

# **MOHAWK TRAIL WOODLANDS PARTNERSHIP**

## **Forest-Based Economic Development and Conservation**

### **Executive Committee Minutes - Approved May 11, 2021**

Members present: Henry Art, Board Chair, Joe Nowak, Bob O'Connor, Whit Sanford

Others present: Lisa Hayden, NEFF/Admin. Agent

The meeting was called to order shortly after 1 p.m.

J. Nowak moved and B. O'Connor seconded approval of the March 30, 2021 Exec. Committee minutes, passed unanimously.

**Upcoming grant deadlines:** There was a lengthy discussion about potential applications for the Regional MTWP grants from the Exec. Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, due May 24. L. Hayden noted that a regional application on behalf of the Partnership could match a US Forest Service grant opportunity of \$60,000 that would focus on riparian restoration and tree-planting in town centers, perhaps with a research component from a local college.

#### **Using the Administrative Agent time and resources efficiently & effectively:**

H. Art and L. Hayden reported that the Standing Committees were getting up and running, but the pace of scheduling and public postings is brisk and can take over planning capacity from some other high priority objectives such as fundraising and items within the Agent bid. NEFF may be able to secure some additional administrative support from existing staff. W. Sanford said she is working on a funding spreadsheet that could list needed projects for the MTWP, needs of the 21 towns to improve forest conservation and economic development, and goals by county and for the region as a whole, which can help to focus grant-writing and fundraising. B. O'Connor noted that the National Heritage Corridor program might be an avenue for the Partnership to explore if the region could be recognized through some kind of coordination with the Forest Service and Park Service. L. Hayden also noted that the RCPP grant that NEFF applied for to provide funding for forest conservation easements and climate change forest management planning and practices to include the Mohawk Trail region was not funded. A TerraCorps member assigned to the MTWP is on a waiting list of positions from this Massachusetts program that is part of AmeriCorps.

**MTWP Website updating; meeting recording:** L. Hayden reported that there is not currently the ability to post videos on the MTWP web site without upgrading. Because there is not a requirement to record public meetings, only to provide minutes to be approved within three meetings of the public body, there was consensus that it was not necessary to record all of the numerous standing committee meetings due to the large size of meeting recording video files and the time required for that task.

**Update on community participation in MTWP:** A Buckland town meeting is scheduled for early June, when they are expected to vote on joining the Partnership, following H. Art's attendance at a recent Selectman's meeting to explain the process for towns to join the MTWP. Members reviewed other current vacancies on the Board, including Board representatives from Cheshire and Rowe, for three-year terms. There will be renewed efforts to reach out to those towns to fill the vacancies.

**Creating the agenda for the 8 June MTWP Annual General Meeting:** W. Sanford suggested that, in addition to business, the annual meeting should include a guest speaker focused on the MTWP vision. It was agreed that H. Art would invite USFS Chief Vicki Christianson to the June 8 meeting and that several

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recipients of MTWP grants could be invited to briefly report on work that was funded, such as winner of the Lever Entrepreneur Challenge and state MVP grants. In addition, about an hour of the meeting will be taken up by reports from the Standing Committees on crafting their missions and priorities. (A more robust forum including more grant project speakers can be planned for the fall.) There will also be a goal to elect a new Treasurer at the meeting, with board members being invited to self-nominate.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:50 p.m.