

Morristown Conservation Commission  
December 21, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 at the Tegu Building and was available via Zoom.

Members Present: Ron Stancliff, Jerry Throne, Kari Anderson, Sandra Zebal, Jess Zehngut, Pamela Stanyon

Members Absent: Brent Teillon, Dave Stevens, Jim Pease

Guests: Kevin Barrows, Fran Sladyk, Evelyn Throne

### **1. Duhamel Gravel Pit Reforestation Discussion**

MCC invited Kevin Barrows of the Morristown Highway Dept, and Fran Sladyk, Morristown's Tree Warden, to discuss plans regarding the reforestation/reclamation of the pit. They provided information regarding current activity, past and present forest management plans, and present state/composition of soils, vegetation, etc.

The presence of knotweed and honeysuckle has prompted invasive control done by a combination of cutting (July) and herbicide application. With continued control, natural early succession regrowth will occur, resulting in the type of young forest that the state lacks overall in about 20 years..

The high sand and gravel content of the soil makes it susceptible to drought, but species such as white pine and red maple would do well. There has been 8-10" of topsoil added to phase 2. Planting on steep slopes is also recommended to aid in soil stability, and again, white pine would be a good choice. Using a 9x6 spacing would aid in deterring weevils. White, red and Norway spruce would also do well.

Fall plantings will increase survival rate, and there was discussion of transplanting from the Town Forest as well as purchasing tublings. Pollinator gardens would be a beneficial addition to the area as well and should be planted on level ground.. NRCS has bare root stock in the spring; nurseries will sell at a discounted rate in the fall. Typical survival rate of tublings is 80%. We will know how a planting in Montgomery did in the spring of this year.

The commission's inclination is to reforest in select areas, cutting, controlling for weeds, and fertilizing to allow/encourage the trees to take root, while allowing natural regrowth to occur as much as possible in the area as a whole.

Fran will email Ron the Act 250 Plan for the pit. We will plan a spring visit and schedule a planting order at that point.

- Kevin Barrows said that Phase 2 has been completed and it has been regraded and seeded. He thinks it will take 5 years to get to the point in Phase 3, when reforestation can begin.

November minutes were not approved due to a lack of quorum.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Town Forest Kiosk**

The kiosk structures are in place in the Beaver Meadow Parking Lot. The remaining task to finalize for the Town Forest kiosk is its map. Walter addressed most of the commission's concerns following its February 2023 meeting, but the current map still shows deviation between the VAST trail and TH 42 and 43 between the gate and where it heads to Johnson, which is inaccurate. Jerry brought several maps to the meeting to show exactly where the discrepancies lie. It would also be nice to have the Burling Trail shown. Jim will go over these last corrections/additions with Walter.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. New Members**

The commission welcomed new members Pamela Stanyon and Sandra Zebal.

### **2. Koper Conservation Celebration**

There will be a gathering at the Tegu Building on January 3 at 11:30 to celebrate the conservation of 129 acres bordering Randolph Road. Ron has worked toward this with Michael Koper, the owner, among others, for over two years. Ron expects 20-30 people to attend, including a representative from the New England Forest Foundation. He will reach out to the News and Citizen, and hopes to have an MCC presence. Mr. Koper will fund refreshments.

### **3. Avery Property**

The Dept of Fish and Wildlife is planning to purchase the Avery property, formerly Cady's Falls Nursery, from Don and Lela Avery. The 22.4-acre property has flooded 7 times since the Averys acquired it in 1979. The property borders the intersection of the Kenfield Brook and the Lamoille River at the end of Duhamel Road.

### **4. Other**

Ron reported on a 50-acre parcel owned by John and Debra Lundblad bordering both the Duhamel Gravel pit and the Town Forest. They do not live in the area, so he suggested approaching them regarding conservation. Kari made a motion to approach, which Pam seconded.

The Selectboard would like a representative from MCC to speak at a town informational meeting on January 6. Jerry has volunteered and has asked that members send him input outlining key points about MCC activities for him to present.

## **MEMBER REPORT**

Ron would like members of the MCC to review agendas and minutes of the town's various governmental groups (DRB, Planning Council, Trustees, etc.) so that we are aware of proposed activities.

Ron would also like to request that Stowe Land Trust take a look at wetlands areas around Paine's Tree Farm and Molly's Bog near the Morristown/Stowe line.

## **ADJOURN**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:05

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jess Zehngut