

TOWN OF MONTGOMERY
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CONSERVATION COMMISSION (MCC) MEETING (unapproved draft)
WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2025

The meeting, held at the Public Safety Building (PSB), was called to order by Patrick Calecas at 5:31 p.m.

Attendance: Marielle Ambroch, Patrick Calecas, Joan Hildreth, Lynn Locher, Matt Paggi, Kip Potter, Charles Snedikor

Absent: None

Visitor(s): Cliff Loos had expressed an interest in joining the MCC and was welcomed to the meeting.

Additions/Changes to Agenda: Additions: Town Forest Census request; flood mitigation proposal at Town Land; offer of new trees for Town Land by the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRCD)

Approval of Minutes 04/02/25 – Lynn made a motion to approve the minutes; Marielle seconded. After a brief discussion, all present voted in favor of approving the 04/02/25 minutes. Motion passed.

Budget/CD Update/Treasurer's Report – No recent update. As of 01/13/25: CD balance of \$78,017.94, maturing on 6/16/25; checking account balance of \$11,794.22. Patrick plans to follow-up re: the CD, as well as re: the receipt of a recent donation to the MCC.

Events/Projects – Planned:

Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC) – Invasives Event on May 9th – Kip is planning to attend. He provided an overview of the event and its expected relevance to the Knotweed Project (KP) at the Town Land (TL). He said that there is a Zoom option, too, if anyone else were interested and available that day. Patrick mentioned that it would be helpful if information about best practices for municipalities re: invasives were covered at the event as well, and all agreed.

Free Trees for Montgomery Residents through UVM Program – Saturday, May 17th – 10 – 12 at PSB – All set for now. Joan plans to be at the PSB to receive the 125 free trees at a day/time TBD the week prior to the event. Doug Kopacz, Montgomery Fire Chief, has offered to assist with watering of the trees as needed until they are picked up. It should be noted that Montgomery residents very quickly signed up for all of the trees.

Bird Walk hosted by Richford Conservation Commission (RCC) – Sunday, May 25th, 8:00 – 10 a.m. at Richford Town Forest - RCC will soon provide further information. Registration will be required; attendance will be capped at 20.

Proposed/Discussion/Updates:

Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions (AVCC) – Patrick plans to complete the AVCC Needs Assessment. Joan submitted an application to the AVCC Tiny Grants Program for \$600 to cover the cost of two community workshops led by

Elliot Cluba: *Reading the Landscape* and *Natural Navigation*. As of this meeting, the MCC has not been notified of the AVCC's decision on the application.

Elliot Club Workshops – After discussion, all agreed on going forward with planning the above two workshops whether or not the grant funding is awarded. Lynn made a motion, seconded by Charlie, to authorize payment of \$600.00 to Elliot Cluba to cover the cost of the two workshops (\$300.00 each). All voted in favor; the motion passed. Joan will contact Elliot about possible dates, one in June, the other in August.

Town Forest (TF) – Bridge Design/Funding – Matt reported that there had been no further discussion with the engineer re: bridge design, and that there are no known grant funding options at this time. Patrick agreed to explore a possible source of a donation for the bridge design. There was also discussion about contacting Dusty May of North Woods Stewardship Center (NWSC) in the future re: a consultation on needed trail work. This would likely be best to do when leaves are off the trees – autumn or spring.

Town Land (TL) – Mowing, etc. – Matt reported that he, Kip, Patrick, and Joan (as well as Barb Paggi and Bill Hildreth) met with Derek Saborowski at the TL on 4/26 to assess mowing needs, the condition of the trees, and the Knotweed Project (KP). Matt shared an overview of the issues raised and concerns identified, which also informed the development of a proposal for work needed during 2025 subsequently provided to the MCC by Derek. That proposal was reviewed at this meeting, with a focus on the scope of the work as well as the costs and their breakdown. There was also discussion re: considering alternative management practices at the TL in the future, including the utilization of goats for knotweed control. After discussion, Matt made a motion, seconded by Charlie, to approve the \$2,200.00 proposal, with the understanding that Matt would discuss relevant additional details with Derek. All voted in favor; the motion passed.

Knotweed Project (KP) – Grant Application Status – Kip provided an update on the 2-year grant for \$15K for the KP. The goal is to start ASAP, this summer. Kip has developed the Work Plan, but a Quality Assurance (QA) Plan is needed as well. Because information provided at the May 9th Invasives event will likely help inform the QA Plan, Kip expects to finalize the QA Plan soon after the May 9th event. He noted that the EPA in Boston has to approve QA Plans, and it is uncertain how long that process will take. Kip also provided an overview of the way in which the KP will be implemented at the TL, including the various control measures which will be tested. Those will consist of mowing, stem injections of several different substances, and allelopathic planting. Everyone agreed that this is an important project and the findings will be very useful.

Flood Mitigation Proposal at TL – This relates to the two above topics. Lauren Weston of the FCNRCD provided the MCC with a map of “Proposed Conditions” at the TL in the event that the recommendations of the Montgomery Flood Hazard Mitigation Study were followed. There was discussion about certain parts of the map, and questions were raised about the possible impacts of the proposal on various sections of the TL and how this would affect planning going forward.

TL – Offer of New Trees by FCNRCD – Dorothy Kinney-Landis of FCNRCD contacted the MCC to offer a wide variety of native trees and shrubs for planting at the TL. All agree that this would be great and expressed appreciation. She plans to be at the TL on 5/14 to scope out planting sites, and on 5/15 she will be there with the MES

students for the day. Kip, Marielle and Matt all said they could be available to meet with Dorothy. Matt plans to contact her prior to her visit to discuss details.

Hazen's Notch Conservation Trust (HNCT) – Patrick shared a letter from HNCT requesting a donation. After discussion, it was agreed that Patrick would respond, denying the request, but providing options for other possible sources of donations.

MCC Membership Openings – Cliff Loos attended the meeting and he confirmed that he would like to formally join the MCC, which everyone very much appreciates. Patrick offered to follow through on the necessary steps to formalize Cliff's MCC membership. It should be noted that there is still an opening for one additional member. If there are members of the Montgomery community who would be interested in serving on the MCC, inquiries are very much welcome. The MCC e-mail address is:

MontgomeryConservation@gmail.com

Logo Design Project – Lynn reported that MES students had developed a number of logo designs, and those were provided to the MCC. Lynn printed all of them for MCC members to review together. Everyone was impressed by all of them and agreed that Montgomery is fortunate to have so many talented students and school staff members. After discussion about the logo designs and how best to proceed, Lynn agreed to contact Sandy Alexander at MES with the MCC's feedback/suggestions. The goal would be to provide the logo finalists to the MCC by the next meeting on 6/4.

Tree and Plaque for MES 2025 Graduating Class – Everyone is interested in continuing the tradition of providing a tree and plaque in honor of the graduates. Lynn offered to contact Sandy at the MES re: details and to identify a source for the plaque.

Farmer's Market – All agreed that it would be beneficial to continue with having a table for the MCC at the Farmer's Market once a month – July, August and September. Patrick offered to check into the procedure. There will be further discussion at the June MCC meeting.

Montgomery Center for the Arts (MCA) - Thank You for Donation to the MCC – Everyone again expressed great appreciation for the MCA's recent donation to the MCC, and all signed a thank you card to give to them. It should be noted that this gift could be used toward the cost of upcoming planned workshops for the community if the MCC does not receive the AVCC grant.

Fundraising/Membership – After discussion, all agreed to not have a membership drive at this time, but to instead focus on other means of fundraising. The option of a raffle was raised and everyone supported the idea. Patrick offered to provide bat boxes and Kip offered to provide a framed photograph for this purpose. Lynn offered to check out options for the raffle tickets themselves. Those could be sold at the Farmer's Market and other events during the summer, with the drawing held at the end of the summer or early fall. The idea of a "Conservation Car Wash" was discussed as well.

Town Forest Census – Marielle shared about an e-mail received from Matt Fischetti, a researcher working on the Vermont Town Forest Census project at UVM, asking the MCC to complete a Town Forest Census form for the project. Matt agreed to complete the form.

Charlie made a motion, seconded by Lynn, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Joan Hildreth