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**Middlesex Conservation District**

319 Littleton Road, Suite 205

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**Board of Supervisors Monthly Meeting Minutes  
September 27, 21, 2021 7:00 P.M.**

**Welcome**

Supervisors Elizabeth Austen, Katherine Becker, Patrick Hearn, Binee Hershon and Andrew Mintz, Contractor Susan Thomas, NRCS DC Robert Purcell (joined us at 7:38), Volunteers Liz McGuire, and Dick Gelpe, and guests Julie Weiss and Carolyn Wirth joined the meeting. Kathie called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

**Minutes:** Not yet available.

**Fall Calendar:**

- Erosion and Sediment Control Workshop scheduled September 27<sup>th</sup> had to be postponed to the spring due to Covid.
- Soils workshop rescheduled from September to October at Farmer Dave's.
- Native Edibles workshop with Russ Cohen scheduled for Monday, Indigenous People's Day from 4-6 PM at Good Pickin' Farm in Westford. Splitting proceeds with Good Pickin' since they are hosting and doing registration.
- Annual Meeting location research not going well for a live meeting. MCD voted to have a virtual meeting. Kathie made the motion for the meeting to be virtual, Liz Austin seconded, all were in favor. Date is December 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Office update:** Not likely to be open to MCD until March at the earliest. NRCS and WCCD are both looking for planners. Bob's position is regional. Central MA District Conservationist is title.

**Treasurer's Report:** Andrew made a motion to approve the report, Patrick seconded. Kathie had questions. These were answered and all were then in favor.

**District Conservationist Report, Robert**

- Ashley Raez from TX has been hired as a full time Program Assistant and starting in the Westford Office soon. First day was September 12<sup>th</sup>. Training in Holden. Will split her time initially between Holden and Westford, then hybrid in Westford, and then become full time eventually.
- Very successful working group in August. Pat thought it was the best meeting the District has ever had. Bob also thought the meeting went well. Lots of real world issues discussed. Productive discussion with a good turnout (10 or so people) and several additional surveys completed providing feedback to NRCS for programming in FY 2022.
- Bob will be in touch with Grisha.

- Three more days in the fiscal year. Wrapping up the last of the contracts. CTA will be able to serve more acres.
- AFT received a grant for Urban Agriculture outreach which will produce more workload in the office.
- New Entry Urban Farm Tour October 21<sup>st</sup> from 10-1. Bob will send details to Sue.

### **EEA Grant Administration:**

- **FY2019 Basic Grant - Programs** – Supported Amy and workshops has been closed out. Invoiced and reimbursed as of September 8, 2021. Despite multiple changes to how we delivered workshops during the pandemic, this money was very well spent on 3 well attended workshops.
- **FY 2020 Basic Grant – Administrator** billed and reimbursed as of September 8, 2021.
- **FY 2020 Innovative Grant** – Running behind. Need to develop strategy for FY 2022 and 2023.
- **FY 2021 Basic Grant – Administrator On schedule.**
- **FY2021 Innovative Grant** – Running behind. Most of the work for both years of grant money to be spent in FY 2022 as a result of Covid and need to restructure grant a bit to reflect current conditions.
- **FY 2022 Basic and Innovative Grants** – awarded. Need to sign contract and allocate funding/tasks to the two years and begin. Innovative grant will support educational programs.

Sue to produce a budget that reflects expenditures and reimbursement by grant in order to understand what budget items are supported by the grant and where we stand relative to our liabilities and income. Sue to strive for quarterly billing, expected revenue, and actual and reporting. EEA commits to reimburse within 45 days. Completely virtual with Citizen's Bank, so can provide receipts easier without US Mail delays in order to see statements, document expenditures, since EEA requires proof of payment in order to reimburse. Purpose of the statements is to make sure we understand all the buckets and are clear about cash flow; what we have spent and what we have left to spend. Sue needs to check that we have 18 months to spend FY 2022 money that was extended. Discussion about how to do the delayed work and the new work is still outstanding.

Patrick pleased to see the additional money and grants coming in because it is inspiring. The work is vitally important and relevant. The challenge is getting the work done under current conditions.

Kathie and Julie pointed out that the Commonwealth has unexpected revenues this year and an increasing focus on conservation, both within government and in the public understanding, so there is a greater possibility of additional funding now and in the future.

**Budget** not yet available – payroll company, web site design.

**Long Term Plan Update:** A mature draft, but still have some pieces to complete and cite, and a bibliography. Looking for feedback and epigraphs. Dick: It is an hour read, impressive, dense with content, past may be portrayed a bit rosier and more smooth than they were actually experienced at the time. Struggle has been part of the history of conservation. Put some emphasis on challenges of future – loss of ag land and people involved in it in the county. Perhaps an abstract? In addition to being a grounding in the past, Patrick also sees this document as a fundraising resource. Also a question of how much focus to devote to forestry and inclusiveness (tribal nations). Andrew likes

historical perspective. Julie liked it, but also thought we might want to talk about urban farming a little bit as it may grow in the future. Indoor farming and fish farming for food production are also topics that we might want to address as we look ahead over the next decade. Could go in section 5 as an addition to traditional agriculture. Julie also wondered about the organizational chart. How does AFT fit in? Chart came from MACD. Lots of organizations span several of these definitions. Sue: If we list all the non-profits and start to promote to them/with them we might increase MCD visibility and build those relationships and constituency across the county. Annual Plan will be extracted from this document. Sue wondered about identifying existing relationships and potential target partnerships without being exclusive. The Small Farm Guide, about to be published by MACD, might also be a good research. Patrick: goal is to finish by the Annual Meeting.

### **Annual Plan Progress: Time to create a FY 2022 Annual Plan**

- Fall workshops addressed earlier
- 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee – no report
- Recruitment – Dick recruiting the Chair of the Hudson Conservation Committee who is interested in native plants and is in a non-profit, but has never heard of Districts. To send Sue contact info to start the conservation. Sue stated that we need to form a nominating committee. Everyone but Andrew is up for renewal. Dick, Liz and Andrew will serve on the nominating committee. Patrick will be stepping down as a Supervisor, but is willing to serve as a volunteer on select projects, particularly if MCD pursues getting an endowment. Kathie will run again. Benee will let us know based on her state of residence. Liz Austin will run for a one year term. We voted Julie in as an Associate Supervisor. She would also like to run for full Supervisor in December. Patrick nominated Julie, Kathie seconded, all were in favor. Thank you, Julie! 5 Supervisors now, 7 slots. Also try to fill Associates, or get volunteers and work year round so that we have people in reserve. Patrick will send materials out to Jennifer Haschley. Sue to update recruiting documentation. Refers people to Sue for initial screen and information. Then she sends materials to nominating committee if candidate wants to proceed. Candidates informed of our meetings as well. Distribute to master contact list. We have the list, Challenge is bulk email tool. Newsletters a resource available now. Associations for watershed groups, conservation groups, member organizations. MACD has asked us to speak about recruitment and “the care and feeding of Supervisors” on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Board asked Sue to attend. Patrick -Recruiting seems to be working for us, but we can expect to have to work at retention, as we saw this past year.

**New Business:** Kathie reported that we hope to be making Carolyn Wirth an offer for the plant sale coordinator position, after we have covered a few more points to make sure the job is clear. Julie offered her time to speak to Carolyn further about the job.

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 PM. Andrew made the motion, Liz A seconded, all were in favor.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Susan Thomas  
District Administrator

