

**Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership  
Forest Conservation Committee Minutes  
Wednesday, November 2, 2021**

**Present:** Kate Lindroos Conlin, Alain Peteroy, Shelia Kelliher, Larry Flaccus, Bob O'Connor  
**Non-members:** Board Chair Hank Art, Agent Lisa Hayden, Williams College student  
Sabrine Brismeur

1. Call to order at 5:05 p.m.
2. Bob moved and Kate seconded to approve of minutes with correction from Forest Conservation committee meeting on Aug. 3, 2021. Vote was unanimous; Alain abstained as she was not present.
3. Discussion regarding the need for a committee budget. Start by filling out standing committee survey sheet. There was discussion of the Partnership's role in land conservation, and whether the Committee could support making grants more competitive. Alain felt the MTWP should not become another land trust but seek to help and support local organizations to get funding, particularly due diligence and appraisals to complete conservation deals, for example.
4. Bob reminded committee members about the availability of USFS Community Forest Program grants and suggested possible projects, including Pelham Lake Park ideas and BNRC projects. The program requires a 50% non-federal match. Bob offered to help with writing grant proposal; committee members can reach out to towns for project ideas.
5. Grant Prospects/Possibilities/Needs
  - a. Grants for due diligence
  - b. Conservation Partnership Grant
  - c. Community Foundation of Western MA (CFWM)
  - d. \* Environmental License Plate program for fundraising: 400 plates, \$40 each, pre-purchased. Need to follow up on this idea and brainstorm designs.
  - e. Great American Outdoors Act
  - f. American Rescue Plan funding possibility
6. Hank discussed efforts to explore if there is a possibility of the MTWP securing the \$30 million fund that was proposed in the partnership's enabling legislation (an endowment that would support the partnership long term). Bob mentioned that Congressman Neal needs to be part of the effort to create such a fund.
7. Discussion of Goals of Forest Conservation committee: work on license plate projects and one small grant application this coming year. Would need to pay artist for plate design so a committee budget is needed.

- a. Vote on proposed Mission Statement of committee: remove “outreach” since that is another committee, and decision to remove “private ownership” in the conservation mission scope to keep it less specific. Vote to approve mission as amended: Bob, Kate seconded. All in favor: yes.  
Committee mission statement:  
**Conserve forestland to protect the region’s rural character, forest-based economy, climate resilience, and ecological benefits through funding and planning.**
  
8. There’s a possible need for a GIS assessment of the MTWP region and incorporation into an Open Space and Recreation Plan. GIS assessment ideas: Alain noted that open space plans for each of the towns could be incorporated. GIS studies on Cold Water/Prime Streams by DFG / Andrew Kawczak; check in with the state GIS staff regarding assessments for the partnership region; review forest corridor data; Scott Jackson and Kevin McGarigal at UMass are other great resources. Though a Terra Corps member/intern had been suggested as a possible idea for MTWP, it was noted that there is a fee for agencies to pay for this 1-year role.
  
9. Other Items/Updates from members, guests
  - a. Sabine Brismeur gave a short report on the Williams College student team project studying the MTWP Forest Center idea. She and team partner Abby Matheny have visited to tour potential site locations. They are conducting an online survey about needs for the Center and have set up interviews with key stakeholders with their report due in Dec.
  - b. A Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition Ecosystem Services study is in process with a consultant. Alain is on the committee.
  - c. Larry would like to hear about what other committees are working on.
  - d. Hank noted that the Board should review the legal mandates that need to be included in the Partnership Plan according to the enabling legislation.
  - e. A detailed action plan is needed for all MTWP committees and the Board.
  - f. Municipal Financial Stability committee is reviewing the PILOT issues and calling for the Board to advocate for reforms.
  - g. Shelia suggested leading a guided walk at Crowningshield Conservation Area (Franklin Land Trust Property) on Saturday. Other suggestions are walks with towns that are getting climate resilience included in their town forest stewardship plans.
  - h. Larry said that Shelburne is working on an effort to get Community Preservation Act funds. Nov. 3 forum; asked if appropriate for letter of support from MTWP. Plan is for town meeting in May and ballot in fall.
  
10. Kate moved and Larry seconded to adjourn at approximately 6:15 p.m.