



TOWN OF PELHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Pelham, Massachusetts

Minutes for August 13, 2020

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

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 7:05 pm.

Chair MacDonald took the roll call.

Updates on Enforcement Order at 59 Meetinghouse Road

Commissioner Lukas reported that he had edited the draft order that was approved on July 30 and sent the approved order to June Massey, Pelham Collector. She will forward it to Town Council Katherine Klein at KP Law. Chair MacDonald said that he will check in with Attorney Klein in a couple of weeks to determine the status of the registration of the order on the property title. Agent Borenstein will send a note and a copy of the order to Mark Stinson of the Mass Department of Environmental Protection to let him know that the enforcement order registration is in process.

Updates on Conservation Signage

Agent Borenstein noted that she has ordered 6 signs for the Cook Road waterfall area from Amherst Copy. Production is currently in process. She has communicated with the Lamdins as to the status of the signage. Chair MacDonald said that he met Amy Rusiecki, Assistant Superintendent of Public Works for Amherst, at the Cook Road conservation area. They walked the whole loop trail from the road to review hiker access to the falls area and to agree on locations for signage on the Amherst watershed side of the area. Amherst will install a no trespassing sign at the ad hoc parking area on Amherst Road that has a trail leading to the falls. The Commission plans to install a sign at the trail entrance on Cook Road.

Marked Trees on Meetinghouse Road

Commissioner Seelig said that he had seen trees on Amherst watershed land adjacent to Meetinghouse Road that were recently marked as if they were to be logged. He said that they are large trees on a steep slope and that he is concerned about erosion and road stability if they are cut. Agent Borenstein said that she had not received a cutting plan for this area. Chair MacDonald noted that watershed land is exempt from some cutting regulations. He suggested that we ask the new Amherst Town Forester Beth Wilson to attend a future meeting to discuss the cutting plans with the Commission. Alternately, a site visit could be arranged with her and

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Commission members. Agent Borenstein will contact Ms. Wilson to arrange the meeting attendance and/or site visit, preferably before any tree harvesting occurs.

Minutes from July 30, 2020

It was moved that the Commission accept the draft minutes of June 25. Second. Approved unanimously, 3-0-0. (Gifford – yes, Gross – yes, Seelig – yes, Lukas – abstain, MacDonald – abstain).

Update on Potential ANRAD

Agent Borenstein reported that she had contacted TRC for an update on their likely request for an Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) in the Tower Road area. A TRC representative said that they would be filing for an ANRAD within the next few weeks.

The Commission discussed procedural concerns due to the ongoing state of emergency. The Commission had previously decided that we will not be taking any action on filings until the state of emergency is lifted. When TRC files for an ANRAD, Agent Borenstein will contact Emily Stockman who has agreed to act as outside consultant for the Commission. Ms. Stockman will review the ANRAD filing and submit a proposal for her work. At that point Agent Borenstein will contact TRC to let them know that we will be hiring a consultant and that TRC must cover the cost.

In the interim, the Commission will determine when the hold on review activities due to the state of emergency will end. Agent Borenstein agreed to check on the official language to insure that the Commission is following proper procedures for timing of reviews.

Updates from the Chair

Chair MacDonald said that warrant articles for the Fall Town Meeting need to be submitted by September 19.

He also reported that he had a meeting with representatives from The Kestrel Land Trust on Wednesday, August 5 to review progress at the Pemberton Memorial Forest and the Buffam Brook Town Forest. Chris Volonte from Kestrel said that some of the work at the Pemberton parcel had yet to be completed due to the pandemic. An ad-hoc trail will be blocked off by moving a brush pile on the site. A cable blocking the trail head will be removed and replaced by large rocks. The kiosk, which is still being built, will be installed. Chair MacDonald said that Kestrel has finished trail plans for the Community Forest. There will be a sign for the Community Forest at the trail head between 25 and 31 Boyden Road.

Ms. Volonte also reported on programming that is planned for the Moose Tracks and Buffam Brook conservation areas. There will be locations set up for places for children's workshops. Benches will be constructed at various locations. Temporary interpretive signs (bobcat habitat, Turkey Vulture eggs, two different food webs, etc.) will be installed at relevant locations to inform visitors about the local natural world. These signs will fulfill a portion of the educational aspects of the conservation areas.

Chair MacDonald said that he had requested an MOU from Kestrel requesting permission for very simple trail wetland crossings such as rock steps across a stream. The purpose of the MOU is to allow such minimally impactful construction without the need for a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) filing for each one at town conservation areas.

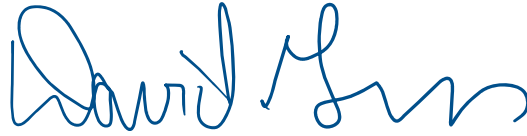
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Meeting on August 28

After discussion, it was agreed that the Commission meeting on August 27 will be cancelled.

It was moved to adjourn at 8:07 pm. Seconded. Approved unanimously 5-0.

Respectfully submitted by David Gross

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Gross", with a stylized, cursive script.