

TOWN OF MONTGOMERY
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CONSERVATION COMMISSION (MCC) MEETING (unapproved draft)
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 02, 2024

The meeting, held at the Public Safety Building (PSB), was called to order by Patrick Calecas at 5:43 p.m.

Attendance: Marielle Ambroch, Patrick Calecas, Joan Hildreth, Parma Jewett, Matt Paggi, Kip Potter

Absent: Susan Baker, Lynn Locher, Charles Snedcor

Additions/Changes to Agenda: New Chairperson and new Vice Chairperson
New Chairperson and Vice Chairperson - After discussion, Joan made a motion to nominate Patrick as Chairperson and Kip as Vice Chairperson of the MCC. Matt seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. All expressed much appreciation to both Patrick and Kip. Parma plans to notify the Town Clerk about the new roles. All agreed that the MCC would continue with the division of duties which was outlined in the minutes of the September 4, 2024 meeting.

Welcome New Member/Visitors: Kip Potter's nomination as a new member of the MCC was approved by the Selectboard, and everyone welcomed him and agreed that it is great to have him officially "on board." There were no visitors at the meeting.

Minutes 09/04/24 – After discussion, Kip made a motion to approve the minutes and Marielle seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The 09/04/24 minutes were approved.

Budget/CD Update, Treasurer's Report – Patrick reported that there had been no changes since the July 3, 2024 meeting and, therefore, there was no update.

Events/Projects:

Planned:

Friday, Oct. 4th 5-7 p.m. Ethan Tapper Book Launch "How to Love a Forest" at MCA in collaboration with the MCA, MCC, Cold Hollow to Canada and Phoenix Books – Parma plans to bring some food/refreshments to the event, which everyone appreciates. All of the MCC members who plan to attend the event agreed to arrive early to help with any set up, as needed.

Saturday, October 5th at 10:00 a.m. at the Richford Town Hall – Loon Program – co-sponsored by the MCC, Arvin A. Brown Public Library, and Enosburgh and Richford Conservation Commissions (ECC, RCC) – Joan will check with Annette at RCC about the invoice for the MCC's share of the cost. Some MCC members who plan to attend the event will contribute refreshments.

Meeting #2 - Watershed Data collection presentation + Outreach Strategy – Date in Oct. TBD – Lauren Weston of the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRCD) will provide information about this once the date is set. It is expected to occur in October of 2024, but there has not yet been notification of a date.

Proposed/Discussion/Updates:

Town Forest (TF) Update- Matt reported that Kricket McCusker of TR Fellows Engineering VT provided an estimate of \$4,000.00 for the cost of designing a walking bridge to span the brook in the TF. On 10/1/24, a Community Grants application completed by Matt, on behalf of the MCC, was submitted to UMATR, seeking \$4,000.00 to cover the cost of the bridge design. Decisions on the grant applications are expected by the end of October 2024. If awarded the grant, the goal would be to have the design completed by July 1, 2025, at which point it could be provided to potential contractors for bids on the cost of constructing the bridge. Possible funding sources for bridge construction were discussed, and additional grant options will continue to be explored. There was also discussion about seeking input from Northwoods Stewardship Center about the proposed trails, but all agreed that this could wait until the spring. The first priority is the bridge design.

MRBA Knotweed Bonfire and Fire Skills & Star Stories- Elliot Cluba – proposed date October 16th – After discussion, all agreed that it would be preferable to have this event at a later date given that there are many upcoming community events in early October already scheduled, as well as a possible conflict with another event on the 16th. The idea was raised of having this event closer to the new moon in the hope of better star gazing opportunities, and perhaps combining it with another community Halloween event. October 30th was raised as a possible date. All agreed that this would be worth exploring. Joan plans to contact MRBA/UMATR as well as Elliot Cluba for input on this idea. If they are in agreement, she would then contact the Rec. Dept. about it for their thoughts, as well as any other possible partners such as RCC.

Conservation Reserve Fund (CRF) application – Joan shared notes from a discussion she had with Dave Erickson, Conservation Director for Cold Hollow to Canada (CHC) about a proposed project and related application to the CRF. An application to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) for the proposed project was expected to be submitted by 10/1/24. The next step would be a site visit sometime this month with Dave, the landowner, and Kip, as the CRF point person for the MCC. Other MCC members would be welcome to attend the visit as well. After the site visit, the CRF application would be completed and submitted to the MCC for review at the 11/6/24 meeting. There was also some general discussion about various issues related to the CRF and its use.

Town Land (TL) – Jewett Property – It was noted that Derek planned to do the final mowing for season at the end of September/early October, and this was reportedly done. The MCC should be receiving the invoice soon. There was discussion about the idea of widening the paths next year. This would require preparations in the early spring, prior to the 1st mowing. Matt plans to touch base with Derek about all of the above. Matt also agreed to pick up the tarp which is at the TL. Kip provided input about the knotweed situation at the TL, and he shared about various methods of knotweed control which are available. He suggested that the TL could be utilized as a demo site, with a number of areas delineated for the testing of different methods of control. This could provide valuable information to the community re: knotweed management. All agreed that this is a great suggestion. Kip offered to discuss the idea with Lindsey Wight of UMATR for her input, including about possible funding sources for this type of project. He also plans

to explore other grants/funding sources. On a different note, Parma raised the issue of ATVs driving on the TL, and there was discussion about the impact. Patrick agreed to contact Charlie Hancock to discuss ways in which this could be addressed.

Association of VT Conservation Commissions – A recording of the 9/5/24 meeting is available on-line. All agreed that it would be useful to watch it.

Marielle made a motion, seconded by Patrick, to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Joan Hildreth