

**Conservation Commission Meeting
March 11, 2015
Town Room, Amherst Town Hall**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

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

ATTENDANCE

Present: Allen, Healey, Brooks, Clark

Staff: Ziomek, Willson

CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS

Meet & Greet with Ag Com

Ziomek stated he thought the workshop was a little formal with all the regulatory discussion up front but like the real work examples at the end. Lots of work to be done with the farming community to educate, great to get help from the Ag Com. Would love to see more workshops to build bridges with the farmers. Willson said she'd like to see more younger farmers attend. Ziomek farmers were very involved in the development of the ag section of the WPA.

Rebecca Fricke said she would like to see more data on how much land Amherst has protected, how much wetland, how much ag land, what have we lost, how many filings from farmers, etc. We didn't talk about why the regulations were put in place and how they benefit everyone. Wm Levine suggested talking about the hydrology and common species of wetlands. Conduct a workshop out in the field where farmers can see how wetlands are delineated. Healey said it would be good to hear from farmers what issues they've run up against with wetlands.

MINUTES

No minutes reviewed.

PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS

7:15 PM Notice of Intent – Howard Ewert for demolition of a barn, construction of a dwelling unit, and modifying a driveway and parking areas within buffer zone to bordering vegetated wetlands at 69 Pelham Rd. (Map 15A, Parcel 107).

Howard Ewert, prospective buyer of property, presented the project showed plan showing wetlands and work. Work includes converting the barn into a home for himself and repair remainder of building to rent as duplex. Work includes rerouting driveway away from the wetlands, section near the wetlands will be removed. Parking will be added but is over 30' from wetlands. The barn is over 60 feet from the wetlands and will be demolished. Healey asked if the new barn will be in the same footprint as the old barn. Ewert responded yes. Ewert said there is cement foundation from an old barn between the 30' and 50' setback that he'd like to build a shed on.

Healey asked parking areas are both new and if they will be paved. Willson responded one parking area is new, nothing will be paved. Ewert driveway and parking will be gravel with blue stone on top. Clark asked if stormwater drainage would be treated at all before draining to wetland. Ewert responded that removing portion of driveway next to wetland and replacing it with vegetated soil would act to slow, infiltrate and treat stormwater drainage before it enters the wetland. Clark asked what are would be revegetated with. Ewert might use lilacs.

Brooks said even though foundation exists can't build shed inside 50' setback. Willson noted that erosion control is not shown on the plan. Ewert said they can add that to the plan.

Brooks moved and Clark seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to close the public hearing and issue the Order of Conditions with special conditions that a revised plan including erosion control location, and that the proposed shed be moved outside the 50' buffer, and that the proposed sidewalk be eliminated.

7:30 PM Request for Determination – Hitchcock Center for the Environment for construction of an educational building and associated site work within buffer zone to an isolated wetland on West St. (Map 22D, Parcel 13).

Chris Chamberlain, Berkshire Design Group, presented the project. The extent of work within the 100' buffer to the isolated wetland is lawn which is part of a court yard, and some disturbance from grading along the 100' buffer line which will be replanted. Julie Johnson, Hitchcock Ctr, gave an overview of the Living Building project. Chamberlain stated all work will be downgradient of the wetland. Stormwater will be captured in rain gardens. The plan shows an alternative septic system leachfield location within the 100' buffer which they would come back before the Commission if they decide to build.

Brooks moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to close the public meeting and issue a Negative Determination #3 with no conditions.

7:45 PM Notice of Intent (cont'd from 2-25-15 mtg) – Catherine & Robert Cann for demolition of a single-family house and barn and construction of a new single family house and workshop within Riverfront at 189 Mill Ln (Map 17D, Parcel 22).

Andy Bohn, NEE, stated they have provided an updated landscape plan with more detailed Riverfront mitigation area. They provided a diagram showing the impact and restoration and mitigation numbers. Proposed impact of 5,867 square ft. which includes demolition of old house, construction of rain gardens, and grading. The regulations require to mitigate for impact to non-degraded area, 2,808 square ft., using area under existing building 1, 222 square ft, current mowed lawn and rain gardens which will turned in a meadow 1,282 square ft and third area is where there will be removal of invasive species and planting of native shrubs 1,280 square ft for a total of 3,786 square ft. Willson asked if there is a management plan for the invasives. Bohn said they are willing to monitor for two years. Healey stated we can't close the hearing tonight because the delineation has not been approved due to the snow. Healey asked how invasives will be removed. Bohn said orange line is limit of where equipment will be used, so invasive removal will be done by hand. Primary invasive is multi-flora rose. Method will be to cut the stem and apply herbicide followed by hand planting native plants.

Clark moved and Brooks seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to continue the public hearing until March 25th at 7:45 PM.

Miscellaneous Untimed Items:

- Request for Amendment to Order of Conditions – Presidential Apts

Willson reviewed DEP guidance for deciding if an OOCs can be amended (vs requiring a new NOI for additional work). DEP guidance was provided in the Commissions packet. If Commission allows the amendment tonight the applicant is required to return to a second mtg that has been legally publicized when the amendment will be reviewed and voted on by the Commission. Mike Schafer, Huntley Assoc., and Alan Cohn, property owner, presented the new proposed work. Schafer stated they would like to build a maintenance and laundry facility building by the entrance. Approximately 3,200 square ft building, adding walkways and a few parking spaces. Building meets the 50' setback and there is no proposed work within the 30' setback. They have spoken to Jason Skeels about changes in drainage, he will be reviewing the proposed design so when the amendment comes before the Commission we'll see his review comments.

Brooks moved and Clark seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-0) to allow the applicant to amend the Order of Conditions.

- Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting

Adjournment

Voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at 8:40 PM.