



**TOWN OF PELHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
Pelham, Massachusetts

**Minutes for February 25, 2021**

Present: Richard Seelig, Dana MacDonald, David Gross, Meredith Borenstein, Tilman Lukas, Janice Gifford

Also present: Peter Sarafino (Home City Development), Bruce Klotz, William Pula (Health Committee), Jeff Squire (Berkshire Design Group), Stacey McCullough (Pelham Zoning Board of Appeals), Ann McNeal (Pelham Zoning Board of Appeals), Ralph Faulkingham (Pelham Zoning Board of Appeals), Judith Eiseman (Pelham Planning Board), Kevin Rothschild-Shea (Architecture Environment Life, Inc.), David Shanabrook (Pelham Select Board), Brian Pearson

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 7:02 pm.

**Public Hearing for the Tower Road-Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation**

The public hearing was continued from February 11, 2021. There was no discussion on the ANRAD.

It was moved to continue the ANRAD public hearing to a subsequent meeting. Second. Approved 5-0 (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Lukas – yes, MacDonald – yes, Seelig – yes).

**Public Meeting for a Request for Determination of Applicability at 75 Arnold Road**

The public meeting was continued from February 11, 2021. There was no discussion on the RDA.

It was moved to continue the RDA public meeting to a subsequent meeting. Second. Approved 5-0 (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Lukas – yes, MacDonald – yes, Seelig – yes).

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

The public hearing was continued from February 11, 2021. The NOI submission is for a redevelopment 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), DEP File #258-0096. The hearing was continued from February 11, 2021.

Pelham Conservation Commission minutes

February 25, 2021

The Commission reminded hearing attendees that Commissioner Lukas has recused himself from this discussion. The Commission noted that Commissioners Gifford, Gross, MacDonald and Seelig met with the peer reviewers, CEI, at 22 Amherst Road on February 24 to review and discuss the plans with them. Given that CEI has not yet submitted their report to the Commission, it was proposed to extend the hearing to next meeting on March 11 to allow time to review their report. Commissioner Gross asked the applicants if there had been any changes in the plan that the Commission and reviewers need to take account of. Jeff Squire said that no changes had been made and that they are waiting for the peer reviewer comments before making alterations. Judy Eiseman asked if the Planning Board chair and the ZBA chair could have copies of the reviewer comments. Chair MacDonald said that he or Agent Borenstein will forward the comments to the chairs. Agent Borenstein confirmed that the comments will be posted on the Commission's web page. Peter Sarafino asked if it is expected that the consultants will attend the next Commission meeting: Chair MacDonald indicated that that is the expectation.

Chair MacDonald asked the applicants if they agree to continue the hearing to a subsequent meeting. Mr. Sarafino agreed, and asked to get the reviewer comments as soon as they come in. Chair MacDonald says that they will be forwarded to the applicants.

It was moved to continue the public hearing to a subsequent Commission meeting. Second. Approved 4-0-1 (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Lukas – abstain, MacDonald – yes, Seelig – yes).

**Pilot Project in Buffam Brook Community Forest (BBCF)**

Brian Pearson presented a project called Outdoor Adventures in which he proposes to lead walks in the BBCF for his startup company Adventure East. He explained that Kestrel Trust wishes to partner with Outdoor Adventures for hikes and possibly overnight camping in the BBCF. (A problem with the Zoom meeting caused a pause in the proceedings at this point. A new Zoom meeting instance was opened a few minutes later.)

Ms. Eiseman noted that this is a for-profit enterprise, so it might require a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Chair MacDonald asked Mr. Pearson to draft a letter to the Commission that outlines his company's relationship with the Kestrel Trust including a description of the request he is making to the Conservation Commission. Commissioner Seelig requested that the letter include the activities that the project aims to do in the forest. There was discussion of financial support that the project will provide to Kestrel. Chair MacDonald suggested that the letter be written in a form that can be reviewed by other town bodies.

The Commission agreed to keep this item on the agenda for its next meeting. Mr. Pearson noted that he hoped to have a hike this week. Chair MacDonald suggested that there should be no problem with that. Commissioner Lukas said that he would like to discuss this more in the future as the town's conservation areas are being more heavily used than they were in the past.

It was moved to allow Mr. Pearson to take his group on hikes in the Buffam Brook Community Forest. Second. Approved 5-0 (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Lukas – yes, MacDonald – yes, Seelig – yes).

February 25, 2021

**Review BBCF Signs from Kestrel Land Trust**

Agent Borenstein noted that Chris Volonte from Kestrel Trust had been unable to obtain a high resolution US Forest Service (USFS) logo for the main kiosk sign at the BBCF. Chair MacDonald said that he will contact the USFS for that. He said that the final report to the USFS on the BBCF is nearly complete. He said that it still needs some signatures and title insurance documentation. He said that he aims to get it all done soon. Agent Borenstein asked about the second sign on the story of the creation of the forest that was proposed at the February 11 meeting. After some discussion about the second sign it was agreed to table this until the narrative can be completed. Chair MacDonald suggested that Kestrel be asked to draft the narrative.

**Dog Walking Issue in Buffam Falls Conservation Area (BFCA)**

Commissioner Lukas noted that the town has gotten complaints about dogs running free in conservation areas. He said that he had talked with the Chief of Police about complaints about dogs. He also said that he had spoken with a dog owner about the problem. That individual noted that signs about dog walking are already up and that it is unlikely that more signage will not change the behavior of dog walkers. Commissioner Lukas suggested that it might be possible to set off one conservation area where dog walking off leash is permitted with other areas requiring leashed dogs. He suggested that the BFCA might be such a location given its current heavy usage by dog walkers. Commissioner Seelig suggested that restricting the time at which dogs can be off leash such as 10 am to 4 pm might be a solution.

Select Board member Shanabrook noted that some citizens have said that they would like to offer a warrant article about this for Town Meeting. He said that getting better reporting incidents would be a great help to the Select Board so that they would have a clearer idea of the issues. Commissioner Gross suggested that an explanation of the procedure for reporting incidents could be included on signs at conservation areas. There was some discussion of the best person to receive such reports, with the animal control officer being the most likely recipient. Chair MacDonald suggested that the Commission could have a public meeting to discuss a requirement for dog leashes between certain hours at conservation areas. He suggested that the Commission schedule such a public meeting for the April 29 meeting. Select Board member Shanabrook said that he thinks that this timeline sounds appropriate. Commissioner Lukas said that the Commission should move cautiously on this divisive issue. He noted that Zoom meetings make discussion difficult, and he suggested that the Commission should wait until later in the spring when in-person meetings may be possible. Chair MacDonald agreed that the Commission can revisit this issue on April 29.

**Minutes from January 28, 2021 and February 11, 2021**

It was moved to approve the draft minutes from the January 28 & February 11 meetings. Approved 5-0 (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Lukas – yes, MacDonald – yes, Seelig – yes).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.



Respectfully submitted by David Gross