

**Conservation Commission Meeting
May 23, 2018
Town Room, Amherst Town Hall**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Ms. Healey at 7:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Healey, Allen, Clark, Butler, Fair

Staff: Ziomek, Willson

CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS

Willson stated she has coordinated with DEP on construction/erosion control inspections at the Mill St. bridge project. There is no OOCs for that project but there is a Water Quality Cert. She stated today she was with the contractor, Horseley Whitten Group, at the Fearing Brook as they collected data for their drainage improvement conceptual design for the area next to the Amherst College Parking lot. Willson stated one of the culverts over the Hop Brook along the DPW's access road to drinking water Well #4 has collapsed. There are actually four 36" corrugated metal culverts in this section of the road, one has completed collapsed but the other three are also in bad shape. DPW has been looking at this area for a while to do a culvert replacement, they submitted a grant this year to DER. DPW has taken out the two central metal culverts and have placed temporary rip rap to stabilize the banks. She is working on the Emergency Cert. which will go to both MADEP and NHESP for review. DPW wants to put in 5X7 box culverts at all four locations, they will embed them at least 1-2'. Ziomek asked if the rip rap will stay on the bank, he doesn't want to see a lot of rip rap. Willson said no, that rip rap will go so the culverts can be set up against the bank, some riprap will be used but she will ask them to limit it. Fair agreed that the rip rap seems oversized for that size stream. Buter asked why the other three need to be under an Emergency Cert. Willson stated the twin culverts carrying the main stem of the brook is where the collapse was and those have been taken out, so that's two of the four already. Ziomek stated if the replacement of those two under an Emergency Cert is not done well the Commission can ask for a full filing to replace the other two. Willson stated DPW can't drive over the first one with the truck carrying the new culverts, so that needs to come out now too, so that's three of the four.

Ziomek stated field work season has started up. Staff hopes to start the Amethyst Brook bridge replacement soon they are waiting on telephone poles from Eversource. Summer staff has been hired. The Puffer's Pond breakfast is June 2nd which funds summer staff. Ziomek is leading a stream cleanup of the Mill River. There was a drowning at Puffer's a month ago, Bordewieck and Pease have been meeting with AFD and APD to discuss ways to improve safety such as creating easier access for emergency vehicles, having some flotation devices stored at the pond. This was the first drowning since 2003. Ziomek stated Markert's Pond is holding water, Bordewieck and Pease to do some cleanup there like removing construction material, and finishing the trail. The hope is to make the trail from Pondview Dr. to the pond ADA accessible. Things are moving forward with the Epstein property purchase, Town Mtg voted in approval of it a couple weeks ago. Kestrel Trust is moving forward on purchasing the house parcel and hope to put their office there. The closing will hopefully be in July/August timeframe. He stated we are updating our trail map, he would like to expand the map and add parking, eateries, make it more annotated. Butler asked about thinking about the size of the map, it's hard to bring a large

map into the field. Ziomek said maybe we break it into quadrants. Ziomek stated Town Mtg did rap up and now we move onto the Town Council. We need to get back to working on the land management plans. Fort River Farm we're moving the community gardens there, working on a plan for a small, gravel parking area, and fencing. Butler asked if the interpretive signs at Bluebird Meadow are ever going up, they were the ones Carol Gray was working on. Ziomek said he'll reach out to Carol.

MINUTES

Review minutes of 11-8-17.

Clark moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-1, Fair abstained) to approve the minutes of 11-8-17.

PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS

7:15 PM Conservation Land Management

Presentation – Ziomek State St.

Ziomek stated he likes having this new section of the agenda for land management, it's important to spend some time at each meeting talking about our conservation areas. We need to spend more time thinking about how to manage these areas. Ziomek stated he wants to talk about Puffer's Pond, back in 2010 a group spearheaded by staff and the Commission put together the Puffer's Pond 2020 plan. Currently the Mill Bridge project is starting and this summer we'd like to get a bathymetry study done. Willson will be working on that project.

Ziomek stated the Mill St. Bridge project is going to be done in the next seven to twelve months they expect to be done in the spring of 2019. This will be a one lane bridge with a 10 ft wide multi-use path on the waterfall side. The path will start at the Sharkin's driveway and go all the way to the State St. and curve around a little onto State St. to the Lewis' driveway. Part of the Puffer's 2020 plan was to look at parking and traffic flow around the pond. DPW has put together these plans of how to make State St. one way.

Ziomek presented the plans on the overhead. He presented this to the TAC. The one way section would start just past the Lewis' driveway. The parking on State St. has never met standards, so not currently good for safety or liability. Parking on the pond side will be prohibited, there will be 8' wide lane for parallel parking on the southern side of State St. The travel lane will be 10' and any space left, it varies, will be used as a pedestrian walk/bike way. Approximately 5-6' wide walk/bike way. There will be no parking by south beach or over the Cushman Brook Bridge, in that area there will be walkways on both sides of State St. and a crosswalk. Both banks on the sides of the bridge are eroding pretty badly. There are some pull offs currently to the east of the bridge where we would like to change parallel parking to nose in parking. There are two ideas for the east end of State St., one is a pull off where people coming in from the east can turn around, the other idea is a circle shaped turn around. Clark asked what is paying for all these changes. Ziomek stated this is mostly just line painting, no real construction. Allen asked if there would be signage. Ziomek said we're trying not to over sign or over pave but there will be needed signage. The TAC was most interested in bike access, maybe we'll add more bike racks. There will be some public meetings before this happens. There will probably be wetland permitting needed. Other part is APD will be enforcing parking better than they do now.

He is looking for the Commission's feedback, email him or call.

7:30 PM Request for Determination – Robert Predmore for restoration planting within Riverfront at 33 Mountain View Circle (Map 25B, Parcel 64).

Tom Benjamin, landscape architect working for Robert Predmore. They are proposing revegetating an approximately 4500 square foot areas within Riverfront. It's all above bank elevation. The project involves planting trees, shrubs, ground cover, and a seed mix. The seed mix is semi-shade from Amherst Wetland Plants. The plantings will bring plant biodiversity to the area. There are currently some invasives especially multi-flora rose. These native plantings will provide a food source and habitat for native fauna. Butler asked what the treatment for the area is now, is it mowed? Mr. Predmore said it was recently brush hogged, he didn't know he wasn't supposed to that because of the brook. Clark asked what the plan is for removing the invasives. Benjamin said they are only planning on hand cutting, no herbicide use is proposed. He added he does a lot of invasive removal and cutting works if you're consistent.

Benjamin stated they did perc tests and soil samples and the soils are actually upland type in some sections. He is happy to take suggestions on the plant type from the Commission. Fair stated she was at the site in the morning and agrees the area is raised up and does not seem to have wetland soils necessarily, she wouldn't expect the Plum Brook to flood this area. Willson said it appears to have been filled and left pretty steep banks for the brook. Butler said the only tree he questions is the black spruce. Healey asked about erosion control. Benjamin stated there already is a filter tube running along the top of the brook bank. All planting will be manually done, no equipment. Butler asked if any fertilizer will be used. Benjamin said he will be monitoring the plants for at least a year after planting, he doesn't use blanket fertilizer but sometimes uses slow release organic type right in the planting holes. No topsoil is being added.

Clark moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to issue a Negative Determination #2 determining that the project is within a resource area but will not impact that resource area.

Miscellaneous Untimed Items:

- Certificate of Compliance – South Orchard Drive (Map 26B, Parcel 132)

Willson stated the Order was for the building of a single family house in the 1970s. The Order is old so doesn't particularly say what the resource areas were. She took a look at the property, there did appear to be wetlands in the back but it all looked fine, no encroachment into the wetlands.

Butler moved and Fair seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to issue the Certificate of Compliance.

- Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Adjournment

Voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at 8:40 PM.