Carissa made a motion, seconded by Parma, for the MCC to purchase one 10'x10' canvas pop-up canopy tent and leg weights at a cost of up to \$200.00. The motion passed unanimously. Sue will check on the model/brand of tent which the Historical Society had ordered because that one appears to be sturdy and well made. Therefore, it would make sense to buy the same kind.

**Discussion – Town's Conservation Fund – Role of MCC** - Joan shared that she had been in contact with Charlie Hancock about the Town's Conservation Fund, the way in which the funds are intended to be utilized, the MCC's role in the application process, and the possibility of conflicts of interest when applications for funding are made and how that would be appropriately addressed. Charlie indicated that the fund has not yet been utilized, and that there is currently no application form for those interested in applying for funds. He indicated that the MCC would likely be asked to develop a form. It was agreed that it could be helpful to check with the Enosburg Conservation Commission to see if they have a form which they use for their Conservation Fund. Charlie also offered helpful suggestions to help avoid conflicts of interests which could arise.

Sue made a motion, seconded by Lynn, to adjourn at 7:05 p.m. The motion passed unanimously by all in attendance.

Respectfully submitted by Joan Hildreth