

Natick Conservation Commission
February 16, 2023

The Meeting was called to order at 7:02 by Chairman, Matthew Gardner. Members present: Doug Shepard, Chris Stillman, Jeff Richards, David Howe, Mike Downey. Members absent: George Bain.

Community Organic Farm Annual Update

Mr. Gardner stated the farm update has been rescheduled to March 16th.

Certificate of Compliance – DEP File #233-825 – 45 & 47 Mill Street

Mitch Maslanka, from Goddard Engineering, stated the project was permitted in March of 2020 and Amended in October of 2020.

The two-year monitoring for the mitigation plantings has been completed. The plantings did well and the site looks good. The grass had struggled on one side of the house. There has been no erosion and made recommendations for shade grass mix.

Claire Rundelli gave an update on sewer line location change. She does not feel there are issues to hold up issuing the Certificate of Compliance.

Matt Gardner noted besides the sewer line issues, all looks good.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance, Chris Stillman moved, Jeff Richards seconded, all in favor 6-0.

Request for Determination – Memorial Beach

Travis was unable to be here this evening. He is fine with whatever path the Commission decides to take. If there is a positive determination, a Notice of Intent can be on the next agenda.

Claire stated she spoke to the contractor who feels the beams will pull out with little issue. They will install floating wattles. If the beams were to break, a subcontractor will be on standby to complete the work.

Chris Stillman asked for more details about the set up for cutting the beams should they fail to pull out cleanly. Claire did not have those details available.

Jeff Richards stated if someone puts a dock on Lake Cochituate, it would likely require a Notice of Intent, why is this type of project any different.

The Commission agreed that a Notice of Intent is the most appropriate path for permitting. Claire and Travis will file a Notice of Intent. There is plenty of time to make sure everything is documented.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to issue a Positive 1 Determination, Mike Downey moved, David Howe seconded, all in favor 6-0.

Request for Determination continuation – 8 Crest Street

Claire Rundelli continues to reach out to DCR with no success. Their input is required before moving forward.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to continue to March 2nd, Chris Stillman moved, David Howe seconded, all in favor 6-0.

Minutes

Matt asked if any Commissioners had concerns or changes to the January 19th minutes. None were noted.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to approve the January 19th minutes, Jeff Richards moved, David Howe seconded, all in favor 6-0.

General Business Discussion

Beaver Decision Tree

Claire Rundelli reviewed the chart. She made some updates to the language regarding “Action” slide based on some comments from the abutter group.

The Tree remains mostly as previously reviewed.

Claire stated Town Forest does qualify for this management via an Order of Conditions based on the current tree. Matt asked about opportunities to review conditions for a site after a certain time to determine if regular breeching is still appropriate. Claire noted that the extension requirement for OOCs provides a good opportunity for that. David Howe hesitating. How long do we wait for the beavers to relocate?

David Howe asked about the cost. DPW does it free and Beaver Solutions has not given a quote as of yet as they need to assess the site.

Matt Gardner asked for another box to give “option” breeching is prescribed course, if there are budget resources to do it. We do not want to be locked into doing it. A time, budget, availability clause to keep doing breeching. The Commission is confident using this as a guide.

Simone – thanked Commission. He has seen a lot of beaver activity. He feels this is a good plan and would like to be kept in the loop. He would also like to see the up and downstream equally considered. Simone feels the abutter concerns were addressed.

Mike Downey asked if we can cite the Wetland’s Protection Act in the action determinations. He also requested that we modify the language to include “infrastructure,” along with structures and utilities. Claire will make all requested changes.

Water gauge/sensors is in the proposed budget. Claire is hoping to purchase in the upcoming fiscal year. Chris suggested a more low-tech alternative should the budget not to be approved.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to approve the Beaver Decision Tree as a guiding policy and we will revisit as needed, Doug Shepard moved, David Howe seconded, all in favor 6-0.

Stormwater Bylaw update – Town Meeting Warrant Article Sponsorship

Claire gave update on the work Town staff have been doing to update the Stormwater Bylaw, Regulations, and Design Standards (Appendix A). A sponsor is needed to bring the Bylaw update to Town Meeting for approval. The warrant closes 2/23/23 at 5pm. The language does not have to be finalized until it goes before the Finance Committee. Claire would like the warrant article sponsored tonight.

Matt Gardner asked to put on the next meeting and we can review what the changes are. Claire will walk through them line by line for discussion.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to sponsor the warrant article, Mike Downey moved, Chris Stillman seconded, all in favor 6-0.

MACC Annual Environmental Conference

David Howe would like to register for some sessions. Claire will forward the schedule to the rest of the Commission to review and she will get anyone registered. All the sessions are available virtually.

Community and Economic Development Department Other Updates

- Claire is working on Community Preservation Committee Bylaw for Spring Town Meeting
- Town staffing – still 2 open planner positions and 1 requested for FY24 budget to support CPC
- CED is working to reduce paper file volume through clean out of old materials and scanning
- Claire met with Haley from COF to discuss goatscaping outside of water tower, JJ Lane, and potentially Town Forest. Matt suggested also bringing them to the land on Oak St where the Cochituate Aqueduct crosses.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm