

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monday, November 28, 2022

12:00 – 1:30 PM

In Person Location: Middlebury Town Office, or join by Zoom

MINUTES

Approved Dec. 19, 2022

Call to Order: 12:07 pm

In Attendance: A. L'Roe, C. Harden, J. Howarth, C. Tate

Minutes from the September 2022 meeting were unanimously approved.

Citizen Comments and Updates

1. Nick Benjamin (a Middlebury resident whose work involves alternative energy development) had viewed an older Conservation Commission (CC) draft map for energy siting. He expressed concern for the implications of implementing a map. He noted that large swaths of prohibited areas challenge alternative energy development projects and that VT state policies are more limiting for alternative energy development than policies of other New England states. CC members explained the rationale for excluding areas: state-defined exclusions of wetlands, sites with threatened and endangered species, and river corridors and stream buffers, and recommendations to exclude areas that are federally protected, under conservation easements, in a FEMA special flood hazard area, or in forest blocks, habitat connectors, or remnants of clay plain forest. The draft map in question is no longer under active consideration by the CC so A. L'Roe will remove the link to it from the commission's agenda.
2. A. L'Roe noted that VTtrans is working to identify points where trails cross roads and he mentioned a suite of maps (TAM, VAST, Rikert, North Country Trail, bike routes) that have already been considered. We did not come up with additional suggestions.
3. Update: The Hazard Mitigation planning process is ongoing. The pre-thanksgiving meeting was cancelled.

Conservation Plan Timeline

What we have called the “Conservation Plan” will have a new name (TBD) more consistent with its goal of helping the Town respond to Act 171.

Based on the example of the Monkton Conservation Commission, it seems clear that Middlebury should develop a schedule of presentations and hearings in anticipation of requesting the Town to vote for an amendment to the Town Plan at the 2024 Town Meeting.

J. Howarth expects new land-cover data (0.5-meter resolution) to become available from the State in March 2023. He will use the new data to update the existing (2016) land-cover maps in the Conservation Atlas. Updated maps and accompanying text are expected to be ready by May or June 2023.

A. L’Roe will invite the Town Planner to the December CC meeting to discuss the process and the schedule for it.

Next meetings

Next monthly meeting: December 19, 12:00– 1:30 pm.

For meetings after December, A. L’Roe will send a poll to determine the best date and time.

Adjourned at 1:35 pm