

Summary MCC 9-26-25 workshop

Conservation Commission Strategy Planning Review

The meeting focused on reviewing and refining a draft vision and 3-5 year strategy plan for the Morristown Conservation Commission, which was based on survey data from 100 responses. The group discussed using a multi-voting process with stickers to prioritize plan elements, with each member receiving 6 votes to place on ideas they support. The plan will be finalized after the multi-voting process, though formal adoption requires a quorum of members who were absent, including Jim, Brent, and Dave.

Morristown Vision and Mission Review

The meeting focused on reviewing and refining Morristown's vision and mission statements. The group discussed their dream destination for the town, which includes a vibrant village center with green spaces, interconnected trails, and pollinator gardens. They emphasized the importance of maintaining large forest blocks and open spaces for biodiversity and recreation. The organization's mission was confirmed to remain unchanged, while a new vision was introduced to enable residents to contribute to a vibrant ecosystem. The group also discussed the need for clear zoning regulations and the importance of the organization's role in shaping the town's development through their mission and vision.

Conservation Easements and Trail Planning

The meeting focused on discussing the need for conservation easements and trail management in the town's planning process. Participants emphasized the importance of integrating conservation goals into development permits and ensuring that trail designs meet safety and maintenance standards. They identified gaps in the current strategic plan regarding trails and easements, suggesting the need for a dedicated trails section. The group also discussed the need to align the strategic plan with the town's bylaws and to define key terms like "modern trail design." They agreed to continue working on these issues in future sessions.

Conservation Easements and Development Impacts

The meeting discussed conservation easements, focusing on the town's ability to require developers to include trails, which was clarified as no longer possible. The group explored the implications of conservation easements on public access and the role of HOAs in managing conserved land. They also discussed a recent governor's executive order allowing development of unmapped wetlands without permits, which could impact conservation efforts. The conversation concluded with a review of MCC members'

understanding of conservation processes and the importance of serving as resources for landowners interested in conservation.

Morristown Trail Mapping Initiative

The group discussed the need to identify and map existing trails and conservation easements in Morristown, with a focus on understanding which lands are suitable for trails versus those that should remain undisturbed for wildlife. They agreed to create a color-coded map and spreadsheet to track different types of conserved land, with plans to gather input from the public at an upcoming event using colored tacks to mark known trails. The discussion revealed that while some trails exist, including the town forest and a few marked winter trails, there is no comprehensive mapping of trails, and the existing Morristown Trails map is outdated.

Community Conservation Education Initiatives

The meeting focused on conservation efforts and the need to better educate the community about land conservation benefits beyond tax breaks. The group discussed updating trail maps and spreadsheets, establishing trail sponsorship programs, and improving the Conservation Commission's marketing and branding efforts, with Nancy and Margo playing key roles in these initiatives. They also reviewed educational programs and workshops, including potential collaboration with Greenagers, and emphasized building relationships with local boards and organizations to strengthen conservation efforts.

Volunteer Recognition and Workshop Planning

The group discussed collaboration efforts and recognition for volunteers, including plans to acknowledge Margo's contributions. They considered holding a workshop rather than a special meeting to finalize important points and gather input from all members. The team also prepared for an upcoming meeting at 8:30 the next day, with plans to bring a camera, weights, and maps, and discussed the possibility of setting up a donation jar to support future expenses.