

**Town of Monkton
Conservation Commission
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, December 9th, 2019 6:00pm
Monkton Town Hall
(Approved January 13th, 2020)**

Members Present: Chelsea Smiley (Chair), Jaime Schulte (Clerk), Ian Smiley (Treasurer), Ann Johnston Miller, Kevin Lambert (joined at 6:20)

Members Absent:

Guests Present: Wendy Sue Harper (Monkton Planning Commission Co-Chair), Laura Farrell

Chelsea called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

Regular Business

- Review Agenda
 - Development Review Findings for the 202 Barnum Rd. project is not on the agenda. MCC will hold a Special Meeting at 6:30pm on Thursday, 12/19, to approve our development review findings regarding 202 Barnum Rd.
- Set date/time for next meetings
 - Monday, January 13th at 6:00pm
 - Monday, February 17th at 6:00pm
- Approve Minutes
 - Approve Minutes for November 4th, 2019
 - **Ian moved that we approve the minutes for November 4th, 2019.** Ann seconded. No edits were made after review. All were in favor (4-0-0).

Working with Other Committees/Agencies

- **MCC Development Review Findings**
 - Kevin joined us at 6:20 at the beginning of this agenda item.
 - Review and approve proposed findings for 4537 Silver St
 - **Ian moved that we approve the MCC Findings for 4537 Silver Street.** Ann seconded. Minor edits made in review. All were in favor (5-0-0).
 - Jaime departed at 7:15pm for the Selectboard meeting. Ian also departed the meeting at this time due to feeling ill.

Monkton Pond

- Update about Cedar Lake Association and Beavers at Monkton Pond
 - Monkton Pond, intense flooding on all sides of the pond. State had put in a Beaver Deceiver device to control the water level, but it has failed or been damaged.
 - Cedar Lake Association is being revived.
 - People want to fix the problem so beavers don't need to be killed.
 - MCC will support the Cedar Lake Association's efforts. There are interesting questions, such as who determines the correct pond level.

Emerald Ash Borers

- Discussion of what steps, if any, the conservation commission may take
 - What makes sense in terms of next steps like an inventory of Ash trees? What can we realistically accomplish?
 - Should coordinate with New Haven CC & David Brynn of Addison County CC. The main things they're looking at are raising funds, getting volunteers, picking a grove or two of ash trees to inoculate.
 - Geographic placement of those groves is very important.
 - Education will be important...unlike elms that stay standing after Dutch Elm affects them, ash trees will fall and become dangerous to take down. Probably a good idea to take down ash that is near homes as a public service.
 - Education can happen via website and front porch forum.
 - Ferrisburgh, Huntington are taking Ash surveys, to identify where they are for house proximity, perhaps identifying groups of ash that may be less vulnerable to disease, to focus on those.
 - Kevin will contact David Brynn to understand Ash strategy. Vermont Family Forests foundation.
 - Need funding to carry out tree removal and grove identification. Recommendation to the town would be ideal...some information that's practical for homeowners.

Update: Possible agenda items for January – Values Mapping & Wetland Inventory

- Values Mapping exercise - Monica P. left her position, but Jens Hilke can come join us to help us execute value mapping.
- Caroline Arles is a biologist who did her PhD on Lewis Creek; has a lot of info for mapping for water. Invited her to our next meeting.
- Around the time the pipeline went in, Charlotte CC came in and was concerned that Monkton had an aquifer running down to Lake Champlain. Proposal would be to do a hydrological study for the town, but not sure what the whole process is. Rule Bowmens, one of the Charlotte CC members, would be a contact point. This relates to permitting the State has done for outside companies to come in and bottle water.
- Wondering if it might be worth having a town meeting saying Monkton does not support outside companies coming in to bottle water.

Working with Other Committees/Agencies, Part 2

Unified Planning Document Process

- Discussion about the UPD process with Planning Commission Co-Chair Wendy Sue Harper, who joined us at 7:42pm.
 - The Planning Commission has a project they would like the Conservation Commission to lead for them: to identify Act 171 corridors (forest fragmentation and habitat connectivity). Discussed Act 171.
 - Need to get this information into the next revision of the Unified Planning Document (UPD). Vision for the town goes into the Town Plan and then enacting that vision happens with the UPD. It took about 2 years to prepare the proposed Town Plan, but it will be amended as new information emerges over time. Town plans used to be every 5 years and now it's every 8, so smaller updates are needed from time to time between larger revisions.

- Planning Commission wants the MCC to go through the process of identifying the Act 171 map with the town, seeking input and feedback.
 - What does the town value and what's important? Work with various entities to create value mapping.
 - Kevin Behm of regional planning may have maps made to illustrate need.
 - It is essential to include the town in the process. The more people brought into the process the more support for the outcome.
 - Municipal planning grants help towns achieve things. To do this effectively, need data, inventory of what we have. A small grant may help do this kind of work.
 - Chelsea confirmed that value mapping is a priority for the MCC. We have reached out to the Town Forest Committee and want to include the Rec Committee.
 - Planning Commission has agenda, minutes and project reports to refer to.
 - Planning Commission is broken down among its personnel by different specialties. Discussed who to talk to for certain topics. More important to do it right than operate by a specific timeline. It will be critical to gather data and perform the values mapping exercise with the town before proceeding much further.
- Jaime rejoined the meeting at 7:58pm. Brief recap for Jaime. Mapping was discussed and how it would be helpful to committees to have big versions of the overlay maps, existing and future, on hand for reference during committee proceedings, such as the DRB.

Adjournment

- Kevin moved to adjourn. Ann seconded. All were in favor (4-0-0). Adjourned at 8:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaime Schulte
Clerk