Middlesex Conservation Commission
Tuesday, July 22, 2025 at 7:00 pm
Meeting Conducted Via Zoom

Minutes

Commissioners Present: Larry Becker, Ross Lieblappen, Adrienne Magida, Dave Shepard and Jon Udis

1. Administrative Operations
a. Middlesex Conservation Commission Membership
Adrienne reported that Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC) member Owen Dalton has moved back to Colorado so there is an additional opening on the MCC.

b. Minutes of May 27, 2025 Meeting
Jon made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 27th meeting of the MCC with a second from Larry. The minutes were approved with the correction of one typo on the spelling of Worcester.

c. Finance Report
Ross reported there are no financial updates. Brian Prendergast has developed a sign regarding Japanese Knotweed that could be posted at control sites. Adrienne asked if the MCC would support funding the printing of several of these signs. Ross made a motion to support the preparation of six to ten of these signs with funding from the MCC annual budget. The motion was approved.

d. Mad River Path
Adrienne reported the advisory committee is going to disband and will be replaced by project committees. Several members of the Middlesex Trails Committee have expressed interest in serving on one of these committees.

e. Natural Resources Conservation Service Emergency Watershed Protection Program
Engineers from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) have surveyed the four sites approved from the 2024 flood but the site work won't be able to start until they complete similar work in other towns. It is possible that the Middlesex construction work will not occur until 2026.

f. Great Brook Project
Mike Kline has provided a report on the work done on this study so far. Larry summarized the findings of the study. Great Brook has been deepening and widening over time and has been creating head cuts that are moving upstream. The Vermont Geologic Survey deployed a seismic measuring device in selected locations to determine the depth to bedrock. This information is important because if stabilization structures that are installed can be tied into bedrock, it will protect them from being undermined by the stream. There is evidence that some of the stabilization work that has been put in is being undermined. If it is possible to effectively stabilize areas along the stream, it can help to reduce the stream energy and thereby further down cutting by the stream. The goal is to determine if there are locations where the stream can be stabilized.

2. Project Reports (point person shown in parentheses)
a. Trails Committee (Adrienne, Dave and/or Jon)

At the last meeting, the Committee reviewed what has been accomplished and potential future projects. Projects accomplished or underway with Committee involvement included: maintenance of Chases Mountain Trail, maintenance of White Rocks Trail, promotion of Class 4 roads as recreational resources, trail potential assessment on the Galaxy Property, trail development at Middle Ground, scouting of a route to link Wrightsville Reservoir with the Ellis-Bruce Trail, scouting and flagging a route for an additional trail in the Middlesex Town Forest (MTF) and assisting with upkeep of trails at the Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area.

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

b. Middlesex Town Forest (Ross and Dave)
The MCC received a report from a Notch Road landowner that someone was living in the first cabin in the MTF. The individual is known to local social service organizations and the State Police who will be or may have already served him with an eviction notice. No trespassing signs have been posted on the cabin. There was discussion of potentially holding a public meeting to determine the future of the cabin.

c. Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area and Shady Rill Park (Aric Brown)
Dave reported on a site visit sponsored by Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Dam Safety Program about the future of the Shady Rill Picnic Area. The site visit was attended by approximately 15-20 individuals including two DEC employees, several representatives from the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District and interested residents and park users. The intent is to maintain access for recreation while acknowledging that future flooding is likely and minimizing infrastructure that might be damaged by such flooding. To that end, there is proposed to be a short access road that would end shortly past the location of the former gate at a parking area. Access to the property from that point would be on foot. A portable toilet will be installed in place of the existing toilet building and likely would be located near the parking. The brook access points survived the recent flooding with minimal to no damage and will be retained. The DEC is in the process of obtaining a parcel on the opposite shore which will allow the removal of a man-made berm that should help to protect the park.

There was no update on the Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area.

d. Middlesex Town Forest Loop Trail
Members of the Trails Committee walked the proposed location of the loop trail today, added additional flagging and made some minor adjustments to the proposed route. The Committee will contact Seth Coffey about a final look at the proposed route.

e. Japanese Knotweed
There has been some digging of knotweed in an area of the town gravel pit on Notch Road and an area along Center Road. The Center Road site turned out to have knotweed growing in rock riprap such that digging out was not feasible. A more confined site where success is more likely will be sought out; a location near Don Hirsh's property on Upper Barnet Hill Road is a possibility. Education of town residents about knotweed could be helpful. Considering the challenge of controlling knotweed when

established and the volunteer effort needed for manual control there was interest in looking into the requirements that would apply to use of herbicide on town lands.

3. New/Other Business
Clean Water Project Verification Training
The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and the Department of Environmental Conservation will be conducting a training on evaluating riparian plantings at the Welch Park on August 7th. This was a site of a riparian zone tree planting project in 2015. MCC members are invited to attend.

Next Meeting: August 26, 2025
Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, MCC Secretary