

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Mr. Walker, Chair at 7:04 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Walker (VC), Allen, Boice, Healey (arrived after vote on minutes), Brooks
Staff: Ziomek, Willson

CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS

Ziomek stated the Saul project is moving through the CPAC process. John Gerber from Grow Food Amherst and two members from the Ag Com presented at the CAPC mtg. March 6 CPAC will meet again and take a vote in which projects they will bring to Town Mtg. John Musante has appointed a new member to the Commission, Fletcher Clark. He will be sworn in this week and come to the next mtg.

Staff is working in the watershed and Plum Springs chipping. They are working on Cons area management plans. The plans will come before the Commission in the next few months. They are pulling together deeds, baseline studies, Town mtg votes, etc. for the documents. Researchers will be coming before the Commission asking for permission to collect data on Spotted Turtles in Lawrence Swamp. This is a continuance of research done at that location 10 yrs ago. Still waiting to hear if we got the Land & Water grant to improve Puffer's Pond, \$36,000.

Willson stated she met with MADOT, MADCR, and NÉE about drainage improvement plans for the Norwottuck Rail Trail. Drainage work was permitted separately from trail reconstruction project and permitted to MADCR. They would like to combine work under MADOT contractor. They are almost done merging the plans, and will be coming to a Con Com meeting to discuss a few changes to the originally proposed drainage work. No new work is proposed, just some decrease in scope.

Willson stated she went to 170 University Drive today for a pre-construction meeting with owner, Tighe & Bond, and the contractor. Reviewed the OOCs. They plan to start invasive tree & shrub removal in the next month then do herbicide application in late spring. Willson said that Presidential Apts has cleared all trees, grading and started putting in water & sewer lines. Hope to start foundations in March.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S ACTION

APPROVE MINUTES

Approve minutes of 4-23-13 & 2-12-14.

Boice moved and Brooks seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0, Healey not present for vote) to approve the minutes of 4-23-13.

Allen moved and Brooks seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0, Healey not present for vote) to approve the minutes of 2-12-14.

PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS

7:15 PM Informal Discussion – Mill St. Bridge conceptual plans

Ziomek stated we are joined by the chairs of the Public Works Com & the Public Transportation Com. He stated the Town through Public Works is looking at options of what to do with the bridge. Through recommendations from the Public Works Com, the public, the Con Com and others the Select Board and Town meeting will eventually decide which option to take. The Con Com has care and control of much of the land in the area, Mill River, Puffer's Pond, Mill River Cons. Area. Puffer's Pond 2020 Com spent a year looking at issues at Puffer's including pedestrian & bicycle safety and traffic flow. After discussion Con Com can make a recommendation to the Public Works Com on which design they favor based on Puffer's Pond 2020, the incredible use the pond gets in the summer, and vehicular & pedestrian safety. Christine Gray-Mullen, chair of Public Works Com, stated that CDM Smith, consultant who put designs together, have said "no action" is not an option due to the current integrity of the bridge. MADOT will only fund bridges that carry cars not pedestrian and bike only. The bridge is currently 20 feet wide. There are 5 conceptual designs for the bridge. Plans were provided on overhead of all designs. Design #5 is the widest and could involve taking some land including Conservation land. Vince O'Conner, Mill Hollow Apts., stated that option #1 (ped & bike only) would leave the existing abutments in place so have less impact on river. Ziomek stated that as the bridge gets wider there is more potential for Cons land to be taken. He showed where the one way would start and end, and that one idea is to have State St be one way west to east to the railroad bridge. Puffer's Pond 2020 studied this, and how it would affect pedestrian safety and parking. Gray-Mullen stated this overall plan from PP 2020 was not discussed at the last PWC mtg but there is another mtg March 6th. Ziomek added these are two separate things, right now we're just looking at the bridge not State St., but should keep the bigger picture in mind. Having the bridge one way does support Puffer's Pond 2020 ideas. Fran XX, Public Transportation Com, stated they support bridge with ped & bike use only. They were only interested in one way car use if the PVTA bus would use the bridge, but they found out the bus route must go north to south so buses would not use the bridge.

Walker asked what the cost would be fix the current bridge up to be used for ped & bike only. O'Conner stated that the state engineer said if the bridge was to be used at all the concrete facing on the abutments needed repair. Gray-Mullen said the consultant is bringing more information on that to the next mtg. Janet Keller, Pulpit Hill Rd., said she's concerned about cars having to drive all they around and public safety. Ziomek stated this mtg should focus on wetland and conservation issues. Boice suggested the Con Com provide parameters they would like to see instead of choosing a plan to support considering the plans may change. Ziomek stated he thought a memo could go through staff with Con Com's views to the PWC for their next mtg. Ziomek stated from his perspective the one way car use with multi-use path provides access and adds safety for the dangerous corner and is a building block for ideas from PP 2020. Brooks asked the width of this design, and said he feels Con Com should support the design with the least impact to resource areas. Design is 24 ft. Elizabeth Hamin, on PP 2020, said with Retreat potentially coming if bridge two way it will be a cut through impacting the Conservation areas.

O'Conner said repairing the existing abutments was costed at \$450,000. He said they are historic abutments and CPA money could be used to fund. He said plans 2 through 5 all include replacing the abutments and lengthening the bridge quite a bit, has to be 1.5 times the river width, state determines width of river. He added removing current abutments would have a large environmental impact. Ziomek

stated having the span be bigger could be better for the river, the current abutments create a pinch point for the stream. Brooks said there are still too many questions, we don't know if the abutments are being taken out or not. Gray-Mullen stated the abutments are coming out. Ziomek suggested Con Com members go to PWC mtg next week and discuss further at next Con Com mtg. Walker said we're not voting tonight, discussion continued until next mtg.

7:30 PM Notice of Intent (cont'd from 2-12-14) - Joshua & Judith Lewis for renovations and additions to a single family house within Riverfront at 172 State St. (Map 5B, Parcel 32).

Continued at 7:50 pm
Closed 8:05 pm

Michael Liu, Berkshire Design, and Wright Builders presented. Liu shared copies of new summary of mitigation package. Includes 2000 square ft for on-site restoration, and off-site mitigation including mulch for Julius Lester trail, plantings & split rail fence along Cushman Brook, and drainage outfall. Liu presented planting plan. Drainage outfall will be a step-pool located where Mill Rd. drainage comes out near Julius Lester trail. Liu provided new site plans, moved driveway out of 50 ft. setback. Willson asked how close the plantings will be to the bank. Liu stated don't want to damage steep bank by planting on it, they would like to plant along flat area on top of bank. Ziomek said plantings and fence need to stay out of public way or they need permits from tree warden and Select Board. He added bank stabilization won't be achieved at the street level, needs to be on the bank. Ziomek suggested Commission permit project with condition that applicant work with staff on final locations of plantings and fence.

O'Conner asked to be shown the locations of the work vs mitigation. Liu showed on the plans. Liu added that the did get review letter from NHESP, no impact to habitat or potential "take".

Boice moved and Healey seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to close the public hearing and issue the Order of Conditions with the following special conditions:

1. Applicant or their representative must work with the Wetlands Administrator to finalize the planting plan and fence location adjacent to Cushman Brook, and the location for the mulch along the Julius Lester trail.
2. Long term maintenance of the off-site mitigation is the responsibility of the Town.

7:45 PM Notice of Intent (cont'd from 2-12-14 mtg) – Joshua & Judith Lewis for renovations to a barn within Riverfront at 5 Mill St. (Map 5B, Parcel 31).

Continued 8:05 pm
Closed 8:20 pm

Michael Liu, Berkshire Design, and Wright Builders presented. Minimal amount of work in Riverfront. Change from 1st meeting is putting in rain garden along north side of driveway. Added new work to plans. Increased mitigation slightly to 22 CY of mulch based on revised calcs.

Boice moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to close the public hearing and issue the Order of Conditions.

8:30 PM Notice of Intent – UMASS and Northeast Utilities Service Company (NUSCO) for construction of a new substation and associated transmission lines within resource areas on Tilson Farm Rd. (Map 8C, Parcels 13C & 13D).

Continued 8:20 pm
Continued 8:25 pm

Willson stated there is an email and minutes from a meeting DEP had regarding this project. She added that applicant has requested to continue the hearing until 4/23/14, they are not here tonight. At that mtg they will provide an update but won't have received comments on their WQC yet from DEP. Con Com can't put together OOCs until we get DEPs conditions on WQC.

Brooks moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to continue the public hearing until 7:30 pm on 4/23/14. Applicant agreed to continue to time and date specified.

Miscellaneous Untimed Items:

- Vote on having 3rd party review - Retreat

Willson stated that a 3rd party review is the hiring by the Commission (fee paid by applicant) of consultant to review submittals. For Retreat it looks like it will be an ANRAD and an NOI. Commission determines what work they would like the consultant to do. Ziomek stated this is common practice for towns, we have done this before. He added that this is paid for by the applicant. The Planning Board is also hiring a third party review for subdivision & site plan review. Healey asked how payment works. Willson stated applicant provides lump sum of money based on RFP cost estimates, lump sum put into account with the Town then the Town hires the consultant and whatever money is left afterwards goes back to applicant. Ziomek stated very important to note that the Town hires the consultant. Healey asked how do we know what to put in the scope of work until we get the submittal? Willson stated the RFP won't go out until the ANRAD comes in, but we do need to put everything we want into the RFP scope of work.

Jack Hirsch asked if the public would have any input on RFP. Ziomek stated public is welcome to come to any of the public meetings where it's being discussed. You can submit comments via email. Brooks asked about guidance on hiring consultants. Ziomek stated we use bylaw, MACC guidance and Town Comptroller.

Healey moved and Brooks seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to have a third-party review for the Retreat project.

- Review/comment on RFP for 3rd party review for Retreat project

Discuss further at 3/12/14 mtg.

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

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at 8:40 p.m.