

Minutes of Conservation Commission Monthly Meeting

January 21, 2019

Minutes recorded by Jeff Howarth

APPROVED 2/25/19

Meeting	Town of Middlebury Conservation Commission
Date	January 21, 2019
Location	Rotary Small Meeting Room Municipal Office Building
Attendance	Monica, Molly, Amy, Judy, Jeff
Absent	Andrew, Kemi, Jennifer
Minutes	Jeff
4:00	Call to order. Monica moves to shift approval of minutes to follow presentations by guests. Agreed.
4:05	Middlebury's proposed plastic bag ban Guests: Amy McAninch and Amelia Miller Amy M connects ban to CC interest in wetlands and conservation of waters. She distributes a handout and we discuss. Provides background on petition – follows Brattleboro's model and criteria (4mm). Will be on town meeting ballot. They are focusing now on voter turnout and encouraging people to express support at Town Meeting. Should ban pass, Middlebury would be third town in VT to ban single-use 4mm plastic bags. Questions from MCC members: Amy S: What other towns? Monica: Have you talked to retailers? Molly: do Maine or Mass have statewide bans? Are there any statewide bans? Amy M: as more towns pass, more pressure on State legislature. Judy: what are reasons that people do not support? Amelia: discusses transitions from plastic to other sources. Also discusses calculator used to quantify impacts of bags. Amy S: what about other bags (produce)? Amelia: start slowly Amy M: sees this as consciousness-building regarding environmental impacts of participating in a consumerist society Jeff and Monica: if this gets passed, does the group stick around to evaluate impacts? How will you evaluate impacts of the ban?
4:25	Addison County River Watch Collaborative Guest: Matt Witten Matt explains what River Watch Collaborative does: train volunteers, develop protocol, visit six rivers in AC, monitor rivers, create reports, give public presentations with Q&A to communities, calls them "Water quality chats." Currently involved with ten towns,

Middlebury big supporter. Matt would like to give a WQ chat in Middlebury.

Agreed: good fit for walks/talks, winter version

Jeff: what's the timeline for collecting, analysis, and reporting to help think about scheduling a talk?

E. coli reported provisionally – public health. All else takes a while to process but ready to go in March.

Amy S: how long have you been doing this?

Seven years

Molly: what would you like to come out of these chats?

Reclassifications for protection; identify point-source problems; community building and relationship building.

Molly: how is your work perceived in the community?

Lots of positive, but sometimes things can get heated – when property owners get identified with problematic results.

Jeff: Are your reports available online?

Regional planning commission hosts Addison County river watch online – have reports through 2017.

Monica: When should we schedule this talk?

Jeff: Is part of the purpose of the chat to help with recruitment to monitor?

Yes, that's one reason, but not the only purpose. First training: March 16

Calendars come out, we identify potential dates: 2/25, 3/3, 4/14-15

Judy: do you monitor storm water runoff effects?

Will Amidon did this in Lemonfair. We study at regular intervals. So much rain this summer, we did capture some runoff events.

Couple of other things to consider: invite another speaker, show a movie, make it more of an event. MCC members think talk itself is plenty long and substantive for an event, doesn't need to be attached to other things.

Agreed: get this scheduled and help promote to get people to attend.

5:00

Approval of minutes

December minutes – approved. No opposed.

November minutes (second draft) approved. No opposed

5:10

Commission member updates

Feb 20: 7-8pm, Vernal pool training

This Thursday: BioFinder training (citizen mapping)

Otter Creek Wetlands: 2/7 Cornwall Town Hall (6:30pm)

Agreed to make two changes to meeting schedule. Meetings will begin at 4:30 (rather than 4) on 4th Monday of month (rather than third).

5:20

Community Values Mapping

Middlebury Town: March 14 (5-7pm)

East Middlebury: March 24 (3-5pm)

Next meeting: mini-mock-up of maps and discuss outreach plan

5:25

Future Project Planning

Agreed: we should have a poster presence at Town Meeting.

Amy S: the poster should succinctly state:

The purpose of the MCC is ...

We are currently working on ...

We discuss other visuals, including a map.

Agenda for Feb

- (1) Update on Otter Creek Complex and River Watch chat
- (2) Town meeting poster (15 minutes)
- (3) Materials for Community Values Meeting (20 minutes)
- (4) Conservation Atlas ideas (10 minutes)

For March

- (5) Act 250 Review

5:40

Adjourned