

MVP Core Team meeting notes 12/2/2020, 7 pm

Present: Liz Callahan, Nancy Pau, Wendy Reed, Rick Parker, Chip Wallace, Elisa Grammer

Next meeting: January 13, 2021 7 pm See meeting information below

At the outset Elisa Grammer said that Patricia Reeser was unable to be at this meeting because she was meeting with the Mill Pond Committee regarding environmental signage, etc.

1) Going forward: issues to pursue

Invasive plants

Nancy Pau reported that the Invasive Plants Subcommittee met again with 4-5 new members and considerable enthusiasm. In fact, Patricia Reeser could not be present at this meeting because she was discussing signage at the Mill Pond Committee meeting as an outgrowth of the Invasive Plants Subcommittee work.

This invasive plant group's next meeting is scheduled for December 16.

Nancy Pau said that the top invasive plants of concern are 1) Japanese Knotweed (which has been identified in Town by Jack Duggin and his team, and can be identified in patches to treat as demonstration sites) 2) black swallow wort and garlic mustard (in early stages and more doable).

Ms. Pau said that Mill Pond is a focus point to demonstration activities because it is highly visible. Ideas include getting rid of invasive plants, highlighting pollinator plants and support, and perhaps starting a pollinator garden. These could serve as examples that could be replicated in individuals' own yards.

Education outreach is a key component: Ms. Pau has written an article in the West Newbury Garden Club newsletter and a Garden Club presentation will be made in January, with public invited.

Interns

The invasives group has explored ideas about hiring student interns to do field work to address the invasive plants question. They are looking into grant funding, and perhaps an article at Spring Town Meeting. The estimate is 8 weeks in summer for 2 interns at \$2.5K per person, \$5K total. They would work on mapping, treating invasives as well as other matters.

Rick Parker noted advantages of bringing this to Town Meeting in terms of townspeople's understanding and buy in. Important aspects are Selectmen approval and coordination with the Department of Public Works. Also, use of certified invasives management companies may be an option.

Wendy Reed said that the Conservation Commission favors using its available funds (whose expenditure would not require Town Meeting authorization) for such intern work. Conservation Agent Comins could be the Town supervisor. Questions of insurance and benefits were discussed, as well as the option of using a third party to manage interns, such as Gulf of Maine Institute (GOMI), or the high school volunteer program. GOMI has done this kind of thing with interns, and is stronger on leadership than administrative details like insurance and benefits.

It was generally agreed the Conservation Agent supervision is preferable. Ms. Reed will inquire if Town insurance, etc. would apply to interns. It was also agreed that the Conservation Commission and the invasives group will coordinate to explore funding, tasks lists, liability and other issues, and will pursue

funding through their separate options on a parallel basis. Proposed budget, project work, and other specifics will be developed.

Composting

Nancy Pau said she reached out to the school committee contact, who indicated that a teacher has expressed interest and the school business manager would be amenable if composting would not cost more. She viewed this as encouraging.

The West Newbury Board of Health favors composting, but cannot recommend a particular company unless it has entered into a contract. *Rick Parker said that he will reach out to Black Earth Composting to see how many people in West Newbury are participating. The group will consider personal notes on facebook advocating composting.*

Electric Vehicles

Members of the Energy Advisory Committee reported that the EV chargers are installed at Town Offices and Page School and now await National Grid hookup and the police hybrid Ford Explorer has been ordered.

Stormwater & roads

The Town is working on bylaws regarding stormwater. Ms. Reed had reached out to Department of Public Works Director (DPW) Amaral about using a MVP grant for support for this work, but had not received much of a reply. Horsely Witten may be doing some consulting on this. *Rick Parker will inquire.*

Nancy Pau added that the Town could look at floodwater storage and planning, to designate areas that should not be developed. The [Massachusetts Coastal Resilience program](#) may have grants to help with such matters as mapping to identify flood prone areas that could be the subject of Town acquisition or acquisition of an easement. *Nancy Pau will look into this.*

Rick Parker noted that the Town Inspector is now charged with making sure that building is not occurring in flood plains. He also noted that he spoke with the DPW Director about problems along River Road. This is something to watch.

Communications

Rick Parker noted that cellphone service remains an issue and pointed out that our Zoning Bylaw about this is very restrictive—it is something that should be changed. It is important that the Town receive the revenues from a new cellphone tower.

Power Outages

No update

Protecting & Securing Water Supplies

No update

Other matters: Green Fair

Liz Callahan noted that the Energy Advisory Committee is working on plans for an energy/environmental fair—which is something that the MVP group could become involved with as well. *The group agreed that this could be a good opportunity for many different Town groups and boards to work together. It was*

decided that this idea could be announced at the December 7 multi-board planning meeting with the Selectmen, with a follow up send out of topic ideas to potentially interested boards/committees.

Among the candidates for participation are the

- Energy Advisory Committee
- MVP
- Open Space Committee
- Mill Pond Committee
- Tree Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Department of Public Works
- Water Department
- Public Health Department
- Garden Club

Possible topics identified by the Energy Advisory Committee could include

- Solar PV
- Solar thermal
- Community Solar
- Battery Storage
- Air Source Heat Pumps for heating and cooling
- Geothermal Heat Pump Systems for heating and cooling
- Energy audits (MassSave or more extensive?)
- Building Envelope Improvements, Sealing, Insulation
- Peak shaving
- Carbon footprint calculator
- Food waste composting
- rain barrels
- rain gardens
- storm water, wetlands and protecting the Merrimac River
- planting natives
- planting pollinators
- West Newbury open space and trail system
- Recyclopedia - what can be recycled in MA, how to ensure that your recycling isn't rejected
- safe disposal of hazardous materials, batteries, medicines...
- septic system dos and don'ts
- private well testing
- Battery powered equipment
- Energy efficient appliances (e.g., water heaters, furnaces, well pumps)
- Electric vehicles

Assuming COVID conditions permit, the tentative target date would be in May (the tentative Garden Club plant sale would be May 15) and the location would be the field by the Town gazebo. If not then, perhaps this could occur in September after school is in session. A working title for this would be Green Fair.

2) December 7, 2020 meeting of boards, committees, about top priorities for the coming year(?)

Elisa Grammer noted that the letter inviting committees to participate in the December 7 meeting with the Selectmen about upcoming priorities for the year was not sent to the MVP Working Group. *The group decided that it should participate and Rick Parker will inquire about this. Assuming the MVP group is allowed to participate, it was agreed that 1) Chip Wallace (who is also presenting for the Energy Advisory Committee) will represent the MVP and 2) MVP priorities will be a) invasive plant management and b) the Green Fair.*

3) December 14, 2020 MVP presentation to BOS

As decided previously--

- The presentation will be at the December 14, 2020 Selectmen meeting
- Chip Wallace will do the presentation
- The presentation will cover 1) the high level conclusions/action items from the Final Report (in Rick Parker's Listening Session Powerpoint and 2) highlights of what we are pursuing now
- The presentation will use a short powerpoint that can be put on the website and publicized to remind townspeople about this

Also, the group agreed with Rick Parker's suggestion that more than passing mention should be made of the problem with cellphone towers and the need to rework the zoning bylaw so that it would be easier to site a tower on Town land.

4) Next MVP Meeting January 13, 2021

WN MVP Meeting

Wed, Jan 13, 2021 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM (EST)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/635587613>

You can also dial in using your phone.

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