

MONMOUTH CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes– September 9, 2014

Meeting began at 6:30pm on September 9, 2014 at the Monmouth Municipal Office. Present were Town Manager Curt Lunt, Commissioners Herb Whittier, Randy Schiller, Cindy Parker, Bob Mulliken. Arriving at 7:00pm, Commissioner Larry Buggia, and guest Nancy Smith of the EDC.

Cindy read the minutes of July's meeting. Motion to approve by Herb; Randy seconded; all in favor. Cindy read the minutes of August's meeting. Discussion about the minutes' format and appropriateness. It was agreed the narrative style was fine; minutes have not yet been posted anywhere – perhaps they should be? Herb made a motion to approve with a few noted changes; Bob seconded; all in favor.

Updates:

We have not received anything from the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions, confirming our membership.

Bob updated us on the Complete Streets Policy (CSP). He said it may be more than we want to take on at this time. He has seen rather complex and lengthy CSP's of other towns and cities, and handed out a copy of the 2013 CSP of the City of Portland. He spoke with Abbey King, Community Advocacy Coordinator of the Bike Coalition of Maine. She had some suggestions for Monmouth: perhaps an advertised community forum; some towns have pedestrian and bicycle committees; a "Community Slow Ride" event or other bike event. Discussion ensued about bike rules and safety, from en masse protocols to basic (which side of the road to use) and do people know the basics.

Herb noted the Lions' Club sponsored bike-a-thon yesterday worked very well. (BikeMaine 2014: Pedaling the Waterways, organized by the Bicycle Coalition of Maine)

Larry Buggia arrived at 7pm. He was welcomed gratefully. Larry was appointed to the Monmouth Conservation Commission by the Selectmen on August 30th.

Nancy Smith from the Economic Development Committee arrived at 7pm.

Randy and Cindy reported there is one more section of properties to check out (will do next week) and that will conclude the tax exempt section of indexing. Curt mentioned that the tax/assessor's maps are available on-line at the town website.

Cindy asked Curt for clarification on the MCC's mission and purpose including indexing "open land."

Curt defined this as undeveloped/unused land. He also mentioned a better boat launch at Annabessacook Lake may be a good idea; no one is currently actively looking at this.

Curt said the Maple Street Coal Shed/rabbit hutch lot is on the warrant for the November 4th vote. There is a public hearing on all warrant articles on October 1st at the Municipal Office at 6pm.

Guest Nancy Smith from the Monmouth Economic Development Committee spoke about a joint project that "continues to follow up on the 2003 Downtown Revitalization Plan for the Town of Monmouth."

One of the plan's recommendations was for assessment and revitalization of the "Street Trees" for which Monmouth is well known; assessing the true health of the trees, recommending to keep the maples going and receiving recommendations for filling in gaps or replanting of trees. Project Canopy Assistance Grants are available to help the town pay for this. A licensed forester would be hired and make assessments. The town would apply first for a Planning and Education Grant and a Planting Grant would come later. Letters of Support from the community are part of the application. Nancy said there may be good reason to reach out to the Cemetery Association. When the big maple in front of the Vestry came down a few months ago, it became clear this whole subject was rather unclear and that everyone in town has opinions on the health of the trees and she said, "this is an example of the value of doing this."

Harold Burnett is a licensed forester from Two Trees Forestry in Winthrop, and he is willing to work with the committees (EDC and CC) on the application. Project Canopy is a 50/50 matching grant. Curt (also on the EDC) said the EDC can help with matching funds. Nancy's work for the last 5 years has been with

Grow Smart Maine. Herb and Curt reminded us that a Project Canopy grant was very helpful with Whittier Woods.

There was general agreement from the CC that this Project Canopy grant was a good and worthwhile idea. Nancy said when the Project Canopy grant application is available, she will make sure we are notified.

Nancy left at 7:40pm.

To continue bicycle talk: Bob spoke of wanting to find ways to improve infrastructure for alternatives to automobiles; road shoulders wide enough for cycling, state stenciling loan program, the 3-foot state law for cars and bicycles. Because the federal gov't says you can't put signs that say "state law" on state highways (route 132), the signs could go on Academy Street. Herb said a traffic engineer at the state is needed to put signs or paint on state roads. Bob said he will attend the next EDC meeting and try to gather some support and/or ideas there. Larry said if three bicycle awareness signs were put on Academy Street, 90% of the people in town will see them, and you could educate the whole town. We all agreed. And this sounded like a good plan to Bob and all of us. Everyone agreed Bob has our full support on this and speaks for the MonmCC when he speaks with the EDC.

It was noted that November 14th is Herb's last day as Director of Public Works.

Bob will invite Jim Connors, KLT Steward of Mt. Pisgah, for the October 14th meeting of the CC.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

The next meeting of the Monmouth Conservation Commission is Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at 7:00pm at the Monmouth Municipal Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Parker, Secretary