

**Town of Monkton  
Conservation Commission  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 6:00pm  
Zoom and Phone Meeting**

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

**Members Absent:**

**Guests Present:** Prem Linskey, Wendy Sue Harper, Marilyn Cargill, Jens Hilke

Chelsea called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**Regular Business**

- Review agenda
- Set Time/Date of Next Meetings
  - Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:00pm
  - Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:00pm
- Approve Minutes
  - **Ann moved to approve the minutes for December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 as written. Caroline seconded.**  
No additional discussion. **All were in favor (4-0-0).**

**Approve Town Report writeup**

- Reviewed and revised the 2020 writeup for the Town Report.
- Jaime moved to approve the 2020 MCC writeup as revised. Kevin seconded. No additional discussion. All were in favor (5-0-0), with Kevin having joined us at 6:15.

**Act 171 (protection of forest blocks and connectivity)**

- Discussed questions to ask the Planning Commission Co-Chairs
  - Timeline, MCC responsibilities in the process, etc.
- Created a subcommittee to organize the timeline and actions for next steps
  - Kevin, Jaime, and Ann to organize this piece. Any working sessions with a quorum to be properly warned. The subcommittee will meet before our next regular meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup>.
- We were joined by Marilyn Cargill & Wendy Sue Harper, Co-Chairs of the Planning Commission, at 7:00pm. They presented the following guidance to the Conservation Commission:

Charge: Develop map for Monkton's Town Plan to fulfil Act 171 requirements to identify forest blocks and connectors to maintain and improve.

Act 171 Requires towns to:

- indicate those areas that are important as forest blocks and habitat connectors
- plan for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests.

[http://anr.vermont.gov/Planning/Forest\\_Blocks\\_And\\_Habitat\\_Connectors](http://anr.vermont.gov/Planning/Forest_Blocks_And_Habitat_Connectors)

- 1) We want Monkton Conservation Commission to go through the process with the Town to identify those important areas. Much of the town has been identified by the State to be highest priority (dark green) from the State's perspective, what areas does the Town want to identify as important.

- 2) We would also like the Monkton Conservation Commission go through the process with the Town to provide acceptable ways to plan for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. For example, a redefined Conservation Prohibited -Forest zoning district, or a forest protection overlay district with ways to protect forests.



Note: some areas may already be in the Conservation Prohibited (Forest and Wetlands) zoning districts or planning overlay districts: Ridgeline, Floodplain Hazard, or Natural Heritage Protection. See UPD for current development requirements for each.

To successfully implement Act 171 requirements, the Monkton community must be involved in the process, as they will vote on the Town Plan where this information will be discussed and displayed, and vote on the UPD where regulations will be enacted to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests.

- Discussion followed on how this would unfold and the related timeline. Community education on forest blocks, fragmentation, and connectivity is one step. Feedback gathering about Monkton's collective ecological values is a key next step. We will also review of the current Town Plan to see what is already described there and what might be missing from an Act 171 perspective. It is essential to balance protection of Monkton's ecological richness with human uses and landowner interests.
- Discussed how the Monkton Community Values Mapping event in November was a success and helps inform the Act 171 process by showing the physical locations in Monkton that we value most for different reasons.
- Jens Hilke of the VT Agency of Natural Resources, who ran the Values Mapping event for us and compiled the results, joined us at 7:30pm to review the outcome. We will be sharing the results with the community!

### Adjournment

- Ann moved to adjourn. Caroline seconded. All were in favor (4-0-0) with Kevin having departed the call at this point. Adjourned at 8:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jaime Schulte  
Clerk