

MPIC Minutes for September 13th, 2023

Attendance: Dave Golden, Amber Kumpulanian (Chair), Nick Zeo, Patience Hartley, Heidi Mannarino- Conservation Agent

Meeting began at 6:00pm

The committee welcomed Heidi from Conservation.

Heidi went through and addressed the action items laid out in the master plan.

She spoke on how she is working closely with the new town Recreation Director, to revive the Trail Maintenance Club in town. They have collected emails and set up one event for maintenance at the Midura Conservation. She needs a bigger budget to accomplish this goal entirely and also would benefit from a shed where tools for maintenance could be kept. Basic landscaping tools are a must but they could also benefit from an ATV or UTV to reach more remote parts of trail systems more efficiently. Several committee members asked follow up questions during this discussion.

Next Heidi spoke about her collaboration with the Recreation Department in creating new brochures for Palmer. She and Andrew want to create a "Things to Do in Palmer", where all activities can be listed in one place. To afford this they may consider advertisements of local businesses on the brochure. Amber and Nick inquired about more parking and the picnic tables at Midura recently. Heidi discussed using part of the meadow for parking and also redoing the picnic tables. She also mentioned part of the overgrown meadow could be made into a pollinator garden with educational signage.

Heidi is continuing to work on the goal of developing a Red Bridge State Park system. They have recently acquired a lot with potential for trails.

Heidi is working with the state on the beach at Forest Lake and trying to get an agreement about the use of the public beach. Nick asked about the enforcement of certain things at both the beach and newly constructed boat ramp. No work has been put in yet towards Crystal Lake being a working public beach.

Next Heidi addressed the status of a Rail Trail in Palmer. She said there was not much progress on this as it is a small connector that runs through Palmer land. There are also issues with private land and land that is difficult to navigate. Ware and Belchertown have either completed or are working on their sections.

Next the committee asked Heidi about the goal of stormwater and aging infrastructure for flood resilience. She said the stormwater had been relocated to the Department of Public Works budget. The problem is that there is no stormwater coordinator position so it is an additional job and part of an already over exhausted budget. Dave inquired about watersheds that extend from Thompson Lake down into Forest Lake. Heidi explained that they were detecting higher

levels of certain things in the lake. She said that this could be handled by putting a swale in at Route 32. It would cost about \$15,000 if they took care of it in house and now, versus later.

Heidi left the meeting at 7:14pm

Members discussed Andrew Golas' social media post, an article in the journal, and how the water departments being separate is impacting the citizens.

Amber brought up that after speaking with Town Councilor Jessica Sizer that a member would be appointed to this committee at their next meeting.

The members agreed to meet again on October 11th at 6pm.

The meeting ended at 7:49pm.