

Morristown Conservation Commission

March 17, 2021

Meeting opened at 6:30 pm. Meeting was held via Zoom on-line.

Attendance: Ron Stancliff, Jim Pease, Kristen Connelly, Brent Teillon, Jennifer Andrews, Jess Zehngut, Mariah Keaghy and David Stevens

Guests: Kevin Lane

The February meeting minutes were approved. Meeting minutes will be reviewed 10 days after they are sent or revised by the Chair at the next meeting.

Election of Officers: Dave made a motion to approve the current existing slate of officers: Ron as cochair, Kristen as cochair, Jim as secretary and Dick as treasurer. Jess seconded it. The motion was approved.

Old Business:

- (1) Summer Conservation** – we have about two weeks of work in the Town Forest. Brent has made a list. We also have the new parking lot near the Red Pine plantation and that will cost about \$18,000 to construct, Cost should be shared with DFPR. The Committee can do some of the trail work but not everything on the list. Jim will contact Megan at the North Woods Stewardship Center to see if they have any crew time available.
- (2) ATVs – The group opposing ATV's gaining access town roads** had a very good response to their petition. This may have some influence with the Select Board. Kevin Lane spoke to an attorney who said the trial use on Silver Ridge Rd should have been done with an ordinance rather than a board decision. The Town cannot overturn the decision like they could with an ordinance. The public does not have the same influence as it would with an ordinance. Bob Beaman did write on FPF that this would be discussed publicly over the next 3-6 months, but Kevin is afraid that the SB may repeat the action they took with Silver Ridge Rd. Kevin did talk to VLCT, but they cannot help his group, only a town board. It was mentioned that Dick may be able to help. Mariah mentioned that there are environmental repercussions for ATV use on Class 4 roads. Brent did send a letter to the SB about ATV use on Mud City Loop and that the MCC was opposed to it. Do we know if Dan gave the letter to the SB? We can check the SB minutes. Dan did tell Brent that there is not an ordinance, and nothing would happen without a public meeting. But Brent knows this is a controversial issue and the SB is looking at their options. Brent feels that if there was a public vote on the issue it would fail. The petition that supports ATVs was not signed only by residents. Kevin stated that the Johnson French Hill Rd/Reservoir Rd route may be open to ATVs and then ATVs would be using the Town Forest roads. Kristen reassured Kevin that the MCC is not in favor of ATVs and that we sent the letter. Jenn made a motion for Mariah to contact the Green Mountain Club trails committee about ATV use in the area. Kristen seconded it. The motion passed.

- (3) **Photo Contest** – Kristen will send the web link to the contest. Kristen has some social media notices to go out. The deadline will be August 13 and the P.A. Senior High School Art students are being asked to judge the youth category. Ben Grunow, of Elmore Mountain Photography, is volunteering as the judge of other categories.
- (4) **Web Site update** – a draft of the updated web site has been sent to the committee members.
- (5) **Neuland-K Parts Center** – New England Forestry Foundation is going to look into conserving this land in the spring. A sample easement was sent to the owner to review. Alan Thorndyke is representing adjoining land owners that are opposed to the initial housing subdivision.

New Business:

- (1) **Raising the Blade** – Jim asked Denise if we can listen in to the Hyde Park SB meeting where the Hyde Park Energy Committee presents the campaign to them. Jim will follow up.
- (2) **Educational Programs** – It will be possible to have public meetings later this year. We have already paid Susan Morse of Keeping Track for one presentation. Moriah suggested talking to Lauren Traister who is with UVM Extension about setting up an event. Kristen was thinking of other COVID friendly activities. Jess and Kristen suggested as an outside Scavenger Hunt possibly in the Town Forest. Brent has been working on a large tree contest for different species of trees. The Town Rec Committee is also interested. Jenn suggested we ask 4th -8th grade school teachers for ideas. Moriah has a packaged trail event where kids can learn about trail conditions and then go inventory a trail(s).
- (3) **Tree Planting** – 4th graders at MES are interested in tree planting. Ron does have some chestnut seeds and apple trees for the TF. Moriah mentioned Treeplenish as a tree planting program for a community.
- (4) **Town Forest Parking Lot** – Brent is going to meet with Walter O about the kiosk at the Beaver Meadow Trailhead. He will send a date for the meeting. Dave put up some interim mounted maps at the TF.
- (5) **Green-Up** – the sign up for Green-Up may not be at the Town Clerk's office.
- (6) **Town Forest Boundary** – the TF has 3 colors of paint for boundaries: red is for the primary boundary; orange is for the state-town boundary and yellow is for the lot lines. Ron will buy some red paint.
- (7) **Bugbee Springs** - Ron is talking to the Village about the Bugbee Springs land.
- (8) **Meeting date** – we are going to move the next meeting to the third Thursday of the month.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Jim Pease

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