

TOWN OF MONTGOMERY
PO BOX 356; MONTGOMERY CENTER, VT 05471
802-326-4719 <http://www.montgomeryvt.us>
CONSERVATION COMMISSION (MCC) MEETING (unapproved draft)
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

The meeting, held at the Public Safety Building (PSB), was called to order by Patrick Calecas at 5:30 p.m.

Attendance: Marielle Ambroch, Patrick Calecas, Joan Hildreth, Lynn Locher, Cliff Loos, Matt Paggi, Kip Potter

Absent: Charles Snedikor

Visitors: Charlie Hancock, Selectboard Chair and Franklin/Grand Isle County Forester; Dorothy Kinney-Landis, Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRCD)

Additions/Changes to Agenda: AVCC Regional Meeting on 10/11/25 in Hardwick, VT

Town Land (TL) – Mowing, Status, Planning - The MCC members appreciate both Charlie's and Dorothy's willingness to attend this meeting in order to provide input about the TL. Matt provided a brief history of the TL and its uses, shared information about the vision which Carissa Stein had developed for its future, and described its current status and the challenges which have been encountered. Concerns/challenges include: knotweed in the interior section (not just along the riverbank), thick/high growth of plants/trees which compete with the fruit and nut trees, and browse and the death of many of the planted trees. It was also noted that a portion of the land, about 4.5 acres close to the river, has been identified as being key in a flood plain restoration project which the Town is pursuing, and that the MCC has a grant for a knotweed project which is expected to get underway in 2026. Matt also reported that Derek has been mowing as planned. After this review and initial discussion, it was agreed by all that a long-term management plan for the property is sorely needed.

Discussion of Long-Term Management Plan for TL – Initial input from Charlie – He shared that the Town is working with Vermont River Conservancy (VRC) on a plan to conserve a relatively small, but important, parcel of land which abuts the TL, with the idea of then transferring ownership to the Town. The project has not been finalized, but if it occurs, it would provide a good fit with the TL as well as River Walk Park. Given this proposed plan, Charlie suggested that the MCC connect with VRC to let them know about the TL situation and to seek their recommendations and inquire about the possibility of coordinated efforts. He also mentioned the Brownway Property in Enosburg, and recommended looking at that and learning more about its development and management. **Initial input from Dorothy** – She shared information about the proposed flood plain restoration of the lower portion of land closer to the river and said that FCNRCD is continuing to explore funding options. All agreed that this project would clearly need to be considered/included in the long-term management of the TL.

Developing management plan and possible components of the plan – Dorothy was asked if FCNRCD could be hired to develop the plan and she agreed to check and let the MCC know. Charlie said that there could be other possibilities as well, such as Arrowwood Environmental. He also mentioned some components/issues to consider as the plan is developed, including: where to mow; where pathways should be; areas of no interventions; enrichment planting; defining where to reforest. Kip raised relevant questions about the flood plain restoration project and appropriate soil removal. He also suggested the idea of the TL having 5 areas: 1. mature forest with some enrichment; 2. orchard and maybe have a pagoda or other structure(s); 3. flood plain; 4. early successional area for nesting birds; 5. Wetland/wetland restoration area. **Short-term plan/tasks** - 1. Patrick and Kip to send Dorothy relevant info about the TL including prior plans and overview of Knotweed Project; 2. Vermont Land Trust (VLT) and VRC to be contacted about restoration work and the possibility of an easement on the TL; 3. MCC members to learn about/visit Brownway property; 4. In late October or early November (date TBD at next meeting), MCC and Dorothy (Charlie, too, if available) to walk the TL to identify the status of planted trees and mark the surviving ones more clearly with taller poles; 5. Late fall – Requests for Proposals (RFPs) re: quotes for management plan to be developed/submitted; 6. Early spring – MCC to check on trees, most everything to be mowed, and knotweed to be addressed in interior section. All agreed that the discussion was very helpful in providing a clearer direction going forward. It was noted that, as the process unfolds further, additional community input will be solicited re: the use of the land for the Town.

Approval of Minutes 08/06/25 – Cliff made a motion to approve the minutes; Matt seconded. After a brief discussion, all present voted in favor of approving the 08/06/25 minutes. Motion passed.

Budget/CD Update/Treasurer's Report – No update

Events/Projects

Planned: None currently planned

Proposed/Discussion/Updates:

Town Land (TL) - See above – discussed at beginning of meeting.

Town Forest (TF) – Tabled until spring.

Knotweed Project (KP) – Grant Update – Kip is working on QA plan, no further update.

MCC Membership Updates/Opening – One opening remains. ***Again, 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 she spoke with Sandy Alexander about gift ideas for the winning designer, Maverick Sylvester, and it was agreed that he would probably like a gift certificate. Cliff made a motion, seconded by Kip, for the MCC to purchase a \$25.00 gift certificate from Amazon. Motion carried unanimously. Lynn also passed around a thank you note to Maverick for everyone to sign. In addition, Lynn

plans to contact Sandy about obtaining a jpeg file of the logo, preferably with the orange background changed to green. That will be used in the MCC brochure, and decals can be printed.

Replacement of Tree for MES 2025 Graduating Class – Lynn reported that she spoke to Sandy about the MCC's intention to replace the dead tree this fall. Patrick plans to look into a source for the new tree.

Farmer's Market – It was reported that all went well on 8/23. The MCC plans to have a table at the market again on 9/27. Marielle, Cliff, Kip and Lynn all volunteered to be there, and the idea of taking shifts was discussed.

Brochure for the MCC – Kip shared a draft of a brochure and all agreed that he did a great job. A few minor edits were discussed. It is expected that the brochure will be all set for availability at the Farmer's Market on 9/27.

Raffle – Additional raffle tickets were sold at the 8/23 Farmer's Market, and they will be available at the one on 9/27. Again, the items being raffled are a large bat house, a glossy photo print of Jay Peak, and another smaller print of Jay Peak. Tickets are being sold as follows: 3 for \$5.00 or 7 for \$10.00. The drawing will be held at the MCC's meeting on 10/01/25.

Ideas for Future MCC Projects –

Bird Houses for TL – Tabled

Trail Camera(s) for TF/TL – Tabled

Ideas for Future MCC Events –

Elliot Club's offer of a free workshop - Tabled

Showing of the film "The Celebration: Exploring Vermont's Wild and Scenic Rivers" – All agreed that this would be a great event to hold in Montgomery during the second half of October. Joan plans to contact UMATR about coordination and possible dates.

Additional Discussion -

AVCC Regional Meeting – 10/11/25 – Cliff plans to attend.

Lynn made a motion, seconded by Marielle, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Joan Hildreth