

Mount Holly Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the 7:05 pm
by Dave Martin. It was held in the Community Room below the Library.

Peter Smith, Dave Martin, Sue Presson, Phil Leonard, Jim Corven, Megan Litwhiler; Guest Josh Litwhiler.

Approval of Agenda

The meeting agenda was discussed and approved.

Minutes from July 2, 2024 were approved as presented.

Star Lake Update

Phil mentioned his recent (July 27) attendance at a DEC Vermont Invasive Patrollers training in North Chittenden. He found the meeting helpful, and had good conversations with Kim Jensen, who led the session.

Megan reported on her 3-way conference with Olin Reed and Zapata Courage about Star Lake management issues. One set of issues involves balancing traditional values with the “natural” development of the lake, especially in view of the Class 2 wetland status of (much of) Star Lake. They also discussed, as examples offered by Zapata Courage, efforts in Rutland involving both Little Lake and the removal of Dunklee Dam.

Commissioners discussed a number of issues including “nuisance-to-fertilizer” conversion, boardwalks for wetland viewing, cleanup to benefit the hydrants and the spillway, and the depth of community feelings favoring restoration of traditional recreation (swimming and boating).

We discussed the possibility of an informational meeting of the Commission and the Trust, and possibly others, with Zapata Courage at a future date.

Arrowwood Plant Study

Jim mentioned that Michael Lew-Smith will let us know in advance of his next visit to Star Lake to continue the vegetation study underwritten by the Mount Holly Conservation Trust.

Ash Borer Mitigation

We discussed the progress of the ash borer project, with reference to an update provided via email by Phil Crane in advance of the meeting. Dave Martin explained that by this time in the summer, urgency for treating trees is beginning to be less urgent, and will soon be less efficient.

Energy Fair Report Jim indicated that the grant supporting the Energy Fair has \$2,900 still to be expended. Possible uses include purchase of one or more infrared cameras (with suitable examples coasting about \$550 each) that could be borrowed by town residents, and engagement of a

contractor to do energy audits of town buildings in order to determine their energy needs. We discussed whether buildings serving the community but not owned by the town, such as the Library, Community Room or the Historical Museum, might qualify for such audits under the grant framework. The Commission was in favor of pursuing these possibilities. Jim will contact the grantor and Energy Works for more information.

Recreation Commission

Dave mentioned that the Selectboard had agreed to ask for people to serve on a recreation commission, and had published a request for applications in this month's ChitChat. Members talked about asking people they know to consider applying to serve.

ChitChat for September

Sue will circulate a draft contribution in advance of the deadline later this month.

Other and New Business

A possible Star Lake cleanup was brought to attention, and Dave mentioned his seeking information about what other conservation commissions do about the mowing of invasive plants. There were zucchini and blackberries to be dealt with, and bird sightings to discuss.

Action Items

- Jim to investigate cameras and audits using remaining Energy Fair grant funds.
- Megan, Jeanmarie and Phil L. to discuss plans for a possible DEC Star Lake visit.
- Sue to prepare a draft for the next ChitChat.
- Jim and Phil L. to plan interactions around the Arrowwood plant study.
- Jeanmarie and Phil L. to plan for a Star Lake cleanup session.
- Members to encourage potential members of recreation commission to apply to select board.

Next meeting

The next regular meeting of the MHCC will be held on Tuesday, September 3, 2024, at 7 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Phil Leonard, clerk.