

**Natick Conservation Commission**  
**March 3, 2022**

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Chairman, Matthew Gardner. Members present: Doug Shepard, Jeff Richards, Mike Downey. Members absent: George Bain, Christopher Stillman

**Notice of Intent – 5 Parkview Street**

Abutter notifications were not sent in time, so the applicant has requested continuation to March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (continuation) – DEP #233-874 – 318 Eliot Street**

Ryan Rosen, Goddard Consulting, visited the wetland with several Commission members. He reviewed the requested changes with the project team, and agreed with moving the line 1-15 ft. Revised plans were submitted showing the revised line.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to accept the resource area delineation, Doug Shepard moved, Mike Downey seconded, all in favor 4-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for a roll call vote:

Doug Shepard, yes

Mike Downey, yes

Jeff Richards, yes

Matt Gardner, yes

**Notice of Intent (continuation) – DEP #233-871 – 86 Kendall Lane**

Diana, Field Resources, reviewed the project. The proposal is to remove the garage, pool, and cesspool with leeching pits within the buffer zone. The exact location of the pits is unknown, but will be found and decommissioned. Work outside of the buffer zone includes demolition of the existing house and construction of a new duplex, along with stormwater management.

The applicant is proposing plantings to revegetate the 25' and 40' buffers. Staff did have a question about one of the species on the planting plan and the applicant stated they would clarify on a plan revision. The project has approval from the ZBA.

The stormwater has been designed for a two family and is outside of commission's jurisdiction. The removal is in their jurisdiction. The erosion control shown at the edge of proposed lawn, any areas behind the erosion control line will be planted. There is also some debris in the yard will be cleaned up.

The proposed house will be tied into town sewer. The topography of the site is fairly level.

Matt Gardner asked if a Stormwater Permit was needed. Claire stated that on initial review she believed only a minor permit would be necessary, but it based on additional volume calculations,

it might tip into a major. She will discuss with the Engineering Division to confirm. Commission discussed a continuation, as a major stormwater permit requires legal ads and abutter notification. We can advertise a legal notice for March 17<sup>th</sup>. Field Resources stated that was fine, and would give them time to update the plan.

Mike Downey questioned the tree canopy on the lot, as he can see a number of trees on the aerial image. Diane stated that she would determine what, if any, trees needed to be removed within jurisdiction and would mark them on the revised plans.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to continue to March 17<sup>th</sup>, Doug Shepard moved, Mike Downey seconded, all in favor 4-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for roll call vote:

Doug Shepard, yes

Mike Downey, yes

Jeff Richards, yes

Matt Gardner, yes

### **Certificate of Compliance – 39 Union Street**

The project was a new construction house. Claire visited the site, and although it was snow covered, the site looked good and appeared to be in substantial compliance. A letter from the project engineer was submitted stated it was in compliance. Two planted trees that did not do well will be replaced in the spring.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance, Jeff Richards moved, Mike Downey seconded, all in favor 4-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for a roll call vote:

Doug Shepard, yes

Mike Downey, yes

Jeff Richards, yes

Matt Gardner, yes

### **Cluster Project Review**

#### **Appleton/Yorkshire “The Meadows” Cluster – Conservation Analysis Map**

The Planning Board has asked the Commission for their comments. Chris D’Antonio gave the history and proposal of the two parcels; 3 Appleton and 9 Yorkshire (which is under agreement).

The site can support a 4- lot subdivision by right, and a 5-lot inclusionary subdivision. The traditional subdivision proposals would clear the majority of land.

The proposed cluster would remove the need for a new road and would have three duplexes off Appleton, and the existing residence at 9 Yorkshire would remain but be renovated to become 2 units. A 6-ft fence and plantings are proposed along the property boundary with 12 Yorkshire to

increase privacy. Under the cluster proposal, the majority of the trees on the site will be preserved. The trail easement would be provided to lay out a trail throughout property. Chris went through site photos and showed entrance to cottage off Yorkshire. The existing driveway around the house will stay under the cluster, but the pool will be removed. The trail will meander through the entire property. He showed the area where the trail would, and confirmed most of the vegetation will remain. All the mature trees will remain. The trail will require an easement across the driveway of 9 Yorkshire. There is 325ft of frontage between the two properties. The cluster bylaw only requires 100 ft. There will be 50ft of separation from abutters.

Chris went through the direct comparison he developed for the inclusionary and cluster proposals. Chris noted that the cluster will result in smaller, more affordable units. The duplexes will be 31ft in height. The third duplex will not be visible from the street. He feels the cluster bylaw is appropriate for this site, and that the houses will transition nicely in the neighborhood.

The Commission is being asked for their opinion and thoughts on what value the proposed open space brings to community. Matt asked if the properties are occupied? Chris owns 3 Appleton, but rents it out. 9 Yorkshire is under agreement with options for cluster or subdivision. Commission would like a site visit. Chris is asking for a letter for the Planning Board by March 16<sup>th</sup>. Claire noted that in order to get the Planning Board a letter by March 16<sup>th</sup>, a site visit could not occur because the next Commission meeting is the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Does this offer advantages over alternatives? Matt reviewed the criteria and discussed potential improvements the cluster would offer. Claire stated there are street connections that eventually reach Pickerel Pond in the Wethersfield neighborhood. Chris pointed out there is another nearby neighborhood connector trail that is used all the time and would connect to his project. Matt does not see anything that would prohibit the inclusionary proposal from being developed. Doug Shepard agreed it would be permissible.

Mike Downey appreciates the approach of moving development out of the Aquifer Protection District. The lot has roughly 18,000 sf in recharge area. Mike feels the cluster would be better than the five family homes.

Jeff Richards liked the path method Chris used, and preferred the cluster plan versus the inclusionary plan. He feels the trail will be a benefit to the neighborhood.

Martin Kessell feels the town hasn't had the opportunity to build small clusters. This site is 2.4 acres. It looks like a good use of space. His only reaction is the setbacks are pretty small. 10-15 ft backyards. Will they spill into the open space in the future? No, Chris is proposing small split rail fences to deter at Claire's suggestion.

Ganesh Ramachandran feels it's a clever approach with smaller units. His only question was if a meandering path was the right choice/ If someone wants to cut through, would they be walking through people's yards? Any lights on the trail? Overall, he feels it is the right thing to do. Chris clarified that no lights are proposed and the majority of trail pathway is free of vegetation.

Matt asked the Commission if they would comfortable issuing a letter that we find this proposed cluster more advantageous than a 5-lot inclusionary subdivision? Commission agreed.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to vote to authorize Matt Gardner and Claire Rundelli to draft a letter to the Planning Board, Doug Shepard moved, Mike Downey seconded, all in favor 4-0.

Matt Gardner asked for a roll call vote:

Doug Shepard, yes

Mike Downey, yes

Jeff Richards, yes

Matt Gardner, yes

### **Violation update – Windy-Lo – 3005, 309 and 311 Eliot Street**

Claire visited the site with Ben Stevens to observe it after the rain. Overall, the site looked good. Claire recommended updating erosion control near the wall. Claire reviewed of the letter Oxbow sent. The slope issues observed and reported. Claire will go out again on Monday to check on the erosion control.

Brian Butler, turbidity levels have tapered off. The basin seems to be stable after the freeze/thaw cycle we have had over the last few days. The crack in the slope appeared to be a result of vehicle wheels from when the basin work occurred last fall and does he does not feel it is slopping. It appears to be stable for now. He will test Monday or Tuesday, depending on rain timing.

Matt asked what is your professional opinion? May/June should determine if the system is correctly working. Ongoing concerns seem to be stabilized as of today with downstream vernal pool and Eliot Street.

Commission discussed keeping the enforcement order or not and where it stands. Claire feels they are making good progress, but we should keep the Enforcement Order in place to ensure compliance. She is keeping up with site visits and has not had any recent complaints from the owner of the vernal pool. The vernal pool assessment has not occurred yet. The applicant has made sufficient effort and is now submitting timely reports. Matt appreciates Brian Butler's efforts. Brian feels they are going in the right direction.

### **General Business**

#### **Community Preservation Act**

Ganesh Ramachandran, along with Martin Kessell, provided a detailed presentation on the Community Preservation Act. They have been presenting to a number of boards and committees to receive endorsement for their Spring Town Meeting article. The Spring Town Meeting article is to vote on putting the Community Preservation Act on the fall 2022 ballot.

Mr. Ramachandran gave some history on the Act.

- Historic preservation
- Open Space and Recreation
- Affordable housing.

- 188 cities and towns have adopted CPA.
- Raised \$2.65 Billion dollars

The CPA places a surcharge on properties tax bills. Natick is proposing a 1% surcharge. There are exemptions to this, which Ganesh reviewed. Ganesh provide an example of what a resident would see on their tax bills if the CPA was adopted.

- A \$600,000 property would be \$66.70 a year.

Funds put into the CPA fund receive additional annual state match, which varies by year.

53% of Massachusetts towns and cities are involved. The total funds raised in Natick could have reached \$20 million in last twenty years.

Looking for Commission’s vote to endorse. Martin is also looking for helpers. Claire is familiar with surcharge. They have it in Newton and it is a beneficial program.

Lisa Standley, stated it’s been a tremendous success in Needham and would be a great thing for Natick. Doug Shepard has been pushing for it for decades.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to endorse the adoption of CPA, supports Town Meeting endorse for Natick, Doug Shepard moved, Mike Downey seconded, all in favor 4-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for a roll call vote:

- Doug Shepard, yes
- Mike Downey, yes
- Jeff Richards, yes
- Matt Gardner, yes

Town Forest Invasives Specie Inventory Project

Lisa Standley of the Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee is proposing a rigorous inventory of invasive plant species in Town Forest for this summer. This would serve as the foundation to a management plan to attack the worst invasives or the ones that can get out of control. Asking for the Commission’s endorsement. It is a volunteer effort Lisa would be organizing.

Mike Downey requested Lisa also document how much Hemlock is there. The Commission is fully in favor of this.

Trail Construction Training Funding Request

Lisa is requesting funding for a Trail Construction training program. She would like training to increase stewards ability to assist with new trail creation projects.

There are two one-hour webinar training sessions. \$1,000 fee. Looking for funding. The Trails budget cannot cover the funding. Matt asked Claire to check other funds accounts. The Commission has latitude to use for trails and open space maintenance.

Matt asked to keep us posted and will be there. He has full support and endorsement of the Commission.

Matt and Claire will discuss where the money comes from, but the entire Commission is in full support of spending \$1,000 for this activity.

#### In-person vs. Virtual Meeting Vote

The Commission in attendance agreed to keep meetings virtual for now and then get other's input. May go back May 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### PLPA letter of support

Looking for approval to support the passing of the PLPA Act.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to sign the letter of support, Doug Shepard moved, Mike Downey seconded, all in favor 4-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for a roll call vote:

Doug Shepard, yes

Mike Downey, yes

Jeff Richards, yes

Matt Gardner, yes

#### Minutes

December 2<sup>nd</sup>

December 16<sup>th</sup>

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to approve the above minutes, Mike Downey moved, Jeff Richards seconded, all in favor 4-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for a roll call vote:

Doug Shepard, yes

Mike Downey, yes

Jeff Richards, yes

Matt Gardner, yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm