

MONKTON SELECTBOARD SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
Tuesday December 6, 2022

The meeting was called to order by S. Pilcher at 7:02 pm.

Members in attendance: Stephen Pilcher (chair), Marikate Kelley, John McNerney, Paul Low

Members absent: none

Others in attendance: Jessica Demeritt (recording secretary), Stan Wilbur, Laura Farrell, John Frigault

ANNOUNCEMENTS

S. Pilcher said there is a buyer for the Russell Memorial Library building. The inspection went well and the contract was signed.

The town of Monkton received Village Center designation for Monkton Ridge from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD).

REGULAR BUSINESS:

APPROVE MINUTE

P. Low moved to approve the minutes of November 22, 2022 as written. M. Kelley seconded. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE CHECK WARRANTS

M. Kelley moved to approve PR 21205 in the amount of \$10,913.18. J. McNerney seconded. All voted in favor.

P. Low moved to approve AP 21125 in the amount of \$57,551.93 . M. Kelley seconded. The majority of the amount is highway department expenses. All voted in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVE OVERWEIGHT PERMITS, ETC.

none

PUBLIC COMMENT

none

NEW BUSINESS:

REVIEW UNIFIED PLANNING DOCUMENT

S. Pilcher read from a list of outstanding issues to be discussed: the ridgeline district, noise issues, erosion control, stormwater, wetlands, and steep slopes. M.

Kelley added that the new village district approval is related to the UPD. She would like to see regulations consistent with the town plan.

L. Farrell read a statement concerning protecting connectivity between forest blocks:

The proposed changes, to PUDs among other things, probably bring us back to the model where we build out along the edges of roads, continuing to cut off blocks of habitat from other blocks (example of Mountain Rd.). It isn't necessarily bad to keep development along roads with less development inside of habitat blocks, and in fact is better in most cases - but the missing element here is maintaining whatever useful connectivity is left between the blocks. The mapping project with Arrowwood will give us a much better understanding of where that connectivity is in Monkton.

The point here is critical...there are some remnant ribbons of forest that wind down to roads and funnel into habitat on the other side of the road. In some situations roadside remnants of connectivity between large forest blocks are the only thread holding the ecological matrix together, and once those are built over there will be no connectivity between two larger forest/habitat blocks. Until Arrowwood completes the mapping and a final version is adopted, any proposed construction involving forested areas should be in consultation with the Conservation Commission, so no critical habitat corridors are built over before the safeguards are in place.

This should be considered carefully. Neglecting to put temporary safeguards in place could render the ARPA funded mapping a waste of time, and precipitate a run on development if there is a sense things may change.

It would be helpful for those with the ability to do so to propose specific language to be included in the UPD, and indicate where such language should be inserted. It is recognized that the language may have to refer to things which do not yet exist in maps or in the proposed UPD.

So how do you restrict development in an area which has not been specifically identified? ... if we knew what these areas were going to be called on the maps, we could refer to that phrase, so that when the maps are adopted, those areas will automatically be protected.

This leaves open the question of how to protect critical connectivity areas prior to the incorporation of the new maps into the town plan and zoning regulations, and this should be considered at the same time.

Thank you for considering safeguarding Monkton's regionally important habitat.

Sincerely,

Laura Farrell

There was discussion about the general performance standards in the UPD and noise. General property maintenance needed to be allowed, as well as construction, and existing businesses.

J. Frigault said there have been issues with motocross use limiting outside enjoyment. The noise was generated for 5-6 hours and over 70 decibels. This noise impacts the valley near Raven Ridge.

P. Low mentioned personal use vs business use and different rules for the two.

J. McNerney suggested that the UPD should allow for the Select Board to add or clarify restrictions through a noise ordinance. S. Pilcher said if UPD is not followed, the zoning administrator would write a violation/ticket. Failure to respond to the ticket would lead to environmental court. S. Pilcher said he believes regulating noise is difficult. M. Kelley added some clarifying language: regarding how the noise ordinance would apply to pre-existing businesses, etc. J. Frigault thanked the Selectboard for their work.

The ridgeline district was discussed and approved.

Erosion control was discussed with regards to slope and conditional use. Changes were made from major project to conditional use. There was clarification on the work of the zoning administrator and the Development Review Board.

Stormwater management was discussed. M. Kelley suggested following the state guidelines. S. Pilcher asked if Monkton wanted to take responsibility.

Riparian buffers, wetlands, and steep slopes were discussed. Some language was changed such as should to shall. Some clarification was made regarding permissions from the zoning administrator or the DRB.

There was further discussion about maintaining forest connectivity in areas where that connectivity is severely threatened. J. McNerney suggested identifying a few areas that might require Conservation Committee review, at least until mapping is done and longer term guidance is developed. S. Pilcher responded that said you cannot do spot zoning. M. Kelley said we need to define standards. There was discussion about previous efforts to protect connectivity where the situation has reached a critical stage. J. McNerney noted that once the last connections in some areas have been severed, the damage is critical and likely irreversible. S. Pilcher said he would like to put something in the UPD. The Select Board agreed to consider the final edits at our next meeting on Dec 13 and decide on a date to warn the hearing.

OLD BUSINESS:

no action taken

OTHER BUSINESS:

The select board discussed the recommendation of the insurance representative regarding an outstanding claim. The board wanted to make sure she had all the relevant information before she makes the final determination.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 7pm.

M. Kelly moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15pm. All voted in favor.

These minutes were respectfully submitted by Jessica Demeritt.