

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Monday, February 22, 2021

12:00 – 1:30 PM

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

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**MINUTES**

**(Approved at March 22, 2021 meeting)**

**In Attendance: J. Howarth, A. L'Roe, J. Wiger-Grohs, C. Harden, M. Anderson, C. Brooks, A. Sheldon**

12:00 Call to Order

12:05 Citizen Comments

12:10 Approval of minutes ([January 2021](#))

**C. Harden, motion to approve, C. Brooks Second, Vote to approve- Unanimous**

12:15 Updates

J. Howarth stepping down as Chair after April, A. L'Roe stepping up as Chair, need to talk about positions

Want to get to point of providing an annual report to the Selectboard, Actionable Items

J. Wiger-Grohs- this is the only group that meets that doesn't have a notetaker for minutes, would it be possible to request someone from the town (e.g. Beth Dow) so that the Commissioners can focus on conversation.

C. Harden and A. L'Roe- okay with this setup, and maybe leave it up to the next person to figure out their preferred method.

C. Harden- timing of VTrans request was a little quick. J. Howarth- Agree- If there's a statement coming out it should go through an open meeting, especially if something has the Conservation Commission's name on it- should be voted on and discussed at a meeting.

J. Wiger-Grohs- response had to be there by Friday (2/19), request came out on Jan 20. Agree that we do need to have a system for response if there isn't a meeting.

J. Howarth- Appreciate that you took it on, if it would possible to set up a system where members could comment on something to a single point of contact (without discussion), and needs to be an open meeting to sign off/make a decision.

12:30 Discuss Commission Governing Plan

Vice-Chair/Chair/Post-Chair officers-

3 position sequence mirror other committees,

A. L'Roe currently Vice-Chair, J. Howarth Chair, these positions would advance for next year (A. L'Roe to Vice-Chair, J. Howarth to Post-Chair), so we need a Vice-Chair for the upcoming year.

Terms and responsibilities

Description in separate document ([linked here](#))

J.Howarth: this defines and formalizes duties and allows regular reporting

C. Harden: a little worried that this overloads the Vice-Chair with duties, could be delegated

C. Brooks- would be good structure and good to continue clarifying

M. Anderson- fully in support, splitting things up is the only way to manage the workload. A couple extra meetings a month is a little excessive and we need to find a solution.

J. Wiger-Grohs- looks like a good idea, provides a continuum with mechanisms to repair and continue if there are breaks.

A. Sheldon- concerns about taking minutes, longer term we may need a solution. Keeping track of other committees is going to be a challenge. We do need to find some way to get staff support.

J. Howarth- this is a draft, working within our current structure- we can show that we can get projects done.

He will work on recruiting a Vice-Chair.

J. Howarth hopes that the meeting at the end of April will be last as Chair.

**A. L'Roe motion to approve positions and description, M. Anderson second-  
Approved**

12:45 Discuss Conservation Plan

Schedule

J. Howarth will have full draft by next meeting in March, plan to read and endorse by April and send to Planning Commission then Selectboard

## Recommendations

J. Howarth showed Recommended Actions from Conservation Plan, with continued development through conversation with J. Murray today, i.e.:

- Language and maps for Town Plan and Town's Zoning and Subdivision Guidelines
- Develop conservation review criteria to incorporate into Zoning and Subdivision
- Developed Preferred Area of Energy Siting Plan
- Making active recommendations to town about acquisitions
- Working with Middlebury College
- Trail Committee- involvement

Perhaps assign a point person to each person to be responsible, report back progress (A. L'Roe will set up a document for people to add their choices before next meeting)

M. Anderson- talking to SelectBoard should be a function of monitoring progress, make sure that we are being heard

J. Howarth- that would be part of annual reporting, plan updates

A. L'Roe- should we include a specific recommendation action about education/ outreach/PR?

C. Harden- would support- there are lots of opportunities, e.g. working with other Town Conservation Commissions, article in Addison Independent.

J. Howarth added to list of recommend Actions

## Mapping

- J. Howarth showed draft of map with Forest Blocks, Valley Blocks, Working with statewide data, identifying forested areas as well as Open Space (non-developed or mined) that could be restored to form connections between blocks.

1:25 Schedule March meeting

**Monday, March 22, Noon-1:30**

1:30 Adjourn

**A. L'Roe Motion to Adjourn, A. Sheldon Second, Adjournment Approved**