

Morristown Conservation Commission

April 20, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:30. It was held at the Tegu building and via Zoom.

Attendance: Brent Teillon, Ron Stancliff, Richard Sargent, Dave Stevens, Kari Anderson, Jess Zehngut, and Kristen Connelly via Zoom.

Absent: Mariah Keagy, Jim Pease

Guest: Martha Battle

Brent motioned to approve the March minutes, Dave seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Old Business:

1. Community Values Mapping

Kristen and Mariah met with Jens Hilke of Vt Fish and Wildlife. He has worked with many other Vermont towns on CVM projects over the years. Brooke and Mariah are compiling data to give Jens and expect the maps to be completed by the end of May. Data and maps will be published, made available on the town website, as well as to any interested parties. This data can be used to guide decision making moving forward and as a reference for various partnerships and collaborative efforts by MCC and other groups. Upon completion, it will be presented to the Selectboard and hopefully to the Planning Council. Waterbury is currently preparing to present its CVM project, while Woodbury's has served as a good model.

2. Green Up Day 2023

Brent has been organizing and preparing for Green Up Day, and has set up all sign-up materials in the hall outside of the Town Clerk's office in the Tegu Building. Interested residents can pick up bags, choose and highlight sections of road for greening up, and leave questions at the table. Brent encourages MCC members to stop by and check on the materials. The dumpster will be dropped off at the Oxbow on Friday morning, May 5. Tents will be set up Saturday morning, May 6. This year, tires collected will be \$5/ due to losses incurred last year at \$3/. Brent will check with Casella and an operation in Hardwick to determine prices. The Town crew will pick up green bags on Monday. Of note; Turtle Fur will be giving employees time for greening up on Friday during the work day.

3. Bryan Pond Parking Lot

There are eight or nine trees left to be cleared. The ground is probably too wet for digging at time of meeting. The parking lot will be a stone base covered by coarse gravel and fine finish gravel. The contractor will only be cutting marked trees.

4. Deer Exclusion Fencing

Dave asked about the deer exclusion fencing in the Town Forest previously discussed. Brent reported that the Lamoille County Forester has been working with Fran Sladyk. The timeline was delayed because she did not have town permission in time to employ the efforts of the PA soccer team. Brent has not heard anything further for several months, but the project should still be in the works.

New Business

1. Summer Schedule

This comprises finishing projects at the Town Forest. Ron reported no downed trees on the road to the Sulham Cellar Hole. He plans to continue to check. Brent predicts we will not organize any volunteer work days before May 20 or 27. He would like to check on schedules for work on adjoining state land as well.

2. Pollinator Garden

Brent would like to consider spending approximately \$300 to rototill and plant around site #7 as a pollinator garden and would like to research more. Ron suggested reaching out to Boy Scouts, who had been interested in constructing bat houses.

3. MACC Tree Planting/Beautification Project

Martha Battle presented updated information on MACC's progress identifying potential spaces for new plantings, and explained that they would be focusing on smaller, flowering species rather than larger trees which have short lifespans when planted within town confines. While MACC has thus far focused on planters, etc, Martha would like to look more 'big picture.' Fran Sladyk walked through the village with Tricia last fall to identify obvious spaces for plantings. They identified seven sites including the space in front of the Noyes House, between the Post Office parking lot and Sundara Yoga studio, along Main Street past the fork where the town memorial is, and the space around the kiosk on the Rail Trail. Martha invites suggestions as well.

She is applying for a grant for small fruit trees, most likely blueberries. She also spoke about the Pollinator Pathway movement that Melissa Jordan is initiating in Morristown, and mentioned involving high schoolers as part of community service projects. Kristen suggested speaking with Jill Mudgett at the Noyes house regarding that planting. Brent expressed concern that the existing trees in town are not well maintained and is concerned about adding to them. Martha said that she thought working with Fran would be helpful in this regard, and that this was taken into consideration when determining what types of plantings to establish. (Those that will require less maintenance).

Member Report:

1. Transfer of village lands to town

Ron spoke about the transfer of various parcels of land to the Town. He has been in touch with Koper about his parcel on Randolph Road. He is waiting for appraisal results to submit for easements for NEFF. This parcel would potentially adjoin their parcel along Elmore Mt. Road. Ron would like to see a portion available for public use, but needs Mr. Koper to sign the easement. The land will be conserved but remain posted. Ron also spoke about the Demars trails between bridge street and Morristown Corners, Bugbee Springs, and Clark Park.

2. Town Plan Task Review

Jess asked Eric Dodge and Anna McCormick for clarification regarding an assignment to MCC to establish a path connecting the walking path around the Oxbow to the Rail Trail to provide a continuous Rail Trail Path. Eric said that the work was likely beyond the scope of a volunteer committee and advised MCC not to act on the task.

Brent moved to adjourn and Jess seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40.

Respectfully submitted, Jessica Zehngut