

**Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership
Forest Conservation Committee Minutes
Tuesday, August 3, 2021**

MTWP Committee Attendees: Chair Kate Lindroos Conlin, Larry Flaccus, Shelia Kelliher, Bob O'Connor, Mark Phelps

Others present: Hank Art, Board Chair; Whit Sanford, Board member; Lisa Hayden, Agent; Glen Ayers, Public

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m.
2. 2. K. Conlin invited Public Comment. G. Ayers suggested that the Northeast Wilderness Trust could be a potential partner to the MTWP in order to seek and provide funding for “forever wild” conservation easements, and could be invited to give a presentation.
3. Review of minutes from May 19, 2021: K. Conlin voted to approve, B. O'Connor seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.
4. Chair K. Conlin introduced the topic of incorporating Forest Conservation Committee goals with the MTWP Plan update. There was discussion that the proposed Forest Legacy designation should be added to the Plan. M. Phelps supported keeping emphasis on conserving private land in the Committee mission, while H. Art suggested adding reference to other categories, such as land trust and public land. K. Conlin will plan to prepare the Mission Statement for a vote at next meeting.
5. During a discussion of different approaches for conserving and protecting forests, a rubric was suggested to display sources of current funding and to administer a variety of grants focused on habitat, recreation, resiliency, carbon or other priorities. M. Phelps suggested there may be programs to incentivize landowners to work together for conservation or other purposes, for example, in sharing a log landing, a harvest could be accomplished for several properties at one time. A spreadsheet of all the towns, and a uniform response sheet, might allow Board members to report back to the Partnership on their community's local conservation priorities, as well their issues and challenges. Identifying regional corridor priorities that cross town boundaries was noted as well as identifying where there is development pressure. Many towns have open space plans, which is a requirement to apply for some grants, however, it was observed that not all MTWP towns have them. B. O'Connor noted that towns with fewer than 6,000 population can seek funding for a free open space and recreation plan. W. Sanford suggested that a separate spread sheet could list what grants are available to sustain the Partnership and its various goals. H. Art suggested grant opportunities could be listed on the web site to empower people and organizations from the region to submit their own grants.
6. The Committee considered future guest speakers, which could include Williams College students who are scheduled to study an MTWP Forest Center in the fall. A community survey is likely to be among their project results. The next meeting is tentatively planned for Oct. 26 at 4:30 p.m.

7. Other future programs could include estate planning forums or woods walks with Franklin Land Trust or Berkshire Natural Resources Council providing expertise on CRs or volunteer public access for trails. M. Phelps noted that another group of landowners are those who provide access across their properties for snowmobile trails, horseback riding, mountain bikes or runners, as well as river access for fishing or hunting. Another idea was that demonstration forests could be de-centralized and branded across the region.
8. L. Hayden asked Committee members to remind their municipalities to submit a letter of support by August for the proposed Forest Legacy designation to make the MTWP region eligible to apply for this federal funding source (information from a previous speaker to the Board on this topic has been distributed.)
9. G. Ayers suggested that the Commonwealth's net zero goals and calculations for how much natural and working lands contribute to absorbing carbon emissions are a current opportunity for the MTWP.
10. B. O'Connor moved to adjourn, K. Conlin seconded and after unanimous vote, the meeting ended at 5:30 p.m.