

Moodna Creek Watershed Intermunicipal Council

c/o Orange County Water Authority

124 Main Street, Goshen, New York 10924

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http://waterauthority.orangecountygov.com/moodna_council.html



MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 30, 2020

Zoom Meeting

Meeting began at 10:10 AM.

Attending:

Voting Members and Alternates: Kelly Morris, Simon Gruber, Jay Beaumont, Ward Brower, Johanna Kiernan, Jackie Hernandez, Frank Palermo, Sue Anne Vogelsberg, Andrew Giacomazza

Non-Governmental Members: Andy Lawrence, Tracy Schuh, Kate Ahmadi

Guests: Virginia Scott, Scott Cuppett, Joe Corona, Shelia McGroddy

Council Business:

• Science and Outreach Committee report

a) Kiosks – status report -- Jay Beaumont

Jay announced that the Merriewold Lake Kiosk is completed. The Washingtonville Scout Troup and Matt Brady helped to assemble the kiosk. Brendan introduced Ian, Cornwall Scout, to Jay and Ian may start work on the third kiosk. The Birch School in Rock Tavern will work on a fourth kiosk. Jay still looking for Scouts to sponsor more kiosks. Kelly noted that she will help leading the dedication of the kiosk in the fall (TBD) and be sure to invite the late Jim Mullany's wife since the kiosk has a panel in memoriam to him.

b) 10th anniversary celebration

Jay suggested Evan Pritchard, an expert on Native Americans, could give a presentation at the Anniversary event. Whether this celebration will be in person or via Zoom will be discussed at the August Committee meeting. Simon requested suggestions for outdoor event locations. Black Rock Fish & Gun Club may be an option. Jackie will check on Black Rock and Palaia Winery and let Kelly know. Kate mentioned that Black Rock was the site of the Council's first event. Date not set, possible September or October. Tracy said need time to reach more people. To be discussed further in August.

c) Increasing public recreational access

Kelly spoke about the Walkkill Water Trail as suggested by Kate. Possible project for Moodna. Kelly stated that the more attention brought to a water body the more people are interested, the more they care and so you can build up a stakeholder group. Public access points on Moodna, its tributaries, and lakes is needed. Twin arches bridge is one public access but is informal because it's privately-owned. Kate mentioned paddlethe-wallkill.org. Simon stated that viewing sites are needed as well as boating. Kelly asked about the Naomi Sewell Richardson park in Washingtonville and Kate gave the background on the park. Johanna mentioned that the project is on hold due to funds and that a Washingtonville group is planning on a butterfly and bee kiosk at that location. Scott spoke about a New Platz pollinator garden. Simon spoke about pollinator pathways. Group discussion about gardens and pollinating ensued because this could be something that the Council could advance through various projects.

Executive Committee

Town of Blooming Grove

Town of Chester

Village of Chester

Town of Cornwall

Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson

Town of Goshen

Town of Hamptonburgh

Town of Monroe

Town of Montgomery

Town of New Windsor

Village of South Blooming Grove

Town of Warwick

Village of Washingtonville

Town of Woodbury

Village of Woodbury

Orange County Water Authority

Non-Municipal Members

Black Rock Fish & Game Club

Black Rock Forest Consortium

Concerned Citizens for the Hudson Valley

Friends of Walton Lake

New York Natural History Council

NY/NJ Trail Conference

Orange County Land Trust

Orange County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs

Palisades Interstate Park Commission

Preservation Collective

John Mickelson

Kate Ahmadi

Ed Butler



d) Next VIRTUAL Committee meeting date – August 14th at 10:30 am

- **Brown's Pond dam removal update – Simon Gruber**

Simon clarified that this dam is in Hamptonburgh, not the Brown's Pond in New Windsor. Both waterbodies are in the Moodna watershed. Owner trying to remove dam as it is not in good condition. NYSDEC's Hudson River Estuary program provided funds for an initial outreach process which has been completed. A larger state grant for the removal of the dam and restoration of the site is pending. Project will take several years. Owner applied for DEC permit to allow lowering pond by opening back side of dam to inspect it as a safety measure. A wetland permit is required and is pending. State focus is on stream restoration, restoring connectivity of the stream to the ocean for fish passage, particularly the American Eel. Grant is focused on habitat restoration for fisheries. It has dual benefit – remove old dam which had a potential public safety issue and restore wetlands and connectivity. Per Simon, there is support and no major opposition to this project. One farmer who uses the water has been provided with options. Simon mentioned to Scott that this is one of the very few dam removal projects, active, near term, potential dam removal projects in the region so it is an important demonstration project for the State. Scott mentioned there are other projects in the Hudson Valley area but that Brown's Pond is a good case study.

Kelly suggested using the pond's other name – Burnside Pond – to prevent confusion with other the New Windsor Browns Pond. Simon would like to see an ongoing ecological monitoring program to see how the site changes, possible education site and rebranding if signage is there. Possible "207-208 Junction".

- **Mill Street embankment – Simon Gruber**

Jay provided history of the situation.

Simon working with Kevin Sumner of Soil and Water on this severe erosion issue along the Moodna Creek. Road is County Rt. 32/Mill Street, near State Rt. 32. Project description letter is ready to be sent to County leaders (legislator Kevin Hines and the County Executive) asking County to take leadership and come up with a plan to stabilize and restore the site, otherwise road will eventually be undermined. Sawmill property owner is losing property. Virginia (Ginny) Scott's property is also affected. Ginny, Jay, and Simon working on final review of letter. Ginny to meet with Cornwall Supervisor and discuss the letter.

- **Walton Lake protection efforts**

Andrew stated that there have been many personnel changes and he will call Kelly to discuss the future of the project.

- **Educational Webinars**

Jay not available to discuss. Members discussed webinars and topics. Simon suggested water conservation and efficiency. Jackie - Responsibility of DEC as a regulatory agency should be clarified and enforcement pushed. Sewage and treatment plants are a concern. High salt contents in Rockland traced back to Orange County. Worley Heights has ongoing well issue. Water is trucked in. Ward mentioned his community is at the epicenter of the treatment plants in Harriman and raised the question – why isn't there recycling of water?



Simon noted he has been working since 1990 on benefits of decentralized approach to waste water management, which is a huge challenge to do this in parts of County that are already sewerred. Council could write policy statement for state leaders, simpler first step educate local officials in Moodna Creek Watershed about benefit of water efficiency. Water still too cheap here. Programs in 80's had posters and programs regarding water efficiency locally. Plan another conversation to educate community. Council could do marketing sponsored by "Moodna Council". Kelly noted that Arcadia Hills in Goshen has had to have water brought into wells many times.

Kelly suggested that the Council have better online presence, as discussed with Tracy in the past. Kelly and Tracy discussed setting up FaceBook page. Jackie can set up account. Email – MoodnaCouncil.com. Use Council logo, Jackie needs help with content. Jackie can post on the page. Members to send Jackie pictures of Moodna. Zoom meeting could be sponsored from page. Jay worked on water education and can be a resource. Team is Jackie, Sue Anne, Simon, and Tracy.

Jackie – permits for unpermitted use, drawing water down not in initial permit.

- Comments/announcements from attendees

Shelia expressed concern over FB page having public access. Johanna – advisor can review comments before they show on screen.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) is still in State Local Government committee. Simon working on letter in support of CPA by Council. New bill before Legislature for all Towns and Villages in NYS to have a CPA. Simon to do letter before next Committee meeting, Aug. 14.

Tracy requested status on Clovewood. Sue Anne – Clovewood comments are being accepted by VBG. Council to submit comments, Jay may be the person to read the comments out loud at the meeting. Sue to send Jay & Brenden information on the meeting. Johanna agreed to read the comments if Jay or Brendan does not.

Kate requested date be stated, August 10th at Independence Firehouse. Sue Anne stated that the Legal Notice was in paper on July 24th.

Kelly may have a conflict as she works for the OC Planning Department and does work for the OC Water Authority which is why she is the representative for the OC Water Authority on the Council. The new Commissioner (Alan Sorenson) is asking that Kelly write letter to OC Ethics Board asking to request an opinion on her role as a representative for the Water Authority to make sure there is no conflict. Clovewood letter to Town of Blooming Grove by the Water Authority and the separate Council letter gave an appearance of conflict. Commissioner is questioning if Water Authority should even be a municipal member of the Council because the Water Authority is not a municipality, no dues are paid, but finances are handled. Possible resignation by the Water Authority from the Council. (Kelly has not missed a meeting in 10 years!)

Andrew (Giacomazza) – Woodbury passed the Water Overlay Protection District Act, a local law. There will be Phase 2 to get community involved. Hope to do Land Preservation Act next. He will send the law to Kelly, who will forward out to the Council's mailing list.

Next Committee meeting is Aug. 14, 2020, 10 AM

Next Council meeting is October 29, 2020, 10 AM

Meeting ended 11:44 AM.