

## TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monday, February 27, 2023

1:00 – 2:30 PM

In Person Location: Middlebury Town Office; also available via Zoom

### DRAFT MINUTES

A L'Roe called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm

In attendance: A L'Roe, C. Harden, J. Howarth, C. Tate, M. Anderson, C. Brooks

Minutes of the January meeting ([January 2023](#)) were unanimously approved following minor edits.

#### New Business

A L'Roe reported that Bernie Paquette (Jericho, VT) who is leading an effort for Vermont to hold an Invasive Species Day in May, two weeks after Green-Up Day, seeks support from town conservation commissions. The intent is not to celebrate invasives, but to call attention to them. M. Anderson will draft a letter of support from our Conservation Commission (CC) and circulate it to CC members for approval before sending it.

#### Activities and Updates

Some CC members have signed up to lead activities on the list generated at the last meeting. Members who have not already done so should add their names to the spreadsheet in the shared Google Drive. We heard updates on a number of these:

1. A L'Roe drafted a poster for display at the Town Meeting (March 6, 2023 at MUHS). ([In shared folder here](#)). After brief discussion, we decided to continue to include the link to the first version of the Conservation Atlas. J. Howarth will add a note to the linked file to let users know that version 2 will become available later this spring.
2. We will work with AC Riverwatch to host the Barnes Brook Forum proposed for May 2, 2023 at the Champlain Valley UU Society in Middlebury. C. Harden will contact them as liaison; M. Anderson is interested in working with RiverWatch on invasives.
3. C. Tate will reach out to Steve Maier to explore if and/or how the Conservation Commission might collaborate with CEAC. A L'Roe noted that paleBLUe dot will facilitate a meeting (10:30–noon on Friday March 3, 2023) involving CEAC and the Energy Committee to explore the potential of a joint Town of Middlebury and Middlebury College Comprehensive Climate Action Plan. The meeting will be at the Town Office building and available via zoom (see [Town website](#) for details).

4. C. Tate volunteered to talk with local realtors so that the CC could become aware of lands important to conservation priorities that are being put on the market. She initiated a brief discussion of the commission's role, using as an example a property now on the market that has Otter Creek frontage. Because the property has the possibility of being subdivided, CC members voiced concern about new development adjacent to Otter Creek. [We subsequently confirmed that Middlebury does not allow development or tree removal within 100 ft. of the Creek.]
5. A L'Roe reported that Addison County Regional Planning Commission's request to identify clean water projects on municipal properties expects to offer a new round of funding. AC RiverWatch obtained a small grant in the recent round to plan for riparian planting to reduce P by the Overbrook condominiums. CC members are asked to keep this funding source in mind if we identify a project needed on municipal land.
6. Our Conservation Commission is now a member of AVCC (Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions). That makes us eligible to submit a tiny grant application, due March 31, 2023.
7. Amphibian Rescue: As the Town expands its water supply system on Chipman Hill, the (constructed) pond will be drained, probably in April. This will be unfortunate timing for the many amphibians living there, who will lose that habitat when construction begins, but the reservoir isn't regulated as a wetland due to having been constructed. A L'Roe may lead an effort to relocate amphibians.

### **Conservation Presentations to the Planning Commission**

J. Howarth made a presentation to the PC at the early February meeting and, as planned, will make another presentation this week (March 2). CC members are welcome to attend. He briefly summarized his plan for the upcoming presentation: First, he will discuss the "30 x 30" goal, including the scale at which it is most appropriate (town, county, region, state?) and what constitutes "protection." Not including agricultural land or land in UVA, about 22% of Middlebury's land is now protected. Then, he will discuss grassland/bird habitat, explaining the clear criteria provided by the State for identifying those sites. If not enough time remains to discuss scenic views, he will present those analyses at the April meeting.

**Adjourn:** A L'Roe adjourned the meeting at 2:28 pm.

The **next monthly meeting-will be on March 27, at 1 pm.** On March 27, the CC will discuss the Water and the Wetlands Goals and Recommendations of the draft Conservation Plan.