

Mill Brook Watershed Management Planning Committee

Minutes of 3/19/18 meeting, approved 4/2/18

Present: Cindy Mitchell, Selena Roman, Tim Boland, Kristen Fauteux, Prudy Burt, Rez Williams, Chuck Hodgkinson.

Also present: Bill Wilcox

There were no 2/26/18 minutes ready for approval.

Cindy suggested a game plan for finishing up this report and process; that we reference our report at Annual Town Meeting in April, then introduce our report with conclusions and recommendations to the board of selectmen, have a public informational meeting where we solicit input/comment, incorporate same, then issue final report.

Members discussed conclusions and recommendations from the key finding for Section 12. 'Land Use and Development within the Mill Brook Watershed'.

Discussion included several possible items; that the town maintain and monitor a prioritized land acquisition list, possibly working with the Conservation Partnership to strategically acquire highly sensitive undeveloped parcels of land within the watershed; encourage landowners to use Best Management Practices (BMPs) for agricultural land within the watershed- the town could help landowners connect with Natural Resources and Conservation Services (NRCS) and the MV Agricultural Society (MVAS) to develop farm plans. It was also noted that MVAS has scholarship money available to farmers- for buying fencing that keeps animals out of wetland areas, for instance. Both of these organizations would be able to help facilitate soil testing- proper soil test data might reduce fertilizer use; and encourage/educate landowners towards lawns that require less fertilizer and water- native plant meadows, and/or 'Vineyard Lawns', such as have been promoted by Vineyard Conservation Society and other conservation groups on the island.

There was some discussion about whether education or enforcement would work best, at this point in time. There has been ample education over the years about how

fertilizers and septic systems affect our local waterbodies. Another issue is that denitrification systems allow for additional bedrooms, negating the net reduction in nutrient loading.

Chuck suggested that the Mill Brook watershed might be designated a zoning overlay district.

Next meetings will be on 3/26/18 and 4/2/18 at 5 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Prudy Burt