

Morristown Conservation Commission

8/15/24

Prior to the scheduled meeting, Kendra Collins gave a presentation on the American Chestnut Foundation. Ron introduced Kendra and provided a brief bio at 6:00. Kendra presented on the background of the ACF, the science (breeding, biotechnology, and biodiversity) behind restoration efforts, and the local volunteer chapter of ACF. Ron has six Chestnut seedlings he is hoping to plant in the Town Forest.

Call to order: 6:57 at the Tegu Building, also available via Zoom. Casey (?) will be overseeing meeting livestream moving forward.

Members present: Ron Stancliff, Jerry Throne, Kari Anderson, Pam Zebal, Jess Zehngut, Dave Stevens

Absent: Pam Stanyon, Brent Teillon, Jim Pease

Guest: Hilary Warner

Approve minutes from June meeting

Jess motioned, Sandra seconded, no discussion, meeting minutes were passed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Warner Trail

Property owners declined proposal when approached by Ron due to previous issues with poor treatment of their property. They need to preserve their sugaring operation. Hilary sent a map of the proposed trail to Scott Johnstone at MWL over a month ago but has gotten no response

2. Ron discussed logging operation at Bugbee Springs. He hopes that MCC members will continue his efforts to transfer this property from the village to the town of Morristown.

3. Ron noted that there is still beaver activity in the Town Forest and erosion on roadside. He believes that the removal of a dam above the culvert five years ago is causing problems. He also noticed a dumpsite above site 7 and personally removed waste. Jess would like to discuss the possible use of beaver baffles but would like to have Brent present.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Duhamel Reforestation

Ron has emailed Emily Potter, county forester, but she's on vacation. Grass on upper level had been mowed last week, which destroys any natural reforestation activity. He emailed Act 250 to change order that the town is supposed to mow. Act 250 rep suggested Ron talk to somebody from Forest and Parks. He contacted Walter, who directed him (eventually) to Emily. He will need to get an Act 250 permit for the

reforestation of the Phase II area. Peter Danforth will help. The mowing is a concern and Ron will email town manager (Brent Raymond).

2. Morristown Forest Update

We need to establish a work day. Ron will email Brent to see if he has a date to propose.

3. MSI Industrial Park

Application with Act 250 for establishment of one or two water tanks which border Stagecoach Rd. Greaves property is 400 acres and on the tax map there are a couple of places that it abuts Stagecoach. This may delay the 85 acre-development across from the airport.

4. Green Up Day

Ron only needs final tonnage of waste for the Town Report.

5. Questionnaire

We used to pass out questionnaires at Town Meeting but with the change to Australian ballot, this opportunity has been lost. Sara Haskins suggested including one with the tax bills to all landowners. Pam would like one or two members to collaborate with her on a new questionnaire. Sandra volunteered to help.

Hilary mentioned that in her previous Conservation Commission experience, proposed plans were brought before them, engineers spoke, and they did site walks.

6. Plans for next Arbor Day plantings

Arbor Day plantings would be a great project for MCC and can be done in conjunction with Duhamel reforestation efforts. We need to determine how much we would like to spend, what we should plant (Ron mentioned a Wisconsin nursery for ordering), and consider our potential labor force (Peter Danforth of LCCD has indicated that he will help, Peoples Academy students). Fran Sladyk suggested planting White Pine and Red Maple in the past.

Pam and Ron attended a grant writing workshop given by Vermont Urban and Community Forestry in Randolph in May. Pam will submit a grant proposal to VT UCF (due in December).

7. Copley Fitness Trail

Ron thought O'Neil Demars might be working on trails. History: Denise (?) approached MCC about having a trail system for patients and staff to use to avoid walking on Washington Highway. O'Neil Demars built trails, Ron named and painted. If any improvement efforts are made, the initial slope leading into the trail system ('Hope' trail) could use steps or an alternative method to lessen the grade. Ron would like somebody to develop a durable solution. He would also like to make a brochure with a map and history. He has provided a map to Copley with color-coded trails, but members have reported that it is hard to access maps at Copley.

8. Other

Kari suggested New Hampshire State Forest nursery as a place to order seedlings. You can start ordering in December. They have hardwoods, softwoods, shrubs, etc.

Kari will request a catalog.

Jess motioned to adjourn and Jerry seconded. Adjourned at 8:00.