Middlesex Conservation Commission
Tuesday, January 27, 2026
Meeting Conducted Via Zoom

Minutes

Commissioners' Present: Larry Becker, Katy Farber, Ross Lieblappen, Dave Shepard and Jon Udis
Guest: Aric Brown

1. Administrative Operations

a. Minutes of October 28, 2025, and November 25, 2025, Meetings
Larry made a motion with a second from Katy to approve the October 28th meeting minutes of the Middlesex Conservation Commission (MCC). The minutes were approved. Dave made a motion to approve the November 25th meeting minutes with a second from Larry. The minutes were approved.

b. Finance Report
Ross reported there were no updates to the finances from the November meeting. Jon reviewed the fund balances from November:
•Commission operating budget: $404.37
•Conservation Commission money market fund: $1025.38
•Land Conservation Fund: $31,236.58
A question was raised at the November meeting as to the source of the money in the Conservation Commission money market fund. Dave reported the fund was created form a donation by Middlesex residents Susan Clark and Mark Bushnell who had requested donations to the Conservation Commission in lieu of gifts at the time of their wedding.

2. Mad River Path
Jon reported on a January 12, 2026, meeting of the Path Implementation Committee. There are four sub-groups working on different aspects of the project. The organization is potentially looking at hiring a part-time grants and administration position. Complete notes of the meeting can be found in the minutes of the Middlesex Trail Committee.

Katy asked about the status of traffic calming efforts in Middlesex Village. Jon will check with the Planning Commission.

e. Town Forest Cabin
MCC chair Adrienne Magida has lined up someone with construction experience to assess the structural soundness of the cabin and potentially provide an estimate of the cost to repair it. Katy asked if there is a vision for future use of the cabin. One possibility would be renting it out; Vermont Huts and Trails could potentially handle reservations for the cabin and would collect a percentage of the fee to cover their time. If we were to consider this the MCC would need to confer with the Selectboard about whether such an arrangement could be made with town property. An estimate of the potential repair cost would be helpful to assess the feasibility of repair and whether it makes sense to pursue that option.

2. Project Reports (point person shown in parentheses)

a. Trails Committee (Adrienne, Dave and/or Jon)
Work by the town road crew to address the persistent puddles on a section of North Bear Swamp Road wasn't completed prior to winter weather. There was an explanation of the renaming of the Hunger Mountain Trail to honor Tim Hayward, a Middlesex resident who lived near the trailhead and was a very active hiker of Mount Hunger. The Committee didn't feel there was a need to change the roadside trailhead directional sign in response to the trail name change. A representative from the Calais trail group expressed interest in coordinating trail connections. There is a meeting of regional trail groups on January 28th at the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District office. Sage Romey is interested in the potential for a guided snowshoe on the Chases Mountain Trail.

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 will not be a change in the entrance fee for 2026 (it 2025 it increased from $2.50 to $3.00). Grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Vermont Recreation Economic Collaborative funded the purchase of several upgrades: an electric pickup truck, a trailer mounted ticket booth, an equipment trailer and a trailer for canoes and kayaks. The various trailers will allow equipment to be moved to high ground if flooding is anticipated. The Board is working with Montpelier Alive on promoting a grand reopening following the work to recover from recent flooding at the park. Suggestions from the Commission for a reopening event included having musicians participate and a food collection.

Operations in 2026 at Shady Rill Park will be more limited than pre flooding but there will be access to the park. Dave asked if the plans presented last year by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) at a public meeting at the park will be proceeding. Aric will follow up with the DEC.

c. Commissioner Terms
Jon reviewed the status of Commissioner terms. A motion was made by Larry, with a second from Katy, to recommend the following appointments to the Selectboard:
•Dave Shepard and Kimberly Hagen - 2024-2028
•Katy Farber and Sage Romey - 2025-2029
Adrienne will forward this list to the Selectboard.

3. New/Other Business

Culvert Monitoring Project
The culvert monitoring project developed by U32 senior Mayla Landis-Marinello now has 30 volunteers. There is an App for the project and an upcoming training. She has asked if the MCC could help with annual coordination of the volunteers in the future. The MCC would be willing to do this if we are the best fit, but Larry suggested checking the town road committee as they have an interest in this.

Next Meeting: February 24. 2026

Minutes recorded by Dave Shepard, MCC Secretary

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