



TOWN OF PELHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION Pelham, Massachusetts

Minutes for November 8, 2018

PRESENT: Dana MacDonald, Tilman Lukas, David Gross, Meredith Borenstein

ALSO ATTENDING: Steven Ward, Alan Weiss, Michael Ashman

The public meeting was brought to order by Chair MacDonald at 7:02 PM.

RDA for septic repair and well installation in the Buffer Zone at 266 Amherst Road (Map 15 Parcel 13).

The Randall Smith Trust (the owner) was notified by certified mail as were the property abutters of this public meeting. A notification was also placed to run on Oct 29 in the Daily Hampshire Gazette.

The Commission reviewed the plans with Alan Weiss, the designer of the proposed system. Mr. Weiss said that he has recommended that the work be delayed until the dry season. The Commission noted that a newly proposed location for the new well has moved about 6 feet upslope based on recommendation of contractor. Mr. Weiss and the Commission agreed that the upslope well location is fine. The Commission suggested that there be a sump and siltation control in place to catch fines during well drilling. This condition will be added to the RDA as will a condition that a heavy straw blanket be maintained on the site until it becomes vegetated.

It was moved that, with these two conditions added, that the Commission authorize the Determination of Applicability. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Chair MacDonald closed the public meeting at 7:20 PM.

114 Amherst Road erosion issue

Michael Ashman, the owner of 114 Amherst Road was present to discuss the erosion problem that has developed at the site of the septic installation at 114 Amherst Road. Water runoff from uphill of the property has been channeled to the western portion of the site, causing erosion of the loam placed there and siltation in the ditch on the south side of Amherst Road that drains into an intermittent stream. Mr. Weiss noted that straw blanketing was not in place at the site, contrary to instructions in his plan. Mr. Ashman said that straw bales are now in place in the ditch and erosion channel, and that a heavy straw blanket has been put down over the entire site. Commissioner Gross confirmed that this work had been done earlier this week.

Mr. Weiss and Commissioner Lukas noted that the bales need to be monitored over the winter as snow accumulation can block the bales. The Commission suggested that the ditch sediment be left in place so as not to damage the vegetation already present at least until new growth begins in the spring. Agent Borenstein informed Mr. Ashman that New England Wetland

Plants in Amherst sells a wetland seed mix that likely would work well to stabilize the swale where erosion has happened.

Timber harvesting violation at Quabbin gate SH1

Steven Ward (a retired forester with 28 years of experience) showed the Commission photographs of damage at timber lot 2051, which the Commission had previously visited. Mr. Ward strongly advocated that the damage done during logging operations earlier this year requires environmental remediation. He believes that the cutting plan was violated, thus providing the Commission with the power to require remediation. The photographic evidence shows that stream crossings were not properly bridged leading to substantial damage to wetland areas. After some discussion, the Commission agreed that it will write to the state Department of Conservation and Recreation to obtain the DCR's plans for remediation.

Bray farm beaver removal

The two beavers at the Bray farm ice pond have been removed, and now the beaver lodge and dam needs to be removed in order to discourage more beavers from occupying the lodge. The Commission discussed an Emergency Certification Form issued by Chair MacDonald for the lodge and dam removal at Bray farm. The Commission agreed that there is to be no equipment access within the pond and that all work must be done from the adjacent roadway or lawn area. The Commission approved the Emergency Certification. Agent Borenstein will make a PDF copy for Mark Stinson, Mass DEP circuit rider, put a copy of the form in the Commission's records, and give the original to DPW Chief Adamcek.

Review previous meeting minutes

Minutes of the Oct. 25, 2018 meeting were reviewed, and some corrections were made. A motion was made to approve as amended. Seconded, approved unanimously.

Kristin DeBoer of the Kestrel Trust requested in an email to Chair MacDonald that the references to solar installations on land purchases in North Pelham being arranged by Kestrel in the October 11, 2018 minutes be clarified. The specific clarification is for the last paragraph in the minutes. The clarification follows:

There are active negotiations ongoing with the McClungs to obtain, through the Kestrel Trust, their property to add to the Community Forest parcel. In addition to the Community Forest addition, Kestrel is working on a larger project in collaboration with Cowls logging to conserve over 2,000 acres of working forest in Shutesbury, Leverett, and Pelham with a conservation restriction held by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. This project excludes about 150 acres for future development purposes, including solar. It will preserve a continuous connection from central Pelham to the Quabbin, providing a protected wildlife corridor, and guarantee public access for hunting and fishing.

Signatures on the Pemberton purchase paperwork for Kestrel

The documents for Commission members to sign are now in the Commission's mailbox in the Rhodes building. Each document must be notarized when a commissioner signs. Either Sandra Burgess or Susannah Carey can notarize the form.

Pelham Conservation Commission minutes

November 8, 2018

Site visit to Well Away Farm

The Commission discussed the site visit to Well Away Farm on Sunday, November 4. The parking area on South Valley Road will be extended by about four feet, and will be improved with a trap rock base to diffuse the storm water runoff from the road. Chair MacDonald has communicated with DPW Chief Adamcek who agreed with the trap rock plan for the parking area. The Commission also agreed that improving the hiking trail along the higher ground option seems to be the best plan.

Signature authority for Agent Borenstein

It was moved that Agent Borenstein have signature authority for Conservation Commission accounts. Seconded and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted by David Gross.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Gross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.