

APPROVED MINUTES
Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership
Executive Committee Meeting – April 4, 2022

In attendance: Henry Art, Williamstown (Board Chair); Bob O’Connor, EOEEA; Joe Nowak, Adams; Whit Sanford, former board member; Lisa Hayden, NEFF, Administrative Agent; Sophie Argetsinger, NEFF, Assistant; Glen Ayers, public.

1. **Call to Order** at 2:05pm by Hank Art, with Land Acknowledgement.
2. **Approval of Minutes from Executive Committee meetings on 12/14/21 and 2/15/22.** J. Nowak motioned to approve the December minutes and B. O’Connor seconded, which was approved unanimously. B. O’Connor motioned to approve the February minutes and J. Nowak seconded. H. Art noted that Congressman Neal’s name was misspelled in the February minutes. All voted to approve the February minutes with the above amendment.
3. **Public Comment.** Glen Ayers thanked the Committee for putting public comment at the beginning of the meeting. In response to agenda item 6 (grant possibilities – Forest Center and Climate-Smart Forestry Initiatives), he stated that DCR’s position is that logging causes carbon loss. He shared several papers in the chat: including “Global Importance of Large-Diameter Trees,” http://www.columbia.edu/~mu2126/publications_files/Lutz_et_al-2018-Global_Ecology_and_Biogeography.pdf G. Ayers encouraged the MTWP to embrace “proforestation” as one of its core principles in the light of the climate emergency and could focus on pushing the state to provide funding for increased carbon storage in our forests. H. Art noted that the MTWP has invited a speaker, Dr. Bill Keaton (University of Vermont), who focuses on many of these topics in the fall.
4. **Changes to Bylaws.** H. Art reminded the Committee that section 10 of the Partnership Bylaws states that there should be 5 members of the Executive Committee (for 3-year terms): 2 from municipalities (elected), 1 from EOEEA (appointed), 1 from USFS (appointed), 1 from a regional organization (elected). H. Art recommended bringing a proposal to the full Board meeting in June to increase the Executive Committee membership from 5 to 7 by adding the Vice Chair of the Board and the Board Treasurer to the Executive Committee. The Bylaws would need to be amended by 2/3 majority Board vote for this to happen.

H. Art noted two additional issues: (1) The Partnership currently doesn’t officially allow Board alternates, although Dicken Crane has served as an alternate for Windsor—the use of alternates should be revisited. (2) There should be a discussion at some point with the full Board about teleconferencing and its continued use as a tool by the Partnership. H. Art proposed that these two issues be discussed and voted on at the May Executive Committee meeting.

J. Nowak liked the idea of increasing the number of Executive Committee members to 7, noting that the more people that are involved, the more progress can be made. W. Sanford agreed and also noted the need for consistency of membership through time. W. Sanford also suggested that there should be equal representation of the two counties on the Committee if possible. B. O’Connor

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agreed it would be good to have 7 members to increase the chances of a quorum, and because 3 people is a small number for making decisions.

5. **2022-23 Plan Outreach to Municipalities.** L. Hayden said she is working on a set of key points and a PowerPoint on Plan updates for representatives to bring to Select Board meetings. The hope is to visit all member town Select Boards before June to give a Plan update. S. Argetsinger has been reaching out the town Board representatives and member towns to get onto Select Board agendas. L. Hayden is also working on putting together a working group that can travel to multiple meetings to support the representatives. S. Argetsinger noted that three meetings have been scheduled so far (Williamstown, Heath, and Conway), and an updated draft of the Plan will be posted on the MTWP website soon for towns and the public to reference.

6. **Upcoming Grant Possibilities.** B. O'Connor discussed a Virtual Forest Center grant proposal—Rowe is submitting an MVP application that would include updating open space and recreation plans in the region with a climate focus, creation of demonstration forests with signs/QR codes to highlight various forestry practices, and the creation of a website for landowners and towns to support forest health through a climate lens. The proposal is due in May.

B. O'Connor discussed a Climate-Smart Commodities grant program, which has a forest products component and a focus on enhancing carbon storage and improving forestry to benefit the climate. The intention is to apply for one of the small pool grants (\$250,000 to \$5 million), but it's not clear at the moment what partner the applicant will be (one possibility is for the MTWP Board to apply). The MTWP could use the grant to pay landowners to implement practices, harvesters to ship wood insulations/CLT products to where they can be tracked. An environmental justice component is part of the grant—and one thought is to work with an institution such as Springfield Technical Community College or Holyoke Community College to pair up students with foresters to do carbon storage monitoring. B. O'Connor suggested a sub-committee work on the 15-page proposal that is needed for this grant (due in June).

7. **Committee Assignments/Reassignments.** H. Art noted that the recent changes in Board membership have presented an opportunity to reorganize the Standing Committees if this is of interest to Board members. He has written a memo that would allow members to switch Committees and/or leadership roles if they would like, which will be sent out individually to each Board member.

8. **Agenda Items and Dates for May Ex. Comm. Meeting; Dates for June Annual Board Meeting.** May 8 or 9 at 2 pm was proposed for the next Executive Committee meeting, pending confirmation of schedules [actual date was May 24]. Sophie Argetsinger gave an update on the Doodle poll for the June Board. A quorum has not yet been reached, so she will reach out individually to Board members who have not yet responded.

9. **Adjournment.** J. Nowak motioned to adjourn, and B. O'Connor seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:29 pm.