

Marshfield Conservation Commission
149th Meeting
3 February, 2021 via Zoom

Members Present: Taber Allison, Allen Banbury, Steve Fiske, Ed Jalbert, Bradley Materick, Anne Miller, Sarah Norton, Bob Popp, and Annie Reed

Non-Members: None

Minutes: Minutes approved unanimously as presented

Treasurer's report: None Presented

- Allen requested a report but has not received it by the time of the meeting
- Allen sent a check for AVCC membership and was reimbursed by the Town.
- Question of whether the AVCC membership is being paid out of Conservation or Operating Funds. It should be the latter. **Allen** will check on that.

Carbon Credit Webinar: Bob and Ed

- Cap and trade of carbon credits is mandatory in Calif, but voluntary elsewhere
- The Northeast Regional Gas Initiative doesn't accept carbon offsets
- Biggest market is for voluntary carbon offsets by corporations, such as Amazon, Ben & Jerry, Microsoft, Starbucks.
- They accept forest carbon offsets for reforestation, avoidance of conversion, or improved forest management. For the latter would need to demonstrate that any management stores more carbon than ongoing management.
- Can't claim offsets for first two purposes on an already protected town forest. For the 3rd purpose would need to conduct a baseline determination of carbon stored and then demonstrate how this could be increased thru management.
- Presently not much research on carbon sequestering based on management practices. Could possibly do a thinning which would increase tree production and store more carbon, but difficult for VT to compete with more productive areas of the country. Carbon must be stored for minimum of 30-40 years, requires insurance against fire, illegal harvest, etc and must be verified by 3rd party.
- Some of the voluntary market seems to be a feel good exercise in that doesn't really save much carbon. Would be more beneficial to invest it in solar, geothermal or reforestation in undeveloped country.
- Decided that not worth pursuing for both moral and practical reasons.

Natural Areas Inventory

- Taber and Bob met with Gary Gulka with Cabot CC to find out about their inventory done last year.

- Their CC tapped into a Special Fund due to settlement with Cabot Creamery over a spill. Received \$9,000 from fund and put in another \$1,000. Was approved by a vote at town meetings.
- They hired a consultant with most of the funds. He did the landscape analysis to identify and prioritize sites to visit. Identified 80 high priority sites, but he visited only 30.
- Cabot CC did the landowner contact. Only a few landowners declined, mostly no replies. They did not access any property without landowner permission.
- Wanted to have a kickoff meeting and site visits, but cancelled due to Covid.
- Consultant completed a report and gave a virtual public presentation re. the results.
- Next Steps:
 - Decided not a good time to approach town for funding so looked into what we can do ourselves in house
 - We won't be able to do the entire inventory, but we can certainly assist.
 - Would need to be a multi year project
 - Tabor created a document of 6 tasks based on Cabot's outline.
- Comments:
 - Many members offered to help and suggested others in town who should be involved.
 - Include aquatic communities
 - Keep track of hours for any future match
 - Suggestion of a virtual town meeting to assess expertise/interest
 - Previously the select board had offered to match any conservation commission funds with town funds.
 - Decided to **develop an operational plan around Task 1** with a timeline about how to complete it with the goal to present it at the next meeting.
 - Inventory Committee: Taber, Bob, Annie, Ed, and Bradley.

Updates on other projects:

- Plant Sale Flyer was sent to members by Sara Alpert with **request to please review**
- FoW submitted a water monitoring grant to monitor water quality at 12 sites in the 3 towns: Cabot, Plainfield, and Marshfield.
- Forest Legacy easement (Hardwood Mt Conservation Easement) almost ready to go. Kate Sudhoff, FPR wants to meet with MCC and SB prior to finalizing it
- **Steve** will contact her to set up a meeting to review the easement

Solid Waste district Composting Workshop

- Outreach coordinator for NE Kingdom will do a composting workshop at OSC this Spring
- Library would like us to cosponsor. Agreed unanimously to do so.

Membership:

- Allen, Bob and Steve terms end
- If want to be reappointed need to send a letter/email to Select Bd

Submitted by: Bob Popp

Submitted on: Feb 7th, 2021

Approved on: March 3rd 2021