

Morristown Conservation Commission

October 17, 2024

Members present: Brent Teillon, Ron Stancliff, Dave Stephens, Jerry Throne, Pam Stanyon, Sandra Zabal, Jim Pease

Members absent: Jess Zehngut

Guests: Evelyn Throne

6:00 PM-Discussion with Shannon Morrison, VTDEC Wetlands Section

Meeting opened at 6:30 PM

Treasurer's Report

Brent reported that the commission has had a .50\$ increase in the conservation fund since September 2024. The total amount is \$38,104.25. There has been an expenditure of \$100 to remove the beaver from the Town Forest culvert. A discussion ensued and Ron made the motion to set up a petty cash limit of \$300 for the Treasurer to approve without full board approval. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Land Use data: Ron summarized the 80+ pages of land use data he found on Morristown. His intent is to release a 6-page summary that would hopefully encourage new private landowners to conserve their land in a Trust. We could do education to the public as well with the summary. Sandra indicated she would like to learn more about how land trusts function. The discussion concluded that we could ask the new administrator of the Stowe Land Trust to speak. Sandra made the motion to send an invitation to the administrator to come and talk. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
2. Brent stated that we could have new signage for the Northwest Trail for about \$300. Brent will have it done by Great Big Graphics.
3. The question arose whether we could modify the TF Kiosk signage to show the new trail. Brent will contact Walter O and see if that is possible. In the future we should add a QR code for the map to the kiosk signage but currently there is no service there.
4. We also need to reprint the TF trail maps with the new trail and refill the two map boxes at either end of the forest. Evelyn volunteered to do the work with Jerry helping. Brent will work with Dave on revising the trail map.
5. Brent proposed that we use the Town Hall window for Earth, Arbor and Greenup Days in 2025. We need to reserve the 4/18/25 to 5/7/25 window with the Town Clerk. Jerry will contact Sara about making this reservation.
6. Jim asked if there were any questions regarding the Jersey Heights stormwater vote.

Old Business

1. Duhamel Reforestation: There is not an Act 250 mowing requirement for Phase 2 according to Ron. Currently natural reforestation is happening although it is slow. A discussion ensued on whether we should write a grant for purchasing and planting trees. Pam would be willing to write it for the December RFP. We would need about \$1000/acre for 15 acres. A draft motion was discussed but it was deemed too early for approval. If we are going to expend funds we will need Select board approval. Jerry will talk to Brent Raymond. Pam will draft a plan and will get grant requirement details.
2. We should do a second release of Apple Trees in Spring 2025 above Bryant Pond Rd. This will involve some heavy work with chainsaws and brush cutters.
3. A survey was completed for the Demars-Copley steep entrance trail, and it has an overall grade of about 35%. Mariah Keaghy has provided comments on possible improvements. There appears to be two options: a) a wooden staircase or b) a switch backed trail. We should get Walter O's opinion of which option is best. We also need a rough estimate for each option. Jim suggested that Copley or Demars might provide some funding and that a stone staircase would last indefinitely but cost more. Jerry will forward Mariah's comments.
4. Conservation Questionnaire: Pam emailed and passed around a copy of the draft questionnaire. Members should send comments directly to her. The questionnaire will use Front Porch Forum to tabulate responses.
5. Ron would like to discuss providing a monetary incentive to landowners that allow the use of their land for recreational trails. If we need to find additional funding, we could submit a grant proposal to the state.
6. Potash Stream Buffer: Ron will look at maps of the area and see which streams do not have official names. We should then nominate those streams for naming to the Select board.
7. Brent pointed out that if we are going to put the .5 cent/1000 grand list assessment on the ballot for Town Meeting Day we need to get Select board and Town Manager approval soon. Brent made the motion to ask the SB/TM for approval of the assessment article for Town Meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Respectively submitted,
Jim Pease, Secretary