

Town of Monkton
Agricultural & Natural Areas Committee
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 7th, 2020, at 6:30pm
Monkton Town Hall
(Approved February 4th, 2020)

Members Attending: Laura Farrell (Chair), Sam Burr (Vice Chair), Jaime Schulte (Clerk), Susan Mahony, John Mejia

Members Absent: Nora Woolf (Alternate)

Guests: Sam Burr (abstaining from Doyle-Burr OPAV project discussions)

Laura called the meeting to order at 6:32.

1) Approve Minutes

- a. **John moved that we approve the minutes for December 3rd, 2019.** Sam seconded. No edits were made after review.
- b. **Sam moved that we approve the minutes for December 3rd, 2019 as written.** Susan seconded. All were in favor (5-0-0).

2) Double-check Yearly 2019 ANAC report for Town Annual Report

- a. No corrections needed to what was submitted.

3) Town meeting talking points

- a. We have averaged a 1:13 leverage of the ANA Fund, meaning that an average project budget is only funded about 8% by the town and 92% from external sources (such as the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board through the Vermont Land Trust). This is a substantial return on our investment.
- b. These funds are a catalyst for conservation projects. Towns that don't support conservation directly don't get the same external funding (over 92% of each project).
- c. The funds (and the external funds they attract) support our community directly, both the farmers/residents and the character of our town as a rural agricultural community.
- d. If unused during a calendar year the funds serve as a buffer for the town budget, avoiding the need for the town to take out a loan for unexpected expenses (example: for a failed road culvert).
- e. Projects can accelerate due to the external funding partners and we sometimes have to move quickly. Having funding on hand makes it possible to engage with opportunities, such as the Norris/Full Belly Farm.

4) Updates

- a. Huizenga project 2019C (Laura)
 - The Vermont Land Trust (VLT) is waiting to hear about Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) funds (a USDA/NRCS program) relating to restoring riparian buffers on the property prior to the conservation closing.
 - There is an aspect of invasive plant management that could benefit from coordination with the Conservation Commission.
- b. Potential project 2019A
 - Laura is reaching out to the potential applicant.
- c. Document storage space (Jaime)
 - No new updates.

5) Work with Selectboard to iron out the timing of the approval process

- a. Time pressure on ANAC projects has been discussed with the Selectboard and will continue to be managed to the best of our ability. At minimum we would like to provide two weeks of notice ahead of a request to approve funds.

6) Elect positions: Tech czar, Accounts, Community Engagement, Advertising?

- a. Decided to postpone consideration until after Town Meeting.

7) Confirm dates for February and March

- a. Tuesday, February 4th @ 6:30pm
- b. Tuesday, February 18th @ 6:30pm
- c. Wednesday, March 18th @ 6:30pm

8) Doyle-Burr OPAV site visit report & Project 2019B

- a. Sam Burr recused himself from consideration of the report and project and moved away from the table to observe from the audience (8:00pm).
- b. **Jaime moved to approve the Last Resort Farm OPAV Site Visit Report.** Susan seconded. Minor edits were made in review.
- c. **Jaime moved to approve the Last Resort Farm OPAV Site Visit Report as amended. John seconded. All were in favor (4-0-0).**
- d. Next steps:
 - We reviewed the application budget and formal application for the project. The requested ANA Fund contribution is \$40,000 of the overall \$213,400 budget for the project. The budget includes a \$10,000 bargain sale reduction and \$1,700 share of the appraisal fee from the applicants.
 - c) **Jaime moved to “Recommend that the Selectboard approve \$40,000 from the ANA Fund for the Vermont Land Trust application regarding the Doyle-Burr Last Resort Farm OPAV project”. Susan seconded. All were in favor (4-0-0).**
 - Laura will send our recommendation, with supporting documentation, to the Selectboard in the coming days.
 - Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)’s consideration of the project will be on January 24th. This is accelerated from the expected March timeframe. We have passed ANAC’s recommendation to the applicants, so it can be shared with VHCB with Selectboard approval pending.

9) Review minutes

- a. Sam rejoined the meeting at this point.
- b. Draft minutes were reviewed.

Adjournment

Sam moved to adjourn. Susan seconded. All were in favor (5-0-0). Adjourned at 9:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaime Schulte
Clerk