



TOWN OF PELHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Pelham, Massachusetts

Minutes for June 10, 2021

Present: David Gross, Janice Gifford, Dana MacDonald, Tilman Lukas

Also present: Barbara Cooper (Pelham Housing Committee)

The meeting was held online via Zoom due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and state-mandated restrictions on meeting in person. The link to the Zoom meeting was published as part of the regular Commission agenda. The meeting was held under guidelines from the Attorney General and the Governor.

The meeting was brought to order at 7:04 pm.

Public Hearing for a Notice of Intent (NOI) Submitted by Home City Development, Inc.

The public hearing was continued from a previous meeting. Chair MacDonald noted that Commissioner Lukas has recused himself from the discussion. This Public Hearing for a Notice of Intent submitted by Home City Development, Inc. for a Riverfront Re-development project from an existing commercial building and single-family home to affordable housing units located at 18 to 22 Amherst Road (Map 3 Parcel 30 and 32) has DEP File #258-0096. There was no discussion.

It was moved to continue this public hearing to later date, subsequent to the conditions order by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Second, Approved 3-0-1 (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Lukas – abstain, MacDonald – yes).

Public Hearing for a Notice of Intent (NOI) submitted by Hank Brakeley c/o SWCA Environmental Consultants for a Driveway/Wetland Crossing for a Single-Family Home (Map 8 Parcel 29.A)

Chair MacDonald reported that Martin Silverberg, an abutter to the subject parcel, sent an email to Chair MacDonald indicating that he refused Mr. Brakeley's request to share Mr. Silverberg's driveway. The chair also said that Emily Stockman, consultant for the Commission, and Chase Bernier of SWCA plan to meet in the near future to review the delineated wetland lines for the parcel. After discussion it was agreed that the Commission should schedule a site visit after Ms. Stockman delivers her report and prior to the next Commission meeting. A likely date range would be the week of June 27, with further discussion of the NOI at the first Commission meeting in July.

It was moved to continue the public hearing to June 24. Second. Approved 4-0 (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Lukas – yes, MacDonald – yes).

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Public Meeting for a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) at 75 Arnold Road

The public meeting was continued from a previous Commission meeting. Chair MacDonald noted that Agent Borenstein had offered to reach out to Natural Heritage for input on Box Turtle habitat. He noted that she is work very part time and has not had time to contact Natural Heritage. Chair MacDonald said that he plans to contact Natural Heritage for their feedback on the site so that the Commission's Orders of Conditions can be completed.

It was moved to continue the RDA to a subsequent meeting. Second. Approved 4-0 (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Lukas – yes, MacDonald – yes).

Dog-walking Forum to be Hosted by the Commission

Chair MacDonald reported that he had sent to the printer the text for a postcard announcing the forums, but he requested a hold due to concerns that the forums must have an in-person component. Commissioner Lukas noted that there is now a requirement of an in-person option for all public meetings. Chair MacDonald noted that a suitable location must be secured and the Commission discussed possible venues. After further discussion, it was agreed that the date for the first forum must be delayed in order to find a location, and that July 10 & 24 would be possible dates. It was agreed to change the text of the postcard to specify dates and times, but to indicate that the location will be posted on the town website. It was further agreed that allowing a phone-in or Zoom-in option would likely increase town participation. Commissioner Gross noted that he has access to A/V equipment that could be used for this purpose if needed.

Resumption of In-person Meetings in July

Chair MacDonald noted that the state will require public meetings to be held in person starting in July. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Commission will meet in person on June 24 in order to test the possibility of a hybrid meeting style with a Zoom option. Commissioner Gross noted that he can set up the AV equipment, which will require about 30 min prior to the start of the meeting.

Replacing the Conservation Agent

Chair Macdonald said that Tessa Dowling has taken a job with a conservation trust, and thus is not available as a temporary Conservation Agent as Agent Borenstein transitions away as Pelham Conservation Agent. He suggested that the Commission ask other Conservation Agents if they are available for temporary service. He also pointed out that the Commission should begin the process of hiring a permanent agent by advertising the position.

Conservation Restrictions (CRs) Registration

Chair MacDonald noted that the 8 Amherst Road CR, held by the town, and the Fennessy CR, also held by the town, have now been recorded.

Site Visit for Request for Determination (RDA) at 57 South Valley Road

Chair MacDonald said that a site visit to 57 North Valley Road should occur prior to the public meeting for the RDA on June 24. It was agreed that the Commission will do the site visit at 4:30 pm on June 17.

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Approval of Minutes for May 13, 2021 and May 27, 2021

Commissioner Gifford noted two typos in the minutes for May 13.

It was moved to accept the May 13, 2021 minutes as corrected. Second. Approved 4-0 (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Lukas – yes, MacDonald – yes).

It was moved to accept the May 27, 2021 minutes. Second. Approved 4-0 (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Lukas – yes, MacDonald – yes).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Gross". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a stylized "G".

Respectfully submitted by David Gross