

Morristown Conservation Commission, Tegu Building
November 17, 2022

Attendees: Ron Standcliff, Kristen Connelly, Brent Teillon, Dave Stevens, Mariah Keagy, Jess Zehngut

Members Absent: Jim Pease, Richard Sargent

Guests: Leslie Oplinger, Kari Anderson

Meeting opened at 6:30

Interviews

The meeting began with interviews of 15 minutes each with two individuals interested in filling the MCC seat left by Jennifer Andrews. Each candidate answered similar questions posed by commission members and was given an opportunity to ask her own questions.

Leslie Oplinger's interview began at 6:30. She is pursuing civic engagement at this point because her son is in college, giving her more time. Her present interest has been motivated by the increased rate of development Morristown is seeing and keeping green spaces is a priority for her. She has expressed interest to the Selectboard specifically regarding Kate Simms's land on Bliss Hill, recognizing that it is already used for recreation and would be an ideal parcel to conserve. She recognizes the importance of partnership in order to acquire land and is comfortable with grant writing, fundraising, partnering with organizations such as SLT, etc. Regarding her priorities with respect to MCC bylaws, preserving green spaces, community education, and information gathering (such as the CVM project) are all interests. She would bring strong advocacy skills, clear communication abilities, organization, and a strong work ethic to the commission. She is a long-time member of the community who loves to spend time outdoors, and is a researcher who will pursue a topic until she feels comfortable representing the MCC at various board meetings. Leslie asked commission members about the time commitment that comes with membership, and current conservation projects.

Kari Anderson does not anticipate any conflicts with regular meetings. She is busier in the summer and has some weekend events then. The MCC bylaws drew her to the commission as they align with her day-to-day activities and how she lives life in general. Land acquisition is an area of particular interest, though her area of strength is hands-on work with the land. As an owner/manager of two agricultural businesses, who has always worked in the natural landscape, she understands the physical needs of various types of land use and how to oversee projects. While Kari expressed that her knowledge of the relationships and interaction between the governing bodies of the town is limited at this point, she is interested in learning more. She understands that the time commitment to the MCC requires more than the monthly meetings. When asked about any specific projects or parcels of land that she would be interested in pursuing, Kari mentioned the 12 acres for sale near Morristown Four Corners as a point of curiosity for her because it is currently for sale. When asked about a unique strength she would

bring to the commission, Kari noted her comfort with nature, seeing land for what it is, and understanding where conservation efforts need to go. if she places more value on science or emotion, she replied that science is real and can't be ignored but that there needs to be a balance between the two,

The board voted and Ron stated that he would email Kari to inform her of her nomination.

Brent motioned to approve the October minutes and Kristen seconded. The motion passed.

Old Business

Bryan Pond Parking Lot: Brent reported that there were no new developments.

Community Values Mapping: Now that there is some more breathing room in Mariah and Kristen's schedules, it will be easier for them to meet and begin to collate the data collected.

Sue Morse Talk: Brent spoke with Sue Morse on 10/25 and she is presenting in webinars in lieu of in-person presentations. The board discussed whether or not to go ahead with this option and whether or not to hold a screening for people to gather. Brent moved to invite Sue to present the webinar, 'The Cougar Returns to the East' and Jess seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Liebler Land: Brent reported that the Liebler family is not interested in selling any land to the town. The commission will take no steps to pursue this.

Town Forest Trails Kiosk: Jess passed out text and photo layouts for the trailhead kiosk for commission approval. The wildlife panel will feature a larger photo while history will contain more text. Discussion regarding use ensued. Several members have seen horse prints. Brent said that the use should follow State Forest trail restrictions.

Book Group at the Library: Kristen reported that the discussion of *The Animal One Thousand Miles Long* at the Morristown Centennial Library was a success. Kristen made the connection between the book and the work of MCC, and Leath, the author, spoke via Zoom as well.

New Business: Ron expressed concern regarding conservation easements, reiterating that undevelopable land should be excluded from calculation. He's also concerned about 6 proposed 6500 sq ft lots on Beacon Hill being considered at the next DRB meeting. Minimum lot size is 10000 sq ft.

Meeting adjourned at 8.