Middlesex Conservation Commission
Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 7:00 pm
Meeting Conducted Via Zoom and at Town Office

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Larry Becker, Owen Dalton, Kimberly Hagen, Ross Lieblappen, Adrienne Magida, Dave Shepard and Jon Udis
Guests: Aric Brown, Maribeth Domanski, Cindy Griffith and Mike Kline

1. Administrative Operations
a. Minutes of November 26, 2024 Meeting
Kimberly made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 26th meeting of the Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC) with a second from Ross. The minutes were approved.

b. Vermont Geological Society Great Brook Project
Mike reported on this project also involving Norwich University, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, the University of Vermont and the State Geologist. Phase 1 of the project is to characterize the geology of the Great Brook valley. The valley is continuing to downcut, causing numerous landslides. There is a question as to whether stabilizing structures for infrastructure can be tied into bedrock to resist getting washed out in future floods and whether the bed of the brook can be stabilized. The project is currently in the data gathering stage. There are a number of entities that have offered to assist in this project, potentially at no cost to the town. An issue for Great Brook is that the brook valley isn't mapped as a flood zone for FEMA. The project is in the process of cataloging structures that have been installed to address erosion, including the cost of maintenance. Working with the characteristics of the stream as much as possible is preferable. There are other brooks in town that have similar issues.

Kimberly asked what the best potential outcome is. Mike replied that residents who want to stay should be able to do so in safety. Brook Road residents have concerns about their neighborhood being characterized as extremely hazardous. Hopefully there are cost effective measures that can be employed to stabilize the brook without over engineering. Kimberly followed up to ask if it's feasible to stabilize the brook. Mike thinks a good portion of the valley along Brook Road is in the process of reforming. Some of the recent installations intended to protect infrastructure are in danger of failing. Collecting necessary baseline information will likely take most of 2025. An outreach committee will be meeting with Brook Road residents. Maribeth asked if we know the percentage of Brook Road that is at risk. The study will help to define this; the upper third of Brook Road is in a narrow, steep valley where the danger is greater and the options are fewer. Where the brook valley widens further downstream the greater concern is for debris blockages that can redirect the brook out of its bed.

Adrienne asked if Mike could provide the MCC with updates every two or three months and he said he would.

c. Natural Resources Conservation Service Emergency Watershed Protection Program
Adrienne reported the projects from the 2023 flood have been completed. Four projects have been approved by the Town for the 2024 flood. Adrienne is hopeful there may be sources of funding to pay for the 25% match of the federal money.

2. Project Reports (point person shown in parentheses)

a. Trails Committee (Adrienne, Dave and/or Jon)
The Committee didn't' meet last month so no update.

Minutes of Trails Committee meetings can be found at the What's Next Middlesex website: http://www.whatsnextmiddlesex.org/meeting-minutes.html.

b. Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area and Shady Rill Park (Aric Brown)
Aric reported there were meetings of the Board in December and January. They are seeking an increase in the per capita rate charged to the member towns. The rate increase to $2.23 per capita approved in 2023 was the first increase since 2010. The current request will be to raise the rate to $3.00 per capita after consideration of $4.00 per capita. At this rate there would be reduced services but the beach, boat launch and Shady Rill Park would remain open. The current manager, Collin O'Neil, will be stepping down as the requested rate is not sufficient to fund the manager position on a year-round basis. At the next meeting, the Board will assess the level of staffing that can be supported with $3.00 per capita.

c. Middlesex Town Forest (Ross and Dave)
No update.

3. New/Other Business
Green Up Day:
Jon reported the cost for a dumpster from Casella will be $345 for deliver and pickup plus a per ton charge for disposal. The cost for tires will be $8 for a tire and $16 for a tire on a rim. In the past Middlesex has received a grant from the Central Vermont Solid Waste District to pay for the tire disposal cost. The MCC checks in with the Select Board about the cost for Green Up. Jon will check in with the Girl Scouts regarding refreshments for the drop-off location by the auxiliary fire station.

Next Meeting: February 25, 2025

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, MCC Secretary