

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monday, July 27, 2020

12:00 – 1:30 PM

Join by Web <https://middlebury.zoom.us/j/91880153974>

Join by Dial: **+1 646 876 9923**. When prompted, enter the meeting ID: **918 8015 3974**.

Phone This is not a toll free number. Depending on your long-distance plan, charges may apply.

Join by smartphone, tablet or other device Download the Zoom app, which is available from the Google Play Store (for Android devices) or the Apple App Store. When the Zoom app opens, select the option to join meeting and enter the meeting ID: **918 8015 3974**

Password If prompted, enter this six-digit number: 429149

Minutes

(Approved at August 24, 2020 meeting)

Present: **Jeff Howarth, Andrew L'Roe, Amy Sheldon, Molly Anderson, Judy Wiger-Grohs, Carol Harden**

1. Call to Order
2. Citizen Comments
 - Introduction from Carol Harden, prospective Conservation Commission member (pending Selectboard approval)
3. Approval of minutes
 - [June 29, 2020](#)- M. Anderson- motion to approve, second, J. Wiger-Grohs second, approved unanimously
4. Commission updates
 - Staff updates- J. Howarth met with J. Murray,
 - Town was not aware of herbiciding (it was on private property so permitting is through state or Army Corps), hasn't heard anything about an access plan (improving existing access) for Middlebury River/Otter Creek
 - A. L'Roe mentioned that there is some trash (possibly remaining from Green Up day), including tires, paint cans, rusty bikes along Creek Rd and access.

- Status of Arrowwood contract- J. Murray will send the updated wetland map, the town hasn't received any reports, doesn't know what the status of other parts is so she will ask them to get in touch with J. Howarth. It was suggested that we ask Arrowwood to make a presentation to the Conservation Commission on status, remaining work.

- Commission member updates:

A. Sheldon- looking at land on the market, found 6 large properties for sale- range from 19-215 acres (spanning Salisbury)- Amy thinks the Pratt Rd piece is especially important. She created a list and map of land currently for sale (in [Land folder](#))- excel list and map. Some of the parcels are within the USFS GMNF acquisition area- she thinks it would be good to map those.

Town and CC need to have a process and strategy for responding as pieces come on the market. So far, most funds have been used for agricultural easements on private land.

Town Conservation Funds are accruing- we need to have an effective plan for identifying and approving land purchases. At the end of the day, purchase approvals go through Selectboard.

J. Howarth- if we were going to convey why these parcels are important, what characteristics would we use? Size, connectivity, proximity to GMNF, etc. Needs to be transparent. J. Howarth has started a web application (Google Earth Engine) that could be used to score parcels.

J. Howarth has begun to set up an interactive "Conservation Atlas" website that draws from the sections Commissioners are writing- this could provide context and transparency for a scorecard of specific parcels. Aims to support pro-active, defensive, and educational approaches.

J. Wiger-Grohs- the education piece is really important to get the word out so that people can make informed decisions (e.g. for trees in parking lots).

5. Conservation Plan

- Commission members will finalize individual water section drafts

6. Action items:

- Editorial responsibilities for water sections- J. Howarth, A. L'Roe, (possibly new member C. Harden)- J. Howarth will follow up on getting together next week
- J. Howarth - Developing proto-type for parcel based scoring with Atlas app
- J. Howarth - Background of topics/layers- explaining where the data comes from
- Everyone - Think about how to prioritize properties

- Deciding on next topics:
 - M. Anderson to start outlining a Working Lands section (A. L'Roe can help with forestry)
 - A. L'Roe to start outlining Wildlife/Habitat/Connectivity
 - A. Sheldon to continue working on parcel acquisition strategy- especially east Middlebury- would like folks to weigh in on the priority parcels and criteria- she will find out status of some of the parcels currently on the market

7. Set Next Agenda & Meeting Date

A. Sheldon moved to adjourn, M. Anderson seconded- unanimous approval