

**Town of Monkton
Conservation Commission
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, December 10th, 2020 6:00pm
Zoom and Phone Meeting**

Members Present: Chelsea Smiley (Chair), Jaime Schulte (Clerk), Kevin Lambert (Treasurer), Ann Johnston Miller, Caroline Alves

Members Absent: None

Guests Present: Prem Linskey

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

Regular Business

- Review agenda
- Set Time/Date of Next Meetings
 - Thursday, January 14th, 2020 at 6:00pm
 - Thursday, February 11th, 2020 at 6:00pm
- Approve Minutes
 - **Kevin moved to approve the minutes for October 29th, 2020 as written. Caroline seconded.** No additional discussion. **All were in favor (5-0-0).**

Take Nominations and elect officers

- Positions on the committee: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary/Clerk, Treasurer
- **Kevin nominated Chelsea Smiley as Chair. Jaime seconded.** Chelsea is willing to serve. She would like to increase the number of committee members willing to serve in leadership roles for a possible future transition. **All were in favor (4-0-1) with Chelsea abstaining.**
- Discussed the role of Vice Chair. Assisting the Chair, running meetings in the absence of the Chair. We don't yet have a detailed definition of each role.
- Kevin nominated Caroline for Vice-Chair due to her expertise in the area of conservation. Caroline declined at this time due to her schedule, etc.
- **Jaime nominated Ann for Vice-Chair. Caroline seconded.** Ann is willing to serve. **All were in favor (4-0-1) with Ann abstaining.**
- **Chelsea nominated Jaime for Clerk. Ann seconded.** Jaime is willing to continue as Clerk. **All were in favor (4-0-1) with Jaime abstaining.**
- **Chelsea nominated Kevin as Treasurer. Caroline seconded.** Kevin is willing to continue as Treasurer. **All were in favor (4-0-1) with Kevin abstaining.**

Approve Budget to send to the Selectboard

- We spent our \$500 budget for 2020 related primarily to the Values Mapping event.
- Planning to request a small increase to \$550 for the 2021 budget, as we have additional members. We anticipate the annual Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions membership, attending a local conference post-covid, and a possible project.
- **Kevin moved to request a budget of \$550 for 2021. Jaime seconded.** No additional discussion. **All were in favor (5-0-0).**

Assign Blurb Drafting for Town Report

- Writeup on the activities of the Conservation Commission in 2020.
 - We welcomed Caroline Alves to the Commission in 2020.
 - Values Mapping - ~40 people attended live and offline sessions, collaboration with the Town Forest Committee and Vermont Fish & Wildlife.

- Update of the Pond Brook Management Plan
- Presentations on wetlands, soils, Emerald Ash Borer, mapping.
- Met with the Planning Commission regarding upcoming Town Plan revisions for Act 171.
- Mention partners we worked with in other towns, agencies, etc.
- Kevin will write a draft of a 2020 report.

Community Engagement

- Values Mapping
 - Thanks to everyone for their work to make the Monkton Community Values Mapping happen!
 - Will post the final report from the Values Mapping event to the Monkton town website.
 - Consider an online discussion of the results – ask Jens Hilke for some advice on the follow-up.
 - Can create some hardcopies for the new town hall/library for residents to review.

Act 171

- Next Steps Act 171
 - Continue to work with maps/state layers, locate mapping from Monica P.
 - Begin to engage with the community.
 - Consider how to get Monkton thinking about forest blocks and connectivity. What do we want the town to look like in 30 years in terms of forested areas, habitat fragmentation, etc. The classic tension between growth vs. maintaining the existing character of the town. Can we have both?
 - Ideas on next steps: have Fish & Wildlife give us some guidance (include Planning and Town Forest); should we be in contact with regional planning; talk to other Planning/Conservation commissions on how they did community outreach, etc., especially neighboring towns; continue gathering data/maps.

Set New Priorities for the Conservation Commission

- **Major areas of focus**
 - Education, Community Engagement, Collaboration with other Committees, Stewardship
- **Priorities for the Conservation Commission**
 - Collaboration - Act 171 map / other map layers (input given to the Planning Commission by spring/early summer)
 - Stewardship - Pond Brook Management Area – site visit and complete the Management Plan
 - Stewardship - Work toward a Morse Park Management Plan (should be in place by June 1st, 2021)
 - Partnership with the Lewis Creek Association to work on the "Impaired Status" of Pond Brook
 - Discuss erosion control with Sam Burr (what options/funding exist; what's worked for him)
 - Research zoning language/recommendations
 - Wetlands Inventory (partner with other communities to obtain funding for an area survey?)
 - Education - presentations for the Community & Commission. Examples:
 - Rural development (Kevin)
 - Have Zapata come to town (for a walk, for a presentation)
 - Use Zapata as a resource on our development review process
 - Approach Jim Andrews about giving an update/talk on the Salamander Crossing)

Adjournment

- **Jaime moved to adjourn. Ann seconded. All were in favor (5-0-0).** Adjourned at 8:01pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jaime Schulte
Clerk