

**Town of Monkton
Agricultural & Natural Areas Committee
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 10th, 2021, at 7:00pm
Zoom & Phone Meeting**

Members Attending: Laura Farrell (Chair), Jaime Schulte (Clerk), Whitney Leighton, John Mejia (Digital Czar), Nora Woolf (Alternate), Sam Burr (Alternate)

Members Absent: Susan Mahony (Vice-Chair)

Guests: None

Laura called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

Discussed Nora stepping down from the committee due to her schedule. She appreciates the work of the committee and the members of it and the feeling is mutual. We look forward to having her visit in the future. Thank you, Nora!

1) Minutes

- a. Sam moved to consider the minutes of January 13th, 2021. Jaime seconded.** Some review took place. **John moved to approve the minutes of January 13th, 2021 as written. Jaime seconded.** No additional discussion. **All were in favor (4-0-2), with Sam and Nora abstaining (not present at the last meeting).**

2) Updates:

- a) Covid assistance progress
 - Sam noted there are a number of programs to assist businesses in need of Covid-related help. Business can work with the state to navigate applying, etc.
- b) Post spreadsheet in ANAC Archives & report to ANAC homepage
 - Will post the PDF version to the website
 - Following the Values Mapping event Sam recommends that a map of conserved lands in Monkton be created and shared with the town.
- c) Infographic
 - John is updating the infographic with the latest numbers & photos
- d) How do we go into executive session if needed – practice
 - Briefly reviewed the valid reasons for using executive session and the Vermont Statute related (1 V.S.A. § 313).
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/01/005/00313>
 - We will create a brief instruction on how to use executive session
- e) Potential project 2019A
 - Continuing to evaluate the options and future for the property with the owner, prior to a potential application to ANAC.
- f) Potential project inquiry (would be 2021A)
 - Assisting the owner with options and whether ANAC would have a role.
- g) Values Mapping
 - Will discuss under a later agenda item
- h) Town Forest progress
 - No new updates
- i) Document storage space
 - No new updates

- j) Raven Ridge use rate
 - Whitney reached out to The Nature Conservancy about overuse of the Raven's Ridge property. They were able to give us data on the number of visitors... approximately tripled from 2019. About 76 visitors on a typical day, which raises concerns about safety (parking on the road) and the upcoming closure of Raven's Ridge for bobcat denning season. TNC will plan to have staff on weekends when weather is good to help turn away people with dogs. There will be a social media push for awareness. They do have funding for improved signage. Whitney will suggest to the Selectboard, on behalf of ANAC, that a request be made to the community to support a sustainable level of usage for Raven's Ridge.

3) **Town Meeting review and talking points**

- Town Meeting will be virtual this year (Zoom)
- Our talking points are in the annual report already submitted

4) **Request from The Planning Commission**

The PC is looking for input for revisions to Monkton's Unified Planning Document (zoning regulations) by June 1, 2021. There is a current round of updates, which are largely complete and will go to the voters in March 2021. There will be another round of updates later in 2021, which we can contribute recommendations to for improved zoning and subdivision regulations. *Please review the links in b. and c. below prior to the meeting, if at all possible, so we can have a robust discussion.*

- a. From ANAC's perspective what is important to have accounted for in the Unified Planning Document? Need to account for the Pond Brook Management Area, wetland complex extending from Rotax Rd/Raven Ridge, improve reference maps for different layers like soil types and habitat connectivity, and consider how the UPD could better reflect the Town Plan on these topics.
- b. Here is a little bit on the pressure that Monkton could be facing in the near term, and why ANAC might be concerned that there might be significant development before ecological concerns are addressed properly.

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/the-new-vermonters-fleeing-covid-19-newcomers-find-temporary-or-permanent-refuge-in-the-green-mountains/Content?oid=31176261>

- c. We have until June 1st to provide recommendations to the Planning Commission.

- d. Samples of how to word concerns for the UPD. Check out Appendix B on p 36:

<https://anr.vermont.gov/sites/anr/files/co/planning/documents/guidance/Act171Guidance.pdf>

- e. We could collaborate with the Conservation Commission who is drafting an Act 171 map and related maps. (Jaime, Laura)

5) **Confirm next meeting dates**

- a. Wednesday, March 10th, 7:00pm
- b. Wednesday, April 14th, 7:00pm

6) **Review Minutes**

- a. Minutes were reviewed.

Adjournment

- b. Sam moved to adjourn. John seconded. All were in favor (6-0-0). Adjourned at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jaime Schulte
Clerk