

**MINUTES**  
**Meeting of June 2, 2021**  
**Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership**  
**Natural Resource-Based Economic Development Standing Committee**

Committee Members in attendance: Andrew Kawczak (chair), Jeffrey Thomas, Nicole Pyser, Zachary Feury (note-taker)

Others in attendance: Henry Art (Board chair), Kyle Hanlon (Board member), Lisa Hayden (Admin. Agent), Jade Schnauber (public)

1. Mr. Kawczak opened the meeting at 3.33pm.
2. Approval of Minutes:
  - a. Motion by J. Thomas to approve April 21 first meeting minutes as written, seconded by N. Pyser, and passed unanimously.
  - b. Motion to approve May 12 minutes made by J. Thomas, seconded by N. Pyser, passed unanimously.
3. Discussion of Proposed Program/Projects/Priorities:
  - a. A. Kawczak shared a list of prospective projects seeking discussion thereon.
  - b. He elaborated on waste wood-related use that could generate economic development. J. Thomas noted that an applicant in the Lever challenge applied with waste wood-related business that was not accepted because it was believed that the enterprise could not scale—demand might outstrip availability thereby potentially leading to increased deforestation. He is unsure whether or not there is scalable, sustainable economic development potential in waste wood-related businesses. N. Pyser noted that determining value of waste wood-related businesses is outside her expertise. A. Kawczak noted that the MTWP’s lack of expertise and knowledge on waste wood-related business could be explored further.
  - c. A. Kawczak moved to other initiatives, asking Z. Feury for his thoughts on mountain biking. Z. Feury noted his limited knowledge on the environmental impact of mountain biking, demonstration forests, and glamping, but that mountain biking and glamping might be useful means of increasing tourism. J. Thomas noted that tourism can lead to congestion at trailheads and known entries into woodlands which can create high environmental impact. He stated that the Lever challenge winner was a “glamping” business that used funds to enhance solar capabilities, and further noted that all initiatives have pros and cons.
  - d. N. Pyser indicated that she could not think of any initiatives not listed, noting that stimulating forest jobs would be beneficial, but unsure as to how, and that outdoor recreation appears to be the most apt approach for stimulating economic development.
  - e. J. Thomas suggested looking at wood products-related initiatives other than waste wood, such as furniture making, flooring production, etc. A. Kawczak noted that the businesses mentioned by JT are already in existence and it has been suggested that such businesses might benefit from increased marketing and cooperative marketing.

4. Identify research needs/sources that address needs of programs discussed above:
  - a. Z. Feury noted a risk/benefit analysis might be valuable.
  - b. J. Thomas suggested that cooperative marketing strategies for forest-related businesses could be a focus. H. Art noted that most timber harvested in the MTWP region is exported; encouraging local timber processing could increase sustainability—how do we encourage sustainable manufacture of timber products?
  - c. J. Thomas inquired as to research capacity. H. Art noted UMASS could be utilized for research purposes, but questions would need to be articulated. He further noted that funds for such research are not currently available and that in-house expertise and time will need to be utilized. It was also noted that Williams College could be utilized for internship research programs, and that an analysis of the waste wood generated in the region could be a summer intern project.
  - d. N. Pyser asked what the outreach and education committee has been working on and about their goals for research. H. Art responded that the committee has so far been focused on creating communications resources, less so on identifying research goals. J. Thomas noted a priority research item would be to conduct a cost/risk analysis that includes a rubric for evaluation of initiatives through a single lens to help prioritize.
  - e. L. Hayden recommended creating three categories of potential projects: tourism-related, forestry-related and waste wood-related.
5. Identify community need for proposed Forest Education Center: A. Kawczak said the Committee can provide input on operational direction for an envisioned Forest Center – such as periodic educational events, for example, a maple sugaring-themed event could be planned for Feb./March. He invited H. Art to provide an update on the Center concept that was included in the Partnership Plan as a potential flagship project. H. Art indicated that he is working on a proposal for a student team at Williams College to embark on a needs assessment this fall. The Ex. Committee had explored opportunity to seeking funding for a Center in the federal infrastructure bill, but determined there is a need to first more clearly delineate the local needs and purposes for a Center, as the concept is not “shovel-ready.”
6. Plan for virtual Annual Meeting on June 8 to deliver group’s recommendations on priorities: A. Kawczak will plan to attend to report on the Committee’s work so far, and invited members to contact him with any suggestions.
7. Committee members’ input is welcome on upcoming tasks the Admin. Agent will be working to coordinate: a) the need to edit the 2015-16 Partnership Plan to make it consistent with the MTWP enabling legislation and shared stewardship agreement, and b) Continue thinking about a Natural Resource and Recreation Assessment, to determine whether existing regional plans and assessments are meeting these needs for the MTWP and if outside contractors will need to be recruited to complete these tasks, or if they will be taken on by various Standing Committees.
8. The date of the next Committee meeting is TBD.
9. Public Comment: None.
10. Motion to adjourn made by J. Thomas, seconded by N. Pyser, and passed unanimously at 4:40 p.m.