

**Conservation Commission Meeting
August 8, 2018
Town Room, Amherst Town Hall**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

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

ATTENDANCE

Present: Angus, Allen, Brooks, Butler

Staff: Willson

CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS

Willson stated she went on a site visit with DEP, DOT and others to Mill St. Bridge project. DOT now hires consultant, Milone & MacBroom to do bank and land under water restoration on all their bridges. Currently DOT has built a temporary bridge and installed erosion control, they've built an under platform to work from when they take the bridge apart. They would like to have the old bridge and abutments out by fall. University Dr has started on the restaurant side, Willson inspected the erosion control. They have done the first herbicide treatment of the invasive species. She stated Markerts Pond is full, water is going over the top of the outflow structure. Staff has been working on the ADA walkway. The KC Trail Bridge NOI will be continued tonight, the Cons Dept is taking another look at how to approach the project. The Epstein property closing is going to happen in the next couple weeks. Willson stated the folks from the UMASS Geosciences Dept will be going out onto Puffers Pond tomorrow to collect the bathymetry data. They will be providing the hard data, cross sections of the sonar and GPR data, and calculations for sediment volume.

MINUTES

Review minutes of 10-26-16.

Butler moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to approve the minutes of 10-26-16.

PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS

7:10 PM Request for Determination - Brian Frank for installation of a swimming pool within buffer zone to bordering vegetated wetlands at 29 Mill Lane (Map 17C, Parcel 174).

Brian Frank, representing property owner, stated the owner would like to put in a 20'X40' swimming pool which is partially located in the 100' buffer. The area is currently all lawn, wattles will be installed between the work area and the wetland. Willson added there will be some plantings at the southwest corner of the pool. Willson shared pictures from the site visit. Butler asked what is the closest point of construction to the wetland. Frank said approximately 75-80'.

Brooks moved and Butler seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to close the meeting and issue a

Negative Determination #3 for work in the buffer zone.

7:15 PM Conservation Land Management

Informal Discussion - John Root & Felix Lufkin for edible plantings at Groff Park

Felix Lufkin, Director of Help Yourself Edibles, which works with partners (towns, schools, private entities, etc.) in transforming their yard into a community edible garden. Use fruit trees other edible plants that are native, easily maintained varieties. They don't charge for their services. They would like to work with Amherst on an edible orchard in the northeast area of Groff Park north of the baseball diamond, near Emily Dickinson Trail and the powerline. They will also be meeting with LSSE. He provided plans of two sites, one north of baseball diamond and one near the river on eastern side of park, both include planting plans. He provided pictures from other sites he's worked on. They would advertise in town to get volunteers to help.

They have planted on town parks in Greenfield with Con Com review because of a nearby river. Angus said it's good you're going to LSSE they have care and control of the property. She added our concerns would be work within Riverfront. Lufkin said they would be digging with hand tools, holes only 12" deep, wood bring in wood chips. Angus asked how they water. Lufkin said they do a good soaking on planting day, could they use water from the river. Angus said withdrawal from the river is tricky. Lufkin said he saw a spigot in the bathroom. Brooks said you need approval from LSSE then an application to us since it is work in Riverfront. Angus said she thinks it can be an RDA. Butler said he thinks it is altering, so needs an application. He asked if they fertilize. Lufkin said they don't use any chemical fertilizer they do use compost. Willson asked how many trees go into Site 1. Lufkin said it was estimated at 200'X300', with trees, paths, herbs, woodchip cover. Angus said they area could get damaged would need maintenance. Willson asked if their program sticks with a project over time. Lufkin said they do keep in touch with all 80 of the sites they've worked on.

Mike Liu, Berkshire Design, said they only issue he says with the new playground project is pits and peels getting into the spray pad water system. He thinks it would be great to have fruit trees nearby that families can stroll over to and pick fruit.

Angus said as this develops be in touch with Willson about a filing. Willson said anything within 200' of the high water line needs to come before the Commission. Commission is generally in favor of the idea.

7:30 PM Notice of Intent (cont'd from 7/16 mtg) – TOA LSSE Department for upgrades to Groff Park Recreational Facility within Riverfront on Mill Lane (Map 17C, Parcel 13).

Mike Liu, Berkshire Design, they did some simple stormwater calculations for the driveway and new rain garden. They added the rain garden for the portion of the driveway that they are altering, it doesn't handle the rest of the parking lot. They revised the restoration plan, they added some willows and two red maples, they added split rail fence near the Emily Dickinson Trail, and some more invasive removal and native planting in that area. The total restoration area is 2,500 square feet. They changed the erosion control to silt fence and silt socks on slopes. Would like to start site work this fall. Butler asked about the water bars that were discussed at the last meeting for the beginning of the Emily Dickinson Trail. Liu responded we can probably add a couple water bars. Angus asked if there was something written about monitoring of the plants. Liu said isn't there a standard condition of two years for monitoring.

This portion of the project maybe done by town staff. No herbicide use for invasive removal.

Butler moved and Brooks seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to close the hearing and issue the Order of Conditions no herbicide use during invasive removal, add water bars to restoration near Emily Dickinson Trail.

7:45 PM Notice of Intent (cont'd from 7/16 mtg) - TOA Conservation Department for replacement of the KC Trail Bridge over the Hop Brook off Southeast St. (Map 20B, Parcel20).

Angus stated the applicant has requested this public hearing be continued.

Brooks moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to continue the hearing to the 8/22/18 meeting at 7:45pm.

8:00 PM Informal Discussion - Ray Mann regarding creation of a pond at Dickinson Meadows off East Pleasant St. (Map 5D, Parcels 313-315).

Ray Mann, developer, stated she's here to talk about a parcel off E Pleasant St. that was permitted (ZBA Special Permit) for a 5 lot subdivision a number of years ago. She would like to put a pond in, and is going before the ZBA tomorrow night regarding the pond. Angus asked if all the houses were built. Mann said 3 have been built and the 4th is about to be built. There is a common driveway off E Pleasant. The area was a former sand pit, and the subdivision forms a bowl shape. The houses sit about 8-10 ft up slope than it rises another 10 feet towards Owen Dr. The bottom of the bowl is labelled infiltration basin, and there are two Town stormwater drainage easements on the property. The infiltration area is supposed to take stormwater from the new house lots and is considered common land for the subdivision.

In the infiltration area they would like to include a lined pond. There will still be enough infiltration area around the outside of the pond to deal with stormwater. They have done the stormwater calculations, the two Town easements take in about 20 acres of stormwater and subdivision is 6 acres. The infiltration areas can deal with 100 yr storm volumes. Mann said they know the pond will become jurisdictional once built.

Mann stated the pond would be lined and would end up being about 80'X30'. The deepest the pond will get is 6.5 ft. It will be aerated to keep the dissolved oxygen concentrations in check. Tim Tenson, landscape architect, stated one intent is to create habitat from a sand pit. He stated the predominant habitat will be wet meadow using seed mixes mostly grass. He presented the seed mix list. They will have a regular mowing the first few seasons to keep the more aggressive species at bay and cultivate the species they want. By the third year hopefully the mowing will just be pathways for walking in between well established meadow species. Tenson listed species that will be used.

Mann showed a drawing with the 50' and 100' buffer zones to the future pond. Brooks asked if they were sure there would be enough water to sustain the pond. Tenson said yes, there is also a rainwater collection system that can be pumped down to the pond if needed. Brooks asked the volume of the pond, Mann said about 8,000 gals. Tenson said they will be establishing aquatic wetland plants in the shallow areas, so the main concern about the pond getting low would be the health of those plants.

NO VOTE.

8:15 PM Request for Determination - Amherst DPW/Jason Skeels for installation of a multi-use path, two bus pull offs, deep sump catch basins, re-located bike share station, and minor road widening within buffer zone to bordering vegetated wetlands on East Hadley Rd.

Jason Skeels, Amherst Town Engineer, presented the project. He stated most of the work is on the southerly side of E Hadley Rd with just a bus pull off on the north side. They are widening the southerly side of the road for bike lanes, removing the existing 5 ft wide sidewalk and replacing it with a 8-10' multi-use path, and adding bus pull-offs. There are three areas of wetlands in the buffer zone to the project. The work is right up against the wetland line in some locations. They will be doing grading and filling of some of the slopes for the new sidewalk. Erosion control will go at the bottom of the slope. Angus asked if DPW would be doing the work. Skeels said no, this is CDBG funded so it has to be bid out to a contractor.

Skeels said there would be silt fence and wattles where slopes are steep. Butler asked what the plan is for exposed soil on the slopes. Skeels said loam and seed with erosion control seed mix and use jute netting. Butler asked when the project would take place. Skeels said it still has to go out to bid, but the money has to be spent by October.

Brooks moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to close the public meeting and issue a Negative Determination #3 for work in the buffer zone with the condition that double erosion control be used in the areas with a steep slope.

8:30 PM Request for Determination - Amherst DPW/Jason Skeels for installation of two bus pull offs, a new sidewalk, and stormwater improvements on East Pleasant St.

Jason Skeels, Town Engineer, stated this is just a buffer zone project. The project includes creation of two bus pull offs, one on the east side and one on the west side, and a crosswalk. They are also extending the sidewalk between Village Park and Olympia Drive, but that's not jurisdictional. There is a drainage outfall on the west side that needs to be re-piped/moved. The water from UMASS parking lots comes down and outflows there and then goes down a swale that isn't holding the water so it sheet flows across the disc golf trail and into the wetland. Idea is to remove the headwall and pipe the water 150' to the north, a catch basin is being added at the bus stop, all water will going into an infiltration gallery and then discharge into a level spreader over 100' east of the wetland. Skeels said silt fence will be installed between the work area and the wetland.

Brooks moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to close the public meeting and issue a Negative Determination #3 for work in the buffer zone.

Miscellaneous Untimed Items:

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

Adjournment

Voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at 8:50 PM.