



Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 8, 2019 Town Hall, Room 101, 7:00 PM

Present: David Haines, Jon Clements, Doug Beach, Heather McCann, Edward Knight, David Lamb, Associate member Mark Brownell; Conservation Administrator Erica Cross & Assistant Conservation Agent Cayla Paulding

Absent: Sabrina Moreau, Associate member Katerina Korolov

Called to order at 7:02 by D. Haines

7:00pm

Request for Determination of Applicability – BCC# 19-16

4 Jon Dr.; Map 251, Lot 37

Construction of a retaining wall and concrete pool deck

Christopher Pope

Christopher Pope presents project with support from E. Cross. The installation and size of pool is an exempt minor activity, but the retaining wall is enough to require permitting. The retaining wall comes up to the 50 ft wetland buffer. E. Cross would like to see erosion and sediment control put on plan. E. Knight discusses history of violation and enforcement on the property (potentially early 2000s under the name Dennis Graham). The current owner has owned the property for 12 years. This project requires no tree removal. This will be a salt water pool. E. Cross recommends adding a condition that does not allow discharging of pool water.

E. Knight motions to issue negative determination; J. Clements seconds; all in favor

Notice of Intent - DEP# 104-1059; BCC# 19-15

X176 Transmission Line ROW; Map 280, Lot 2

Geotechnical Soil Borings

New England Power Company; Kelly Doherty

Alexandra Echandi from BSC group presents project. They are going to do 2 exploratory borings. There will be a hole 6-8 inches in diameter that will go 35-40 feet deep. They are trying to identify soil composition in case the structure has to be replaced in the future. Usually the structures are put 10-15 feet into the ground. They are going in the access road from Pain St. The area is in a shrub swamp BVW that will require matting for the equipment. The matting is a 50 X 50 work pad; which is a conservative space for the project. The hole is generally backfilled with sand or clean fill, but it is up to the commission if they would like it to be backfilled or not. Alexandra has seen it revegetate naturally. The work consists of a tube that augurs in and sucks out the soil. National Grid has protocols to follow that will require strict restoration. This will only take 1-2 days. BSC group does inspections before and after. The applicant is hoping to conduct the boring in August or September. E. Cross notes that the timing of this will not impact vernal pools. D. Haines mentions that the swamp mats are great for maintaining the health of the resource areas. They are essentially mats made of natural wood that spread the weight of the boring equipment. D. Haines would like the holes to be backfilled.

E. Knight motions to close and issue order of conditions; J. Clements seconds; all in favor

Notice of Intent - DEP# 104-1059; BCC# 19-15

Lot G Bardwell St; Map 272, Lot 28.15

Construction of a single family home

Michael Roy

Keith Terry of Sherman & Frydryk presents project. The main portion of the parcel is above the wetland, it is a former agricultural field. The 100 ft buffer extends across the front of the parcel. The house and parking is outside of the buffer. They intend to install a rain garden to collect driveway and roof runoff. There is a swale proposed along the entrance of the driveway. The driveway is in the 50-100 ft buffer. E. Cross confirms the integrity of the wetland flagging. The permanent markers are going to be 2 ft boulders along the 50 ft no disturb line. The driveway will be from Bardwell St to the tree line. The edges on the driveway will be reestablished vegetation. There is a proposed underground utility under the driveway. There is generally a hard wood mulch in the center of the rain garden. There was discussion on promoting pollinator friendly rain gardens in the future. This will be discussed more in the future.

H. McCann motions to close the hearing and issue order of conditions, D. Beach seconds, all in favor

Discussion on Local Actions to Encourage Pollinator Habitat

By John Root of Western Mass Pollinator Networks (<https://www.wmassbees.org/>)

John Root is an organizer, activist, and landscaper. He leads the discussion. There are no official policies in Belchertown to promote pollinator habitat. E. Cross notes that we often encourage developers to seed developed areas with pollinator seed mixes. John has a “tool kit” that has 9 suggested ways to promote pollinator friendly habitats. John Root would like Belchertown to consider non binding by-laws to promote pollinator friendly habitats. He wants to know the best way to conduct outreach in Belchertown. E. Cross suggests that the conservation commission can recommend a more pollinator friendly lawn mix to developers that will require less maintenance as well. H. McCann asks about many pollinator mixes containing non native vegetation. John Root suggests mixing the native and non native plant species because the pollinators do not discriminate. That is assuming the non native vegetation is not invasive. John Root recommends ground cover instead of mulch. J. Clements asks if the commission has the right to make pollinator friendly recommendations. D. Haines and E. Cross note that they can negotiate conditions within 100 ft of wetland resources. It could be a mitigation technique listed on the order of conditions. H. McCann notes that many home owners seem receptive to promoting pollinator habitats. J. Clements notes that oftentimes developers choose the cheapest option. D. Haines recommends having resources to give to new homeowners to make it easy to promote pollinator friendly habitats. A resident recommends recruiting high school students to promote enthusiasm and participation with this effort. Another resident asks about town maintained open spaces that are primarily composed of lawn. She notes that they could also be planted with more pollinator friendly flora. E. Cross says that this could be a topic for the special town meeting. Going forward, the conservation commission can include pollinator friendly stipulations in the orders.

Discussion Items: Bills, Minutes and Miscellaneous Matters

J. Clements motions to accept 6/24 minutes, H. McCann seconds, all in favor

-  Emergency Certificates
-  Enforcement actions
-  Certificate of Compliance- we have not received all the paperwork for these yet
 - 33 Magnolia Ln
 - 114 Mountainview Drive

- + New Business
 - Hickory Hill replication plans
- + Sign grant paperwork (LAND grant (Dubois property), Dam & Seawall Removal/Repair Program)
 - H. McCann motions to apply for LAND grant; J. Clements seconds; all in favor
 - discussion on the dam & seawall repair grant
- + Management of invasive plants on access strip to land behind Catherine Drive by abutter
 - E. Cross suggests allowing resident to help with invasive species, but commission brings up the fact that herbicides cannot be used on our property as well as the fact that the resident is not a certified pesticide applicator.
- + Discussion regarding revised solar plans for Gulf Rd. E. Cross and D. Haines will meet with developers 7/9/2019.
- + J. Clements motions to recommend that the selectman do not exercise right of first refusal for pine st property, H. McCann seconds, all in favor

9:00 E. Knight motions to adjourn, J. Clements seconds, all in favor

NEXT MEETING Monday, July 22, 2019