

**Conservation Commission Meeting
April 27, 2016
Town Room, Amherst Town Hall**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

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

ATTENDANCE

Present: Angus, Clark, Allen, Healey, Brooks

Staff: Ziomek, Willson

CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS

Willson stated that in the Commission's packet there is a letter regarding sedimentation basin cleanout at Pomeroy Ln Co-Housing this spring. She said Bordewieck would like to show the Commission the new tractor, so if folks could plan a head for May 11th we'll add that to our morning site visits. Drain markers will be installed next Tuesday.

Ziomek stated community garden work is underway at Mill Ln they have been brush hogged and will be harrowed this week. The hiring process for summer staff has begun. Usually summer staff is 3-4 people, they will start in late May or early June. Still waiting on the trails grant, grant proposal is for a raised platform at Brickyard Cons Area. Town Meeting starts Monday night, Open Space Projects are Hoerle APR and the Stowes/Stosz project on E Leverett Rd that we got the LAND Grant for. Boice will be presenting the projects to Town Mtg. Clark asked if there was a timber harvest going on on Pelham Rd. Ziomek said yes there is a timber harvest for red pine, will get the specifics from Brad. Clark asked if Con Com had permitted the party at Mill River Rec that was in the newspaper. Ziomek no, that was a private party that was reserved through the town but for a much larger number of people. Town does not rent the Mill River Rec pavilion for a party that includes hundreds of people. The party produced 1,500 lbs of garbage.

MINUTES

PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS

7:15 PM Informal Discussion – Mill Street Bridge

Ziomek presented a general map with site locations. He said part of this project is addressing some of the recommendation from the Puffer's Pond 2020 report. Some recommendations from that report include dredging the pond, improving parking, maybe create parking fee, and improving safety walking on Mill and State Streets. The plan that has been discussed and recommended by the Public Works Committee is for a one lane bridge with a multi-use trail. The State is currently working on designs. The multi-purpose trail would be on the inside of the road (dam side) and would go all the way from drive to N Beach parking lot to State St. It would be raised like a sidewalk and be 10-12 ft wide. The multi-use path would go onto Conservation Land so an easement would be necessary. DPW to come to Commission when MassDOT has preliminary plans for discussion. The idea of State St. being one way

has not been discussed yet. A lot of people living in N Amherst would like to see traffic crossing the bridge even if it's just one-way and the state funding is available, the Town could not do it without the state money. Angus asked why not just a sidewalk instead of a multi-use path? Ziomek said he's not sure of the exact width so could be similar to a sidewalk. Angus if MassDOT does the work they may not be required to meet Ch 97. Ziomek we should have Guilford Mooring, DPW Super, come to a Con Com mtg and talk about MassDOT approach. Ziomek said if considered a trail Ch 97 may not apply.

7:30 PM Request for Determination – Amherst College for installation of two temporary sections of bog bridging over resource areas on land south of the rail trail (Map 17A, Parcel 57).

Ethan Clotfelter, Amherst College faculty, stated he's been studying the birds on this parcel since 2004. This request is for installation of bog bridging so he and his students aren't walking through resource areas to get to bird boxes. It's a large tract of land east of SE St. and south of the Norwottuck Rail Trail. He said the bridging would be installed by Amherst College students by hand. He would like to leave the bridging in all year, make it permanent. The path is only used by his students so the vegetation stays well developed. Angus asked if the bridging with span the entire wetland. Clotfelter responded yes. He added there are about 120 boxes and they are studying tree swallows. Healey asked how often are the wet areas crossed. Clotfelter at least once a day from April to July.

Brooks moved and Allen seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to close the meeting and issue a Negative Determination #2 with the conditions that the bridges be removed when the study is done and a maximum bridge width of two ft.

7:45 PM Request for Determination (cont'd from 3-23-16 mtg) – Brightergy for construction of parking lot solar canopies on Lot 44, North Pleasant St., UMASS campus (Map 8C, Parcel 13).

Angus stated this is a continuation, the Commission had requested additional information on the stormwater design for the project and whether UMASS could provide improvements to the parking lot drainage as part of this project. She added there is revised plan from the applicant in front of us. Dave LaPoint from Beals & Thomas stated there will be a gutter down the center of each canopy and a downspout in each column. The water will then be piped to the west side of the parking lot where it will outfall into the existing swale. It will exit from two 18' pipes. The western edge of the parking lot will be under a canopy, the plan is to make what is now grass into a gravel swale for infiltration of sheet flow and water from the last row of paels. LaPoint read a letter from UMASS stating they will cleanup the dead wood covering the swale at the NW corner of the parking lot, re-shape the asphalt in the swale, and place rip-rap to slow velocity. They are proposing erosion control all along the northern edge of the parking lot and in the swale. Work could start as early as mid-May.

Brooks moved and Clark seconded. Commission VOTED (4 Healey left-0-0) to close the meeting and issue a Negative Determination #3.

8:00 PM Request for Determination – Joshua & Judith Lewis for installation of a dock in Puffer's Pond at 172 State St. (Map5B, Parcel 32).

Jeff Squire, Berkshire Design Group, the property owners are interested in installing a seasonal dock on their property that extends into Puffer's Pond but still on their property, they own part of the pond. There is an existing wood platform, about 4'X4', on the bank with handrails that the dock would attach to. The dock would be 20' long and anchored at the far end. The dock would be a wooden frame with floats and would be removed in the winter. Squire presented a plan showing wetland lines. No digging is necessary because it will attach to the posts of the existing platform. Brooks asked what the anchors would be made of. Squire replied most likely concrete blocks.

Robin Morris, Sand Hill Rd., asked why do they need a dock? Squire stated they want a place to put a canoe. Morris asked how are they going to keep people off the dock? Allen responded we spoke to the owner about that and they realize people will sit on the dock. Angus stated that is not a concern of Con Com we're just looking at impact to resource areas.

Elizabeth Gilbert, neighbor, asked if there is a place (meeting) where things like the purpose and public use could be heard? Squire said not going to Planning or ZBA, dock and work will be entirely on private property.

David Sharken, Mill St., stated he applied for a similar dock 15-20 yrs ago from the Con Com and was granted permission. He thinks it's actually created habitat for fish, turtles, and snakes. People do sit on his dock and they will sit on this one.

Howard Sinoto, neighbor, said he knows the pond needs to be dredged, will the Lewis' pay for part of it? Angus said that would need lots of discussion when the time comes. The Town is looking into dredging but it won't be happening any time soon. Sinoto asked about the portion of the dam owned by the Lewis'. Willson stated the Town is responsible for the dam maintenance under an agreement with the property owners. Sharken said there is a right of way over both his property and the Lewis' over the dam for maintenance.

Public (name?) asked will the wood be treated? Squire said most likely. Willson said we can condition the permit with what wood treatment we allow.

Brooks moved and Clark seconded. Commission VOTED (4 Healey left-0-0) to close the meeting and issue a Negative Determination #2 with conditions that the wood be treated with the least environmentally impactful treatment and that the foam be of a type that doesn't disintegrate.

8:15 PM Notice of Intent – Amherst Conservation Department for installation of a parking area, picnic area, and fencing within Riverfront at 1200 North Pleasant St. (Map 5A, Parcel 22).

Willson presented the design drawings for the project. The project includes construction of a stone dust (TRG) parking area, removal of a backstop, leveling of the playfield, installation of a decorative fence along Sunderland Rd., and installation of a split rail fence around the parking area. All the work is within the second 100' of Riverfront. A curb cut exists where the parking lot entrance will be, currently people park on the grass where the new parking area will be. Clark asked if any trees were being taken down. Willson said not in the current plan. Although the project is in floodzone, the project doesn't impact or take any flood zone away. Allen suggests a port-a-potty so people don't use the woods. The project will also be going through Planning and ZBA approval. We don't have a DEP# for the project yet so we can't close tonight. Angus said you can impact up to 5,000 sq ft in the second 100' of Riverfront. Clark asked what will the field be used for? Willson said as a sports field by LSSE and other groups.

Brooks moved and Clark seconded. Commission VOTED (4 Healey left-0-0) to continue the public hearing until May 11th, at 8:00pm.

Miscellaneous Untimed Items:

- Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting

Adjournment

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