

**Conservation Commission Meeting
October 10, 2018
First Floor Mtg Rm, Amherst Town Hall**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

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

ATTENDANCE

Present: Angus, Brooks, Clark, Allen, Butler, Fair

Staff: Willson

CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS

Willson stated the KC Trail Bridge hearing is being continued. The design has been revised and sent to NHESP but we haven't heard back from them yet. Ziomek plans to present the revised bridge design at the next meeting. She stated MassDOT did not like the Contech bridge DPW was planning on using as a temporary bridge on Station Rd. They want a more substantial temporary crossing that meets their standards. Hopefully by the end of this week DPW will make a decision and put something on the Town webpage to inform the public.

Willson shared photos of East Hadley Rd construction done by Taylor Davis. Erosion control looked good, they have silt sacks in their catch basins. Butler asked if the electric line poles will have to move. Willson said no, they are not moving the poles. She stated construction of the residential side of University Dr. project has started. They put in a temporary culvert where the driveway stream crossing will be to get construction equipment across. Eventually they will put in the permanent crossing. They have brought in a lot of fill to the restaurant side of the project.

Willson stated she has a request from the residents along Summer St. They're having basement flooding issues and they would like the Commission to do a site visit and see the flooding/drainage problems on their road. One problem is that the outfall of the storm drains goes into a wetland that is level and water has no where to go. The land is also Conservation land. She is looking for volunteers to meet with the residents. Angus suggested they come to a meeting for an informal discussion since no Commissioners could commit at the moment to doing a site visit. Willson stated Conservation Dept staff moved the location of the fence at Fort River Farm to the south so it is no longer in buffer zone and they don't need to file an RDA.

MINUTES

Review minutes of 8-22-18 & 9-12-18

Brooks moved and Clark seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-1, Brooks abstained) to approve the minutes of 8-22-18.

Brooks moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0) to approve the minutes of 9-12-18.

PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS

7:15 PM Conservation Land Management

Puffer's Pond Parking Improvements - Phase I

Willson presented the proposed State St. parking and one-way travel changes. She stated Ziomek did previously present this plan to the Commission in actual design drawings. At this point these plans are final and will be coming before the Select Board on October 29th. She is looking for the Commission to provide a recommendation to the Select Board that they support the plan as it pertains to environmental quality, so improves conditions for the pond and the conservation area. The total number of parking spaces will decrease by approximately 50 which Town staff feels will help Puffer's Pond which is over stressed by the number of people currently using it. She presented the plan and showed where the road is one-way and where it's two-way, she also showed the parking changes. Willson stated these changes will make the road safer. Butler and Allen asked what is the total number of spots currently. Willson stated DPW has that data, she will bring it to the next meeting. She added this is considered Phase I of the overall improvements to Puffer's Pond, Phase II could involve charging for parking and dredging the pond and improvements to South Beach. Ziomek will be leading two walkabouts for the public on 10/17 and 10/25 Commissioners are welcome to join. Willson stated the rotary and possibly the nose in areas may need permitting so an RDA would be submitted by the Town. She stated we'd like the Commission to vote and either the Commission or Angus put together a short recommendation statement. Butler commented that having both bikes and walkers on a 4-foot section is dangerous and he is wondering if there is a way for more bus service to Puffer's. Willson and Clark responded that there is a very active bus route that ends at the end of Summer St. on the north side of the pond.

Brooks moved and Butler seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0) to issue a letter of support for the proposed State St. parking improvements and one-way traffic flow.

7:20 PM Enforcement Order – Susan Lowery for tree removal within a stream and its buffer zone at 36 Greenwich Rd (Map 22B, Parcel 162).

Willson stated Ms. Lowery actually called herself reported, that she took down some trees not realizing they were near a wetland. Willson showed the Commission the location of the property and photos on the overhead. She stated there is an intermittent stream/drainage the cuts across the back of this yard and the neighboring yards. Willson asked how many trees were taken down? Susan Lowery, home owner, responded 14. The contractor was LashCo from South Hadley. Willson said they saw evidence of erosion during the site visit.

Angus asked where was the work done, in a resource area of buffer zone? Willson said she thinks both. Lowery said it's actually a man-made ditch she believes was dug in the 1970s. Angus stated as long as it's in a channel and flowing and has some other wetland benefits it's jurisdictional. Willson said no re-planting has been done, the stumps are still there, erosion control needs to be put up. Willson did ask the home owner to remove the trees and equipment that was sitting on the stream.

Lowery stated she is putting solar panels on her roof and the trees were blocking the sun. The trees were also a hazard in terms of falling on the house. She added no one ever told her the stream area was a designated wetland. Lowery stated that the energy her solar panels will produce is equal to 50 trees in carbon sequestration. She plans to plant trees that won't grow very tall and block the sun. Angus said that is what we need to know. Allen said the stumps must stay in place. Fair said erosion control needs to be installed. Lowery said she told LashCo about the enforcement and he was surprised about the need for a wetland permit. Brooks suggested shrubs, dogwood, that wouldn't exceed twenty feet. Butler & Fair said as long as the plants are native, wetland plants. Willson said the plantings should be planted up

slope from the swale.

Brooks moved and Butler seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0) to ratify Enforcement #1.

Brooks moved and Clark seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0) to issue Enforcement #2.

7:30 PM Notice of Intent (cont'd from 9/26 mtg) – Amir Mikhchi for construction of an apartment building and associated driveway, parking, stormwater drainage, utilities, and landscaping within a resource area at 133-143 South East St. (Map 15C, Parcel 3 & 4).

Angus stated this is a continuation of the public hearing, at the last meeting the Commission had asked for modifications to the plan, we were waiting on comments from the Town Engineer on the stormwater report. Angus asked if the modifications change the stormwater design. Liu said no, there is reduction in impervious surface actually so they didn't change the stormwater design or report from the last meeting. Angus asked if they had gone before the Planning Board yet, Liu said no. Liu said he met with town officials to discuss use of the common area.

Liu stated they reduced the width of the circular drive and made it one way which allowed them to increase the replication area to four times the impacted wetland area. Additionally, the grass islands in the parking area have been changed to stone filter gardens. They will be about 6" deep and will allow water to infiltrate. The replication area is predominantly wet already, he proposes not digging up the soil but just leaving as is and planting some native wetland plants and letting the area naturally fill in. The plans include a plant list of shrubs and five native trees.

Angus asked what the vegetation would be on the slope down to the wetland. Liu said the plans call for a 2:1 slope seeded with grass. He said behind the guard rail they could use a wetland seed mix and not mow. Willson asked where the drainage in the driveway right above the replication area would drain. Liu showed on the map how driveway/parking lot drainage will drain to catch basins. Willson stated there has been some dumping in the wetland just west of the property line which could be removed as part of this project to improve hydrology of that wetland.

Angus asked if we can close tonight. Willson said no, we don't have the Town Engineer's stormwater review. Willson sent the Town Engineer the revised plans today, and he has the revised stormwater report from last meeting plus small additions. Liu stated his engineer couldn't get to responding to DEP's comments about the stormwater calculations. Berkshire Design will provide those in writing and add to the stormwater report. Angus asked what the reduction in impervious is. Liu stated they had been at 69.9% total coverage and now down to 68.9%, so 1%. Fair stated the grades of the replication area must be such that the hydrology creates a wetland.

Amir Mikchi, property owner, stated this project has been ten years in the works. He said it follows the Master Plan idea of downtown development, and he went to Town Meeting to have that area re-zoned. He has been working with Planning, Conservation, etc every step of the way. He stated all the profits from this project will remain here in the valley where he lives and does development. They will be increasing the larger wetland four times to replace 800 square feet of wetland that was not connected to the larger wetland system.

Brooks moved and Clark seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0) to continue the hearing to the 10/24/18 meeting at 7:30pm.

7:45 PM Notice of Intent (cont'd from 9/26 mtg) – TOA Conservation Department for replacement of the KC Trail Bridge over the Hop Brook off Southeast St. (Map 20B, Parcel 20).

Willson stated the applicant has requested a continuation of this hearing.

Brooks moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0) to continue the hearing to the 10/24/18 meeting at 7:45pm.

Miscellaneous Untimed Items:

- Ratify Enforcement Order #2 - 16 Eames Ave.

Willson provided a copy of Enforcement Order #2 for the Commission to review.

Brooks moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0) to ratify Enforcement Order #2 for 16 Eames Ave.

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

Adjournment

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