

MWA October Meeting Notes
4:30 Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Due to confusion about the location of and the zoom link to the meeting, President Dave Converse opened the meeting a little after 5 PM. Present at Work Commons with Dave was Doug Coutts; present via zoom were Jennifer Hopkins, Beth Torpey, Peter Lepine (MCI liaison). Louise Beaudry missed Peter's updated, but arrived before the official meeting started

Before the meeting started Peter updated us on a few of the various activities that MCI has been busy with over the summer - dealing with phragmites, Japanese Knotweed, zebra mussels, land and lake protection, appropriate ditch building, noise and wake control. Currently in addition to the patrollers, MCI has five employees. MCI is very involved in assisting and providing input in updating and developing new environmental standards for the region. The landfill expansion/leachate, discovery of PFOAs in Magog, and development on Owl's head have been the hot topics of this year.

Secretary's Report

Doug moved acceptance of the Meeting Notes for 9/1/21, Beth seconded, approved.

Treasurer's Report

Jennifer provided some detail about the expenses on the 9/30/21 financials.

Current Grant Status Updates:

Regional Aquatic Nuisance Control – nothing new to report on our sub-grantees. Jennifer reported for Tom that the contractor's DASH equipment broke and they were unable to finish the work at the Newport Marina nor return to Whipple Point.

A written report was provided by Patrick updating the board on his work on the Riparian Buffers – VT F&W/GLRC, WUV Tactical Basin Planning Workplan Grants, and WUV Project Development Grant – Barton, Glover, Wetlands. Jennifer complimented Patrick on his presentation to Wetlands for Realtors Workshop, he did an excellent job summarizing what MWA has done and does.

WUV Prouty Beach Project – MWA is wrapping up this project. There are some plants and signage remain to be ordered and installed.

Status New/pending grant applications – no news on the 2 applications that are pending with WUV.

Committee Reports/ Other Activities Updates:

Landfill Steering Committee report - September 8th meeting. Charles Goulding emailed the board that not much happened, no significant findings. He submitted his notes from the meeting, but they weren't readable. Additionally, he did provide the minutes from the February 2021 meeting, these will be forwarded to the Board.

Phragmites Pulling Party Part II on 9/2 event went very well. Columbia Forest Products crew of 12 along with a few MWA volunteers made a great deal of headway, but there are days more work to do. Casella provided the dumpster and wrap, MWA the coffee and donuts and CFP provided lunch.

Zebra Mussel Samplers - Nine samplers provided by the University of Sherbrooke study went out in July, and were returned to MCI on September 27th. Despite an increase in mussels on the Canadian side, ours were zebra free; for now they are respecting the closed border. MWA has offered to participate next year.

Coventry School Education Project – UVM/Rubenstein School sent staff to do the water section grades 4 thru 8 - 80 kids- on the boat. The second half was with MWA all day on the Black River – 4 stations run by Stan, Jane, Mary Pat, Lynne and Doug. The two sections complemented each other; the overall program was based on the model that Hillary & Louise developed – Doug said “It works”, and was well received. UVM, now hooked in, has agreed to come twice next year for the boat section and has donated equipment for the River side. MCM needs to “conclude an agreement” with MWA to provide the volunteers (current volunteers might not be available next year) especially on the river side and to assure that the funding for it is included in their contracts with the schools.

MCM – Maritime Education Center grant - Matching funds for MCM/USDA-RD(NCIC) grant, final paperwork is still to come, amount should \$3794.40 (30% match on \$12,648 proposal).

Annual Meeting/leachate forum—Tentatively scheduled for 10/27, has been postponed. The presenters at the forum want to postpone until possibly January to avoid conflict or early release of information in conjunction with the comment period on Waste USA pretreatment permit. Options discussed for the Annual Meeting were cancelling totally, holding it along with a regular board meeting, but starting later or on the weekend, or holding it along with the forum. No decision was made.

Other Business:

The recent number of cyanobacteria blooms were discussed. It is that time of year....

Meeting adjourned about 5:50 pm.

The next planned meetings are 3 November and 1 December at 4:30 PM

In absence of our secretary, these notes were taken by Jennifer Hopkins.

Patrick’s written report is attached. The landfill oversight committee’s February minutes are included as an addendum – NEWSVT LOC 20210210 Meeting Minutes.

September Activities Report – submitted by Patrick Hurley

WUV Project Development Grant:

Glover – The town selectboard approved my request to continue developing this potential project by reaching out to the agency folks. I am in communication with Sacha Pealer (floodplain manager) and Ben C to determine the eligibility/feasibility of a green stormwater project based on floodplain and river corridor regulations. This is ongoing.

Barton – Still waiting to hear back from DEC regarding our request for design funding. On hold.

Wetlands – I am about to wrap up the GIS screening work to identify potential wetlands. I will then be doing drive-by windshield surveys to get eyes on the ground for those sites I deemed as ‘potential’ restoration sites to confirm whether or not wetlands can likely be created/supported. This will occur in October and November. If folks are interested in tagging along for some of these drive-bys, reach out.

Riparian Lands:

I will submit the September invoice today. I generated 70 draft conservation maps for the Johns River. I then walked the Riparian Lands Team thru 40 of the highest-priority maps during a 2-hour meeting last week to give them a chance to provide background information on landowner interactions, map edits, and outreach planning. I am working on the second draft for these maps and will be for the next few weeks. The Team were provided with a boilerplate outreach letter that will accompany the conservation maps when I mail them (or hand deliver) and so far Meg and US FWS have provided comments/edits. I will be putting together the outreach packets and delivering the first batch of them later this month (hopefully) after the Team gets a second chance to review. I have also been helping Pete with electro-fishing on the tributaries of the Clyde, as well as Northwoods with tree seed collection for Pete’s floodplain restoration projects that are slated for the spring.

Tactical Basin Planning:

I have been attending Lyn Munno’s Act 76 meetings and now sit on the Operations & Maintenance subcommittee for the Guidance document, which is currently in draft form. The Guidance document elaborates on the Act 76 Rule by providing specific protocols for the Clean Water Service Provider to follow when developing projects, releasing RFPs, reviewing proposals, and such. I sit on the O&M subcommittee because a portion of annual CWSP funds must be allocated to O&M of phosphorus reduction projects, and they need folks who have a background in implementation. We will review the O&M chapter of the guidance, provide comments/questions/feedback, and advocate for more inclusion of watershed groups in planning and project execution. I have quite a few tasks for the TBP support grant which will pick up more in late fall once the Act 76 work is a bit more refined.

Orleans County Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA):

Bimonthly meetings; we want to organize an in-person meeting and event for the fall and looking for ideas. Also want to engage more roads crews/municipalities. I reached out to Tom Latta and Doug to see if they are willing to provide updates at our next meeting in December regarding the Marina DASH work and the zebra mussel PVC samplers led by MCI. Folks are encouraged to attend this group!