

Town of Monkton
Town Forest Committee
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 21st, 2023, at 7:00pm
Monkton Town Hall & via Zoom
(Approved: April 5th, 2023)

Members present: Callie Brynn (Chair), John McNerney, Jaime Schulte, Peter Dufault

Members absent: None

Guests: Bob Heiser (Vermont Land Trust), Stephen Pilcher (Selectboard Chair), Ann Miller (Conservation Commission Chair), Tom Mansfield (Monkton resident).

Callie called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

1. Public Comment (10 minutes)

- a. There was no public comment.

2. Reviewed the Minutes of 02/22/2023

- a. **Jaime moved to approve the minutes of February 22nd, 2023 as written. John seconded.** There was no additional discussion. **All were in favor (4-0-0).**

3. Info session recap

- a. It would help to have a Frequently Asked Questions page for the town forest webpage. We will work on that with the Vermont Land Trust.
- b. Discussed how to get feedback on the town forest project from the most voters. Three individuals have asked whether a town-wide vote is possible on the project and/or related town funds. Monkton only uses Australian Ballot for specific things and this would not be one of them. The only option for a formal town-wide vote would be a Special Town Meeting. Based on historical attendance such a meeting would see something in the range of 70 to 100 voters (perhaps 5 or 6%) attending. Regular Town Meetings see 90-120 (6-8%). We feel that it would be preferable to have input from a lot more voters than that before making this decision, which needs to be made by the end of this summer. It would perhaps be preferable to survey voters or have a petition or ballot box at Town Hall for a period of time. That kind of vote would be advisory to the Selectboard who would make the final decision, but might reach a few hundred voters. Voters in Australian Ballot elections (not linked to a Presidential or Midterm Election) total 250-650 (about 18-50% of voters), depending on the year. We might be able to get into that range, which would be a better representation of the town.

4. Grant applications

- a. The Community Forest Grant application will be submitted by next week. The committee reviewed the draft application and gave some feedback to Bob Heiser (Vermont Land Trust).
- b. Discussed the status of letters of support for the project from the Selectboard, various town committees, and area organizations.

- c. Site visits with representatives from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board and the Community Forest Grant Program will be taking place next week.
- 5. Community engagement**
- a. Site walks will be scheduled for the community as the weather and mud improve. We'll need to manage numbers to a dozen or so people per walk and potentially carpool, so there is adequate parking at potential access points on the property.
- 6. Access**
- a. We are working to make contact with all of the residents who have driveways opening onto Old Airport Rd., to discuss future shared maintenance of the road and what arrangement would be workable and fair for all parties.
 - b. It appears there would be no conflict with the Green Mountain Power lines running east of Hardscrabble and a potential parking turnout. There is sufficient room between the lines and road near the fire pond, for instance. It would also need to be 50 feet from wetland boundaries.
- 7. ARPA proposal**
- a. We will update the ARPA proposal to the Selectboard for the next meeting.
- 8. Committee members**
- a. There are three or four candidates for the open position on the committee. The Selectboard will be reviewing interest beginning at their meeting next week.
 - b. Discussed the position with Tom Mansfield, who is interested in the project and the position on the committee. Tom is an abutting landowner to the proposed town forest parcel, which might be a complication for his ability to participate in some of the committee's work. He noted that his primary goal is to be aware of progress and have a voice in the process.
- 9. Confirm date of next meeting(s)**
- a. Wednesday, April 5th, 7:00pm
 - b. Thursday, April 20th, 7:00pm

Adjournment

Jaime moved to adjourn. All were in favor (4-0-0). Adjourned at 9:40pm.

Minutes taken by Jaime Schulte.