

TOWN OF MONTGOMERY
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CONSERVATION COMMISSION (MCC) MEETING (unapproved draft)
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2023

The meeting, held at the Rec. Center, was called to order by Carissa Stein at 5:34 p.m.

Attendance: Susan Baker, Patrick Calecas, Joan Hildreth, Matt Paggi, Karen Stanley, Carissa Stein.

Absent: Parma Jewett, John Kuryloski, Lynn Locher, Sue Wilson.

Visitors: Marielle Ambroch

Additions/Deletions/Changes to the Agenda – Additions: bat event arranged by the Richford Conservation Commission (RCC); MRBA Grants

Welcome Visitor: Marielle is interested in the work which the MCC does and would like to be involved. Everyone agreed that it would be great to have her join the MCC.

Minutes 8/2/23 – After discussion, Matt made a motion to approve the minutes with one change in order to clarify the date/time of the MRBA swimming hole clean up event. (It will be 9/9/23 from 10:30 a.m.-noon.) Susan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously; the 8/2/23 minutes (with the change) were approved.

Treasurer's Report – Patrick provided a spreadsheet showing the MCC's revenue and expenses during the last fiscal year (7/1/22-6/30/23). All agreed that this is very useful info to have. Patrick plans to keep it updated going forward to reflect current status, and all agreed that this will be very helpful.

Events/Projects:

Planned:

-MRBA Montgomery Swimming Hole Clean-Up Event 9/9/23 (10:30 a.m. – noon)-

Carissa has sent out info about this on the listserv, and the MCC has shared the flyer on social media. All expressed appreciation that that MRBA is doing this.

Fruit/Nut Tree Protection – Pick a Date – Carissa reported that the trees will need protection after the first snow. Picking of date tabled until the October MCC meeting.

Finalizing the Knowing Knotweed Project – Carissa reported that mowing by Avery at the Town Land had gone well. The hope is that there can be one more mowing this year. One of the deliverables for the grant is developing a brochure re: managing knotweed. Carissa plans to develop a draft for review by the end of September.

Finalizing the Fruit/Nut Grant – Carissa provided an update on the status of the fruit/nut trees and, overall, they are doing well, especially considering the challenging weather this spring/summer. Although there is still time to finalize the grant requirements, she would like to have it done by the end of October of 2023.

-Town Forest (TF) Trail Update-

Matt provided an update re: input from the three contractors that have toured the TF thus far. He included a very helpful table summarizing the strengths/characteristics of each contractor's business. Matt also has names/contact info of additional trail builders and plans to contact them in order to arrange visits for the week of 9/18/23. There was

discussion re: what had been thought to be one of the potentially most promising grant options (RTP - available in November). Due to the recent devastation from flooding this past summer, though, it is likely that at least some of that money would go to restoration projects instead of new projects. Therefore, an RTP grant might not be a possible funding source this year. All agreed that the biggest challenge of the TF project appears to be the bridge which is needed. Other possible stream crossing areas for the bridge will be explored. The idea of seeking grant funding for just a bridge design was also discussed, but there was no decision to pursue that at this time.

Proposed/Discussion/Updates:

-Conservation Fund- After discussion, Matt offered to contact Charlie Hancock, Chair of the Selectboard, to clarify information related to the Town's Conservation Fund. Everyone was appreciative of Matt's willingness to do this.

-Three Holes Reflection Bench Update-

Susan has made many attempts to contact the abutting neighbor in order to discuss the proposed project, but there has been no response. The MCC's key concerns which need to be addressed prior to moving forward are: clarification of property boundaries, and; being respectful of abutting landowners, including seeking their input/ideas. Matt offered to check with a surveyor who might have info on the property boundaries. Susan plans to look at Town survey maps.

Conservation Section in the Montgomery Town Library- After review of the list Carissa had sent to Marlene (the Town librarian) and discussion, Patrick made a motion to provide up to \$250.00 to the library for purchase of the books on the list. The motion was seconded by Matt and it passed unanimously.

Vincent Bridge Swimming Hole E-Mail from Landowner- The landowner shared concerns about trash being left at the swimming hole. Carissa looked at the site and reported that there was some trash as well as old tires. She wondered if someone had used it as a dump site, similar to what had happened at Creamery Bridge. There was discussion re: the challenges of addressing this type of behavior. Everyone could appreciate the landowners' concerns. The swimming hole cleanup day on Saturday will be a positive step, but ongoing measures and community involvement will be helpful.

Additional Discussion:

Bat Event September 27th at 6:30 p.m.- The RCC has planned a presentation by Barry Genzlinger of the Vermont Bat Center. Specific location TBD, but it is expected to be in Richford. This program will be free and all ages are welcome. As soon as details are set, the MCC will help spread the word. After discussion, Carissa made a motion to donate a \$25.00 gas gift card to Barry. Patrick seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

MRBA Grant Applications Announced – This was brought to everyone's attention. At this point, there was no decision to move forward with an application.

Patrick. made a motion, seconded by Matt, to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Joan Hildreth