

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

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

ATTENDANCE

Present: Angus (C), Walker (VC), Allen, Boice, Healey

Staff: Ziomek, Willson

CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS

Ms. Willson stated that in the Commission's packet was a copy of the proposed revisions to the Wetlands Protection Act regulations. The state is looking for comments and will be holding a public forum in Springfield. Comments can also be submitted to their webpage. Ms. Willson stated she got a call from MassDOT who has been working with Natural Heritage installing kestrel boxes across the State and they will be installing two along Route 116 in Amherst. Ms. Willson provided photographs of the temporary erosion control at Wentworth Farm.

Mr. Ziomek stated that Brad and Mike have received permits to conduct burns at Atkins Flats. This work is done as part of a federal WHIP grant. He stated things are coming together for the purchase of the Ricci property. The CPAC process is moving forward, the open space projects are the Brunelle and Southeast St. properties. Kristen DeBoer, Kestrel Trust, will be attending the CPAC meeting to discuss their role in the Southeast St. property purchase. He stated there will most likely be a portion of the property separated out and sold for residential development. There will be another trail committee meeting to try and get volunteers to help with trail maintenance on April 26 here in the Town Room. Mr. Ziomek stated that the Town Manager has met with applicants for the vacant commission seat.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S ACTION

Review/Approve Minutes of September 12, 2012.

Walker moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0 Healey abstained) to approve the minutes of 9-12-12.

PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS

7:15 PM Informal Discussion – New England Environmental for UMASS & Pratt Field projects

UMASS

Mickey Marcus, New England Environmental, discussed changes to the previously permitted UMASS Academic Building project. He stated that the location of the stormwater separator that was permitted under that project has changed. They will now be replacing an existing catch basin located approximately 250 feet downstream of where Tan Brook enters a culvert, in the parking lot for the

UMASS Visitor Building. The catch basin will be reconstructed to include the hydraulic separator; hopefully the work will be done this summer.

Mr. Marcus provided a document with additional information for the Operations & Maintenance Plan for the Academic Bldg. project. The document includes information on the elevation of the pond and maintenance of the re-vegetated areas, including the wetland replication area, around the pond. He stated that the responsibility to maintain the areas around the pond will transfer from DCAM to UMASS once the Certificate of Compliance is issued. He stated that the work on the pond will hopefully start in April. Ms. Angus requested that a document be put together to be used as a reminder to include long term monitoring, maintenance and reporting of the vegetation surrounding the pond in the COC.

Amherst College

Mickey Marcus stated that Amherst College is proposing work on a number of the small sheds at Pratt Field. All these buildings are within the buffer zone to BVW. The proposed work includes rebuilding a maintenance building within its current footprint. In addition, a number of small sheds used to store sports equipment have already been taken down and will be replaced with a new equipment building. He stated he is looking for guidance from the Commission on whether to file an RDA or NOI. Ms. Boice asked why the buildings had to be in the buffer zone. Mr. Marcus stated there is not a lot of space surrounding the track and field, and that the equipment sheds and bathroom have always been in this area. Tom Hartman, Coldham & Hartman Architects, stated that the new equipment building will be built into the hill to have direct access to both floors, and to accomplish this it needs to be located within the buffer zone. He added that both the maintenance building and the equipment building will not have any plumbing. He added that surface drainage in the area of the proposed equipment building actually flows away from the wetland. Ms. Angus asked if the demo of the equipment sheds was permitted? Mr. Marcus replied no. Mr. Walker stated he was OK with an RDA considering the new building is outside the 50' setback and the storage building will be rebuilt in its current footprint. Ms. Angus stated that the RDA should provide reasoning why the buildings need to be in the buffer zone.

7:30 PM Request for Determination – Brian Giggey for installation of a disk golf course partially within the buffer zone of bordering vegetated wetlands at Eastman Lane and Pleasant Street (Map 8C, Parcel 13).

- Opened the public hearing at 7:39 p.m.
- Closed the public hearing at 8:10 p.m.

Brian Giggey, Explore Disc Golf, presented the project. He provided a plan of the proposed disc golf course. He stated he is working with UMASS to install a 9 hole disc golf course on UMASS property south of Eastman Lane and west of Pleasant St. Areas that will be within the 100' buffer to a pond and wetlands include Hole #3 and the walking path between Hole #6 and Hole #7. He stated there will be no vegetation removal for Hole #3, that area is currently lawn. He stated the walking path is located approximately 30 feet from the wetland boundary and that if it needs to be moved closer to the road it can be. Ms. Boice stated she would like to see the path moved further from the wetland boundary, and that if it got moved up the hill there would be some trees between it and the wetland which may deter people from disturbing the wetland. Mr. Giggey stated he could use logs and sticks to mark the edges of the walk. He also agreed to move the path to the east around the trees.

Mr. Walker stated the area around Hole #3 is very wet. Ms. Angus asked why Hole #3 couldn't be rearranged to be further away from the pond. Mr. Giggey responded they didn't want the hole to cross the parking lot or bike path. Mr. Giggey stated the baskets will be put in 5-gallon buckets that can be removed from the ground easily if they need to be moved. Ms. Angus asked where in addition to the

pond were the resource areas. Mr. Dauchy responded there is wetland south of the pond, the west side was mapped as part of the bike path permitting and the east was flagged but never mapped. He stated that in the areas where the disc golf was going to be within 100' he flagged the closest points. Ms. Angus asked for suggestions of other ways to keep golfers out of the wetlands. Ms. Willson suggested some signs. She asked if it would be possible to include on the tee signs language about staying out of the wetlands or putting other signs along wetland boundaries. Ms. Angus stated Mr. Giggey should work with Ms. Willson to put together signs to keep people out of the resource areas. Mr. Giggey asked if they could put up environmental education signs also, or combine them with the "stay out of the wetland" signs. The Commission said yes.

Walker moved and Healey seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to close the public hearing and issue a Negative Determination #3 with the conditions that Mr. Giggey work with the wetlands administrator with regard to the language and location for the signs, the walking path boundary marking, and whether any changes to the course layout require additional filing.

7:45 PM Request for Determination – John Coelho/Cherry Hill Golf Course for trimming of trees and shrubs within a resource area at Cherry Hill Golf Course, 323 Montague Rd. (Map 2D, Parcel 2).

- Opened the public hearing at 8:10 p.m.
- Closed the public hearing at 8:45 p.m.

John Coelho, Superintendent Cherry Hill Golf Course, stated that Hole #7 shoots over a pond that has vegetation growing in and around it. He added that some red maple samplings have grown tall enough to be in the flight path for the golfers. He is requesting to be allowed to trim the trees. Mr. Coelho stated he will do the trimming during the winter (2013/14) to lessen the impact to the wetland and pond. He stated he will remove the cuttings from the resource area. Mr. Ziomek stated it isn't really a pond, it's Riverfront along the Eastman Brook and the first 100 feet of Riverfront is strictly regulated. Ms. Angus stated the only way to permit it is to say it's work within a resource area but will not impact the resource area. Ms. Willson stated in addition to Riverfront the work will be done within BVW.

Ms. Healy asked how tall the current vegetation is. Mr. Coelho stated 4 or 5 feet tall. Ms. Angus stated that one of the definitions of alter is destruction of wetland vegetation. Mr. Ziomek asked if pruning would be more acceptable, maybe take off the top 3 feet. Mr. Coelho stated pruning was acceptable, his goal is to not let them get tall enough and thick enough that he would need a chain saw to cut them. Ms. Angus asked if maintaining the vegetation at 4 feet sounds good to everyone. Mr. Ziomek stated he thinks this should be a one time permit not for continual maintenance. Mr. Walker stated he supports taking one or two feet off the top because what remains preserves the habitat.

Walker moved and Boice seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-1 Healey abstained) to close the public hearing and issue a Negative Determination #2 allowing a one time pruning of the trees to 4 feet done during the winter.

8:00 PM Enforcement Order #2 – Northeast Utilities/WMECO for release of sediment into a stream and associated wetlands at Wentworth Farm Conservation Area (Map 18A, Parcels 46, 17 & 34). – **Long-term stabilization plan discussion**

Ms. Angus stated that at the previous meeting the Con Com issued an Enforcement Order to maintain the short term stabilization and to come before us tonight with a long term stabilization plan. Tonight we are discussing the long term plan and coming up with a date for implementation. Bill Hoynack,

Northeast Utilities, stated that there was a conference call with MADEP, Town of Amherst, NHESP, and the Army Corps going over the long term plan and making changes. Ms. Willson provided a summary of what the temporary erosion control looked like that morning and stated that WMECO & it's subcontractors were providing weekly monitoring reports.

Matt Kennedy, VHB, presented the proposed long term plan. He stated the proposed channel will be low flow, similar to the previous channel with step pools and cross veins. There will be a 25' wide floodplain corridor. The natural channel will be 1 to 1.5 ft deep then spill into the floodplain. The floodplain will be vegetated. The floodplain is needed to deal with the potential 100 year storm. Also being proposed is bringing the elevation of the dam up in spots to level it and make it harder to overtop during a 100 year storm. This would involve adding 6 to 9 inches of dense gravel. He presented a planting plan. Matt Varrell stated that with the new floodplain design there is no longer room for the proposed wetland replication area. One idea had been to move the replication area next to the pond but DEP didn't like the idea of more disturbance near the pond and suggested just providing vegetation throughout the floodplain that would provide good shading and habitat for the stream. Matt Kennedy stated they are proposing a buried cut-off wall at the entrance of the stream as extra protection to prevent ever loosing the pond in the event the stream banks erode. Sheet piles will be driven down about ten feet, then a concrete cap put on that will be imbedded in the cobble ground cover at the same elevation as the old stream entrance.

Ms. Angus asked based on the evaluation of why the old stream failed, how is this design different/better? Mr. Kennedy stated they are adding more protection such as the cut-off wall. He stated the natural substrate is very prone to erosion, therefore, with this design they have widened the channel to create the floodplain and are filling the bottom with rock. They will be using turf reinforcement mats to provide stability for the sediment and vegetation. He added that their analysis showed that because the previous stream was built when soils were frozen they didn't settle correctly and during the storm water got behind where a cross vein was imbedded into the bank and started eroding the sandy/silty sediment of the bank. This created a channel outside the real channel and resulted in eroding the whole bank.

He stated that the bridge will be removed for construction. The abutments will be reset, one has been significantly eroded. They don't plan on vegetating under the bridge or between the bridge and the pond. They will be adding a 7th step pool where there had been some undercutting of the bank. They plan to start towards the end of April. They are working with NHESP on the best way to remove the sediment from the downstream wetlands. First priority is the long term stabilization of the stream.

Ms. Angus asked if DEP has commented on this plan and if the applicant plans to revise based on comments from DEP and Con Com. Mr. Varrell stated they will take comments from the teleconference with DEP and from the Con Com and put together a final design set that will be submitted to all parties. Ms. Boice and Ms. Healy stated they would prefer turf reinforcement mats that are biodegradable. Ms. Angus asked if the Commission would like to have the applicant come to another mtg with their final design. Commission said yes. Ms. Angus suggested the applicant look at the Enforcement Order and meet all the requirements. Applicant agreed to come back for the March 27th mtg. Ms. Willson will email all comments Commission has to the applicant.

Miscellaneous Untimed Items:

- Emergency Certification – MADCR Norwottuck Rail Trail

Ms. Willson stated erosion occurred along a drainage channel and is undermining the trail. DCR shored up the bank with sand bags.

Healey moved and Boice seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0 Britt left) to ratify the Emergency Certification.

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

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at 9:55 p.m.