

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

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

ATTENDANCE

Present: Angus, Brooks, Allen, Fair

Staff: Willson

CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS

Willson stated four Open Space project applications have been submitted to the CPAC: Acquisition of Keet-Haskins property (\$238K), Szala property (\$188K), Hickory Ridge (\$200K), and \$50K for Conservation land trail/bridge/parking area maintenance. Willson provided photos of the Mill Street bridge project. One abutment is complete, they are working on the second. They have fixed the issue with sedimentation blatter that was allowing sediment laden water to flow into the river.

MINUTES

Minutes 11-14-18

Brooks moved and Angus seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to approve the minutes of 11-14-18.

PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS

7:15 PM Conservation Land Management

Research on Conservation Land Application - Joe Elkinton/UMASS for gypsy moth tree research on Conservation land.

Mr. Elkinton/Professor Environmental Science at UMASS stated he has worked with gypsy moths for many years, there was an investation in the 1980s that ended in the late 1980s when a asian fungus arrived and wiped them out. He stated due to the drought in Maine between 2012-14 the population has rebounded dramatically and trees are being damaged. He's conducting two studies, one on tree mortality and one on using insecticide on the tree to keep it alive. The tree mortality study includes 16 trees at Leslie Conservation Area, and the insecticide study involves treatment of 8 oak trees in Wentworth Farm Conservation Area. The insecticide is injected into the trunk of the tree and spreads throughout the tree killing caterpillars that feed on it. He is also using town right of way trees and privately owned trees for both studies. Willson said we would like to see the results. Elkinton said he would share the results with the Commission. Fair asked why gypsy moths only eat oaks, he responded they prefer oaks but will also eat maple, beech, poplar but definitely start with the oaks probably because of certain tannins that are in the oak.

Brooks moved and Fair seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to approve the request for research on 16 trees in Leslie Conservation Area.

Brooks moved and Fair seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to approve the request for research including insecticide injection on 8 trees in Wentworth Farm Conservation Area.

7:40 PM Presentation - UMASS Engineering Students - Kevin Flood Trail Project

Stephanie Ciccarello, Sustainability Coordinator for the Town, stated each year she contacts the Engineering School at UMASS to see if any students are interested in working on projects with the Conservation Department. This group worked on a conceptual design for the Kevin Flood Trail off of State St. The class introduced themselves. They stated they focused on the Kevin Flood trail and making it more handicap accessible. They presented a map of the trail, it heads south from State St. crossing the Robert Francis Bridge and then heads toward Cushman Village. The first half of the trail is more ADA compliant and has a guide rope for the visually impaired, the second half of the trail is more uneven and needs more work to become compliant. They provided some history of the area. They had originally thought of working on the bridge to make it more ADA compliant but Jason Skeels the Town Engineer visited the site with the class and told them the old bridge would need to be completely replaced. So, they focused more on changes to the trail on either side of the bridge.

They stated any work would need to meet the ADA requirements and the wetland regulations. They proposed roping off some of the steeper sloped areas and replacing some of the substrate that has eroded, re-grading areas that are uneven and have roots, and providing a place for people to sit near the brook. The bridge is 80 ft long and ranges from 3.6 ft - 4.2 ft wide. The northern bridge entrance is difficult for a variety of reasons, they propose removing shrubbery for better vision, filling in the lip at the bridge entrance with gravel or stone dust to make more of a ramp up to the bridge. The current guide rope doesn't go the entire way to the bridge and is made of a material that can splinter, they propose replacing the rope with a heavy kevlar or thinner metal rope, and make it go the entire way which is about 1,000 ft. They propose adding stairs down to the Cushman Brook for better access that won't erode as much, and adding plantings on the slopes for stabilization. They propose small railings or bumpers along the brook side of the trail for disabled people to tap walking stick against for security, these railings would also help with erosion of the TRG/stone dust trail. They found there were many parts of the trail that are over 5% slope which is not ADA compliant. They propose re-grading, maybe creating switchbacks or using boardwalks made of wood with concrete piles. They propose indicator beads on the guide rope, adding braille signage, and an audio tour. They propose an ADA accessible bridge on either side of the bridge, and accessible picnic tables at a look out area.

Angus asked how the ADA requirements apply to municipal properties including conservation land. The students said the ADA Accessibility Committee told them most towns have at least one ADA compliant trail. Fair asked if there are any grants available from ADA groups for trails. Ciccarello stated the Conservation Department just applied for a trails grant but chose not to include this project but instead the Amethyst Brook bridge repair. That grant was written with the Kestrel Trust for work along the entire Robert Frost Trail including the Amethyst Brook bridge. Angus said we'll have to talk to Dave Z about whether to re-post the trail as not ADA accessible currently.

NO VOTE.

HEARINGS

7:45 PM__Notice of Intent (cont'd from 1-23-19 mtg) - Niels LaCour/UMASS Campus Planning for Operation & Maintenance Plan for twenty-four parcels owned by UMASS within jurisdictional areas.

Willson stated the applicant has requested a continuance of the hearing.

Brooks moved and Fair seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to continue the public hearing until February 27, 2019 at 8:00pm..

8:00 PM__Notice of Intent (cont'd from 1-23-19 mtg) - Charles Kovacic/Direct Energy Solar for installation of a solar array and associated access roads, utility poles, transformer pad, and fencing within Riverfront, Bordering Land Subject to Flooding, and buffer zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands at 191 West Pomeroy Lane (Map 19D, Parcel 10)..

Willson stated the applicant has requested a continuance of the hearing.

Brooks moved and Fair seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to continue the public hearing until February 27, 2019 at 8:15pm..

Miscellaneous Untimed Items

- Sign LAND Grant Project Agreement (Keet-Haskins property)

Willson stated this document is part of the contract package that we need to send back to the state for the grant.

Brooks moved and Fair seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to approve and sign the LAND Grant Project Agreement for the Keet-Haskins property.

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

Adjournment

Voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at 8:10 PM.