

**Conservation Commission Meeting  
March 9, 2016  
Town Room, Amherst Town Hall**

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by Ms. Angus, Chair at 7:05 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

Present: Angus, Boice, Allen, Brooks, Clark, Butler

Staff: Willson

**CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS**

Boice stated that the CPA mtg was Monday night and all the Open Space projects were supported by CPA for Town Meeting. Willson stated the signing for the Hall property was last week. Willson attended the MACC conference, Clark attended also, it was very informative. Willson has ordered 100 drain markers for catch basins that feed the Fearing Brook and stream signs.

**MINUTES**

No minutes were reviewed.

**PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS**

**7:15 PM Presentation** – Brad Bordewieck & Kody Clark present recent Conservation Department projects.

Brad Bordewieck introduces Kody Clark our new Assistant Land Manager. Angus stated (for the public) that once or twice a year Bordewieck and Clark present the work they've been doing on Conservation Land. Adrienne Terrizi (spelling?) requested everyone speak loudly so all can hear. Bordewieck presented photos of the Reid Bridge (Montague Rd.), Atkins Flats mowing, Stosz Bridge (E Leverett Rd), UMASS Day of Impact crew at Puffer's Pond working on perimeter trail, and Puffer's Pond improvements at N Beach.

Clark asked what projects are coming up? Bordewieck stated we just applied for a DCR grant to build a wildlife viewing platform at the Brickyard Cons Area off the Norwottuck Rail Trail. Brooks added this will connect with the Bluebird Meadow trail. Willson asked if they had done the Bluebird Meadow work that was permitted. Bordewieck, not yet. Bordewieck said they're working to finish up the work under the LWCF grant at Puffer's Pond including work on South Beach, kiosk on N Beach and perimeter trail. Butler asked about where the Robert Frost Trails crosses a stream in Amethyst Brook but there is no bridge. Bordewieck said that's actually private land and the land owner doesn't want a bridge there.

John Boothroyd, Longmeadow Dr., stated there used to be a bunch of bridges along the Hop Brook east of SE St. near Norwottuck Rail Trail that all got washed out a long time ago and he wonders why they

haven't been replaced. He's upset about the draining of the wetlands along the Norwottuck Rail Trail?? He said I don't know why we're giving up on the wetlands, they belong to the public.

**7:30 PM Notice of Intent** – Town of Amherst Conservation Department for replacement of a pond outflow structure at Markert's Pond Conservation Area, Pondview Dr. (Map 19C, Parcel 4).

Brad Bordewieck, TOA Land Manager, introduced the project. Replacing out flow structure to restore pond height to historical levels. He stated they will install a sandbag coffer dam and pump out the water to work in a dry space. All materials and equipment will come in off Pondview Dr. Material will be excavated from the current dam and replaced with rip rap to strengthen the dam. Rip rap will be covered with loam and woodchips for trail. Strawbales will be placed downstream for erosion control. An excavator will be used to grade and place the new outflow structure. Willson shared photos with the Commission. John Boothroyd asked if the pond will be brought two feet up from where it currently is. Willson stated we've looked at old aerial photos and topo maps to determine the historical elevation and are basing our outflow structure height on that.

Brooks asked if there is any regulation that requires us to maintain this as a pond. Willson said no, but the Conservation Dept. has looked into taking out the dam and returning it to a stream as an option. Willson said it's been pond habitat since the 1930s for turtles, fish, birds, best to bring it back to what it's historically been in the last 70 yrs. Butler asked in the pond was healthy otherwise. Brooks said it's filling in, there is a lot of aquatic vegetation and invasives. Willson stated we working on the draft Management Plan for Markert's Pond that includes sedimentation, invasives, repairs to stormwater outfalls, but this is the first step. Angus asked when work will happen, Bordewieck responded sometime in 2016.

Janet (last name ??) - Stated she has been an abutter to the pond for 49 years and has seen it change dramatically in the last few years. Her children ice skated on the pond, there were fish in the pond.

Adrienne Terrizi - Long time neighbor. She stated Pete Westover took great pride in this pond, it has historical significance the Markert boys dug the pond. When the land was sold to a developer the pond was given to the Town for conservation and recreation. Thank you for listening to us, we don't want to see this area become a stream because we have enjoyed the pond for so long.

Alice Swift - Has lived next the pond for almost 50 years. Her kids fished and swam in the pond, they had a rubber raft they would go out and see the turtles. Would hate to see it turned into just a stream and wetlands, a pond is a real asset to the a community.

Connor (last name?) - He grew up next to the pond, ice skated, fishing, took dogs out in canoe's on the pond, etc. It's also a stormwater feature, it takes stormwater from the neighborhood.

John Boothroyd - He said there are problems with the watershed that are causing the pond to disappear. Brooks asked that we keep the discussion to the outflow structure. Boothroyd presented a map showing Markert's Pond watershed, he stated there were basically two streams that feed the pond one got re-directed and flows down Rte 116 and the other got dug up for Hampshire College's farm pond. The Mt. Holyoke Range feeds all the South Amherst streams and they are cold water fisheries with native brook trout. We need to start restoring the wetlands and stop draining them.

Peter Martin (?) - has lived in the neighborhood for five years. Would love to see the pond returned. Adrienne T added the this is a tight neighborhood and that the pond is the pride of the neighborhood and the Town should fix it. Carol (?) stated she walks around the pond and sees kids and others using the open field and feels it's important that the Town revitalize the pond for the Orchard Valley neighborhood.

Angus stated she appreciates the neighbors coming out. She added the Town is before us asking to do work to improve the area, the Town is always working to keep it's Conservation Areas in good upkeep but we have a lot of land and not a lot of money so it's an ongoing struggle.

**Boice moved and Butler seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0)** to close the hearing and issue the Order of Conditions with no special conditions. Willson to investigate Hampshire College farm pond and impact on Markert's Pond.

**8:00 PM Request for Determination** – The Common School for an increase in drainage to a drain outfall within buffer zone to bordering vegetated wetlands at 521 S Pleasant St. (Map 17A, Parcel 78).

Mike Liu, Berkshire Design Group, presented the project. This application is for work on the main parcel where the school buildings and parking lot are located. He said right now people park along the drive and all around the gravel turnaround. Majority of the work on this parcel is outside the 100' buffer zone. Part of the work will be to redesign the driveway and turnaround, it will be one way and narrower with only parking along the east side, it will be paved, and all stormwater will be directed toward a rain garden in the center. Any overflow of the rain garden will be piped to an existing outfall for roof drainage. The water that comes out of that outfall currently flow southerly onto Larch Hill Conservation Land and under the boardwalk. During the site walk we observed the drainage ditch for the outfall and noticed how little vegetation there is because the kids play in the water. We talked about ways to improve the stream bed, widen out in places and create pools for the kids to access that would also slow the flow, and plant in other areas to reduce erosion. Butler asked how much increase in flow there will be? Liu responded minimal. Brooks asked if they can use permeable pavement. Liu said no, they are actually getting the pavement as a donation.

Angus asked what the Commission thinks about additional work in the swales such as plantings. Boice said she thinks there should be a plan for use, maybe design to keep kids in one or two areas. Bordeweick stated we have had trouble with water coming down from this stream channel and under our boardwalk. It plugs up with sediment and debris. Commission decides they would like to continue in order to see a design drawing for the stream pools and plantings.

**Boice moved and Brooks seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0)** to continue the meeting until March 23rd mtg at 8:30pm. Applicant shall provide a plan for stormwater outfall improvements.

**8:15 PM Notice of Intent** – The Common School for demolition of a garage, construction of a parking lot, associated drainage features and landscaping within buffer zone to an isolated wetland at 535 S Pleasant. (Map 17A, Parcel 51).

Mike Liu, Berkshire Design Group, presented the project. The proposal is to construct a parking area along the western portion of the lot. The driveway off S Pleasant St would be removed, access would be off the school drive. Drainage would flow into a sedimentation basin along the southern end of the parking lot. Water that overflows from the sedimentation basin will flow through a grass swale and into a catch basin with a stormceptor before it flows into the Town stormwater system. Willson stated we have a letter from Jason Skeels, Town Engineer. Portion of old driveway that curves and goes to the neighbor property will be maintained. Lui stated there is one little corner that extends into the 25' setback for parking lots, we could either shift the parking lot or remove one parking space. Angus said OK. Willson presented photos from the site visit.

Southern abutter (name??) stated we currently share a driveway with this parcel and the parcel are very open to eachother, not a lot of screening. She provided photos. A 25 car parking lot will affect the feel in her backyard. She asked if there could be a better set back or more screening. Angus stated that area is outside the Commission's jurisdiction. Liu stated they will have to file with the Planning Board and those concerns will be brought up. Angus stated could you look the stormwater fixtures along the southern boundary and see if you can move the parking lot out of the 25' and provide additional plantings for screening.

Abutter asked if changes in drainage will affect the driveway at all? Liu stated no the drainage will be underground at that end of the driveway. Butler asked if we could request they stop mowing the isolated wetland.

**Boice moved and Brooks seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0)** to continue the meeting until March 23rd mtg at 8:35pm. Applicant shall provide changes to parking lot location and screening, and whether property owner would let the mowed wetland re-vegetate.

### **Miscellaneous Untimed Items:**

- Emergency Certification – Amherst DPW for beaver dam breach on Plum Brook near Pomeroy Court.

Willson stated the residents on Pomeroy Crt have been complaining again that water from the Plum Brook is collecting in the road. DPW's consultant went to the area and found no new beaver activity but there are old dams still blocking flow. This Emergency Cert is for DPW to breach the old dams, beavers are no longer building them back up so it should work.

**Boice moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (6-0-0)** to ratify the Emergency Cert.

- Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting

### **Adjournment**

**Voted** unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at 9:15 PM.