

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

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Ms. Boice, Vice Chair at 7:04 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Boice, Allen, Clark, Brooks, Butler

Staff: Ziomek, Willson

CHAIR, DIRECTOR & WETLANDS ADM REPORTS

Ziomek stated that field staff and DPW are working to get flow structure in at Markert's Pond. We have a concrete flow structure on order. DPW and potentially the fire department may help with installation. Ziomek thinks upstream sources may have declined adding to low pond elevation. Willson stated the Hampshire College farm pond was built in 2000 blocking one of the main tributaries to Markert's Pond. Ziomek has been talking with the Hitchcock Ctr about a one year lease to still use the Larch Hill buildings. Staff has been doing some building maintenance before winter. Ziomek met with Orchard Arboretum folks about an extension of their ADA walkway. Conservation Dept is submitting a MA Wildlife grant, Willson has a support letter for the Commission to sign. The grant is to expand field habitat at Lawrence Swamp, Atkins Flats, and Eastman Brook. Staff are doing the fall time mowing on many conservation areas.

Brooks asked when the cut down pine trees on Mt. Pollux would be removed. Ziomek said staff is waiting on a wood chipper from DPW. Brooks stated the Poet's Walk trail off Southeast St. needs signage. Ziomek said, yes, we need to work on that trail. Ziomek stated the drought committees continue to meet, however, the ban may be lifted as early as next week. We've gotten rain and due to the time of year people aren't watering their lawns, washing cars, and using swimming pools. Atkins Reservoir is still very low and remains offline.

Willson stated she emailed the Commission a link to the Beacon Communities project ZBA application. This is the large housing development in North Amherst. If Commissioners could provide comments she would put together a review letter from the Commission to the ZBA. The area to look at is drainage, currently there is only a grading and drainage plan no stormwater report. One thing the Commission could request is production of a stormwater report to be reviewed by the Commission and the Town Engineer.

Willson asked Commission if they want to meet the week of Thanksgiving, She stated we have no applications at this time. Commission decided to not have a second meeting in November unless necessary due to applications being submitted. Willson stated Carol Gray is still looking for comments from the Commission on her signs, however, one of her signs is still not in the Dropbox folder for us to review. She hopes to bring the final sign designs to our next meeting Dec. 14th. Willson stated we need to review an Emergency Cert that didn't get on the agenda.

MINUTES

Review/approve minutes of 4-13-16.

Clark moved and Butler seconded. Commission VOTED (4-0-1, Brooks abstained) to approve the minutes of 4-13-16.

PERMITS/DISCUSSIONS

7:15 PM Request for Determination – Penny Beebe for removal of four trees within buffer zone to bordering vegetated wetlands at 391 Old Farm Road (Map 18C, Parcel 43).

Penny Beebe, home owner, presented the project. She stated there is flooding behind her house due to beavers that has resulted in a lot of trees coming down. She is worried about the health of some of the large trees that could fall on her house. She had a arborist come and look, and there are four trees he feels are either not healthy or standing in water. The trees would be climbed and taken down in pieces, so by hand with little equipment going into the woods. The debris would be left to decompose and as habitat. Clark said letting the trees fall as one piece into the wetland is OK too, it will slowly decompose. No erosion control needed.

Butler moved and Brooks seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to close the public meeting and issue a Negative 3 Determination with no conditions to take down the four trees in buffer zone to BVW.

7:30 PM Informal Discussion – Amherst DPW regarding Mill St. Bridge easements (Map 8A, Parcel 71).

Willson stated Guilford Moring, Director of Public Works, couldn't make the meeting. She presented the Right of Entry document and stated we've talked about this for a couple meetings now, the Commission saw the previous version at the last meeting. Conditions have been added as requested by the Commission. Butler questioned only inventorying 10" or greater trees for the Commission to review. Butler and Clark suggested 5" or greater trees. Willson will make that change to the document.

Approved at the 10/25/17 Conservation Commission Mtg

Brooks moved and Clark seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to approve Right of Entry document with tree inventory diameter changed to 5” or greater.

Miscellaneous Untimed Items:

- Approve/Sign MHMGP Grant support letter

Clark moved and Brooks seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to approve the recommendation letter for the Mass Wildlife Grant.

- Emergency Cert – Puffer’s Pond beaver dam

Ziomek stated staff has breached the beaver dam four or five times since August. His proposal is to bring in some matting and have an excavator come down onto the matting and reach out and grab as much of the beaver dam as possible. Brooks asked where the lodge is, Ziomek said across the pond by the dike.

Brooks moved and Butler seconded. Commission VOTED (5-0-0) to issue the Emergency Cert.

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

Adjournment

Voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at 8:15 PM.