

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Ms. Angus, Chair at 7:02 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Angus (C), Boice, Clark, Brooks, Butler
Staff: Ziomek, Willson

CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS

Angus introduced new Commissioner Bret Butler, gave overview of Commission's roles. Willson provided update on Norwottuck Rail Trail project, they will be installing erosion control in Amherst by the middle of May. Boice asked if they are doing it in sections. Willson stated yes, first section from Hadley line to Snell St bridge. Tilson Farm Substation project has submitted their Water Quality Cert application to DEP and will be coming to our next meeting to discuss Riverfront mitigation. Cons Dept was informed by an abutter that Landmark (Retreat developer) and New England Env. (NÉE) has been seeking permission from homeowners to look for vernal pools on their property, this may include Hawley Swamp Cons area. Ziomek stated that he spoke to someone at NÉE and told them they needed to fill out an application to do research on Cons Land. Willson said Landmark is hoping to submit the ANRAD for the Retreat project by the end of April. She provided current photos of Owen's Pond. Ziomek provided a summary of the Owen's Pond stream construction project for new Commissioners. Willson said that she and Ziomek met with the residents of Pomeroy Court regarding beavers in Plum Brook. Ziomek stated DPW will be working with Board of Health and residents to potentially trap in private land, no trapping on Cons. Land.

Ziomek said gearing up for Town mtg., will discuss Cons & Dev. Dept operating budget. Typically operate with about \$17,000/yr. for equipment, equipment maintenance, etc. to manage all cons land and help manage watershed land. CPA article will include due diligence money (\$26,000), conservation restriction money (\$40,000), and Saul property (\$41,000). Ziomek and John Gerber will do presentation at Jones Library tomorrow night on ideas for Saul Property. Field staff gearing up for summer work, will be submitting RFDs for some work. One RFD will be for tree trimming and removal along Mill River. Select Board voted to accept recommendation of the Public Works Com for Alt. #4, one lane bridge with multi use path, for Mill St. They did not decide on direction of traffic. Keep your eye on plans for Pine St road work considering Mill River Cons area is to the north and the North Amherst Community Farm APR is to the south. Willson said Matt Biskup called asking about what he can do on LIAU. She told him he could cleanup debris from clearing in LIAU and spread fertilizer. He mentioned he had been in contact with a consultant. Angus asked to put on next mtg agenda discuss enforcement order against contractor. Angus provided summary of Biskup enforcement order for new Commissioners.

MINUTES

Approve minutes of 3-12-14.

Boice moved and Angus seconded. Commission VOTED (2-0-0), Brooks, Clark & Butler abstained) to approve the minutes of 3-12-14.

PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS

7:15 PM Informal Discussion – New England Environmental regarding aquatic vegetation treatment of Gull Pond.

Mickey Marcus, NÉE stated a year ago NÉE had made an offer to work with Cons Dept on aquatic treatment of Gull Pond. The pond has gotten very vegetated the last few years, used to fish and have kids fishing derbies and can't do that anymore. NÉE does aquatic plant treatment/pond management and they have offered to do it for free at Gull Pond when they have the time. Work needs either a negative determination or Order of Conditions. NÉE could then apply for a license with the State to apply an algacide or herbicide to the Pond. Gull Pond has a lot of algae and water Lillie's, very nutrient rich. Treatment would be done a small section at a time because as the plants die they decay and use up oxygen.

Willson stated she thought they had done some sampling. Marcus said yes, the depth to bottom is about 2 ft, they identified some of the vegetation. With so much algae the pond lacks oxygen and fish die. Herbicides could be used to open up certain areas of the pond for fishing, etc. and leave water lillies in other areas. Could take three to five years to treat.

Ziomek asked about mechanical treatment and impact to aquatic & terrestrial animals. At UMASS they use a hydro rake which pulls up the plants across the pond by their roots. Aquatic herbicides can now better target the nuisance vegetation. You would treat in small areas so fish can go to other parts of the pond where oxygen is not depleted. Boice asked if it has an outlet. Ziomek said yes it flows under Old Farm Rd comes out the other side of Kestrel Lane becomes part of marsh next to rail trail. Ziomek said the Commission should think about what our long term goals are for the pond, let it continue to eutrophy and become a wetland/wet meadow, or manage it as a pond habitat for fish, critters that wouldn't be in a wetland. Open water habitat is in short supply in Amherst.

Angus said she supports treating the pond. Brooks said he does not, if it's headed toward being a marsh let it become a marsh. Butler said if it was a natural pond he would be more in favor of treating it. Ziomek suggested staff put together pros/cons document and meet with residents. Julie Marcus said it's the only place in Amherst where you can consistently see otters.

7:30 PM Discussion - Cons Com/Ag Com meeting series – schedule & develop discussion topics

Ziomek stated partially in response to what happened out on Meadow St., staff and some Con Com members had discussed having some workshops/meetings with members of both the Con Com and the Ag Com. It's clear from the incident on Meadow St that the state and local regs are complex and we don't do any outreach to farmers. Angus said it's a good idea, asked if these would be at Con Com or Ag Com mtgs or separate. Not sure yet. Wm Levine, Ag Com member stated Ag would like to work with Con Com on a number of fronts, this he saw as a one time educational event. Ag Com would like to work with Con Com on Fort River Farm, licensing of conservation land for farming. Ziomek said they talked at the Ag Com mtg about the Ag Con weighing in on future APRs. The Fort River Farm will be a

good opportunity for the two committees to work together. Angus asked if farmers would come to an informational workshop, maybe have DEP come, on how to interpret Ag section of the Wetlands Protection Act. Especially like to invite new farmers. Mr. Levine said he thought people would be eager to attend the meeting. He added Ag Com had a member who works for DAR, so she may be able to convince people to attend. Ziomek said could be a couple of workshops in fall/winter 2014 sponsored by both committees. Angus said issues seem to be field edge, water withdrawal, and beavers.

Levine stated he will report at the next Ag Com mtg that the Con Com would like to work on some workshops. Butler asked about the timeframe for the Saul Property project. Ziomek stated if Town mtg votes to support the purchase Cons Dept would move to buy in June. Would start process with Con Com of planning it's use hopefully for the 2015 growing season. Need to do resource assessment, work with Grow Food Amherst & Ag Com planning sharing garden and farming plots. Potentially come to Cons Com with plans in early fall 2014.

Miscellaneous Untimed Items:

- Application for event on Cons. land – Boys & Girls Club at Puffer's Pond

Ziomek stated Commission approved the application the last two years. Approximately 40 riders arriving at different times, this is one stop along their ride, they pick up water, snacks, etc. Butler said if there is already a large number of people using the pond that day it could be an issue. Boice suggested asking them to set up at the entrance rather than on the beach. Ziomek suggested having Brad meet with their representative prior and get comfortable with where they are setting up, etc. Butler suggested moving it to the north beach. Willson suggested moving it to Mill River. No vote, staff to talk to them about these other options.

- Mill St. Bridge conceptual design plans

Willson stated the Select Board made their recommendation for Alt. #4 – one traffic lane with multi-use path. Direction of traffic to be determined.

- Vote of RFP review subcommittee

Willson stated Town is working on draft RFP, once responses are received we'll need a subcommittee to review responses and choose consultant. Boice & Brooks volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

Clark moved and Butler seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to approve Boice & Brooks to subcommittee.

- Nominate/Vote on Vice Chair

Angus nominated Boice to be Vice Chair. Boice made an acceptance speech.

Angus moved and Brooks seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) for Boice as Vice Chair.

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

Ziomek showed the location of the Mitchell property along Rte 116 in North Amherst. It's over 50 acres, and has been nominated for an APR, which means the state will pay 80% of the cost to preserve the land.

ADJOURNMENT

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