

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Rotary Small Meeting Room, First Floor  
Alternative Location- Planning Office, Second Floor  
Municipal Office Building  
77 Main Street, Middlebury

Monday, OCTOBER 28, 2019

4:30 – 6:00 PM

*Attending* Jeff Howarth (Chair), Andrew L’Roe (Vice Chair), Kemi Fuentes-George, Amy Sheldon, Monica Przyperhart

*Absent* Judy Wiger-Grohs, Molly Anderson

*Guests* Leslie Kameny, Debbie Tracht

MINUTES

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of minutes

Tabled because of technical difficulties with the monitor in the room which prevented discussion.

III. Commission member updates

Update on Wetlands Reclassification (Andrew L’Roe)

Andrew presented maps – areas for possible reclassification in regards to wetlands project. Idea of a whole wetlands might be ‘dead in the water,’ but we can be ready to go if Cornwall isn’t ready to go. But it might not make sense to go ahead without Cornwall, given the plurality of the wetlands in Cornwall. Jeff: clarification on Fertig? Andrew: area behind Porter, well-defined, College owned – good place to start with reclassification. In Otter View, half in Weybridge, and may need additional communication. Monica: In Midd, are these the three main areas of communities? Andrew: These are the three with the most documentation, as they are College owned. Amy: So there may be more areas, e.g., in farming. Observed that a lot of areas under easement are not showing up on town maps. Andrew: Maybe state should take the lead, given possible concerns from other towns about conservation commissions & land owners conflicting about selecting areas for reclassification. Kemi: likelihood of weakening wetlands? Mentioned earlier. Amy: minimal – there was some push to weaken in regards to agriculture, but seems unlikely to undermine wetlands management protocols. Further discussion about what are the criteria – 10 identified – to reclassify wetlands.

Update on Community Values Mapping event (Monica .

Would prefer to do before mid-December. Have a couple dates – early December.

IV. Solar Farm Discussion

Jeff: Compared visibility of solar in current and proposed sites. Proposed site is out of any documented wetland, but hydric soils indicate that the new site is within what may have been wetlands in the past (now drained). Was under continual cultivation since at least 1940s (earliest air photos). Agricultural soils listed as Statewide Value.

Monica: what are new dates in terms of when they need feedback?

Application was to be submitted by Nov 15, although now 60 – 90 days from now.

Jeff: we're being asked for something written for feedback. Suggestion is that we're not going to be given time at Selectboard to present so needs to be written.

Jen entered – clarified ability of Selectboard and Planning Commission on siting solar farms. Ability to veto sites. (Jeff) we can talk about impact on natural resources, wetlands – minimal, due to inheritance of historical wetland impact. Also, could discuss alternate sites – brown fields, rooftop solar.

Group discussed doubts about value of large-scale solar: GMP is less interested, rooftop might be better, GMP is planning to be 100% renewable by 2028.

#### V. Set Next Agenda & Meeting Date

Stick to fourth Monday routine. Send agenda items.

If you need special accommodations to attend this meeting, please contact the Town Planning Office at 388-8100 x210 as soon as possible.