



TOWN OF PELHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Pelham, Massachusetts

Minutes for August 9, 2018

PRESENT: Dana MacDonald, Tilman Lukas, David Gross, Cynthia Weigel

VISITOR: Chris Volonte

Chair MacDonald brought the meeting to order at 7:05 PM

Request from Kestrel to finalize and sign the baseline report for Pemberton CR

There was discussion about the signature page for the Pemberton conservation restriction as described by Chris Volonte of Kestrel Trust. She said that the timing of the notarization was different than the signing date. This was questioned by John Joya, who reviews all conservation restrictions for the state. He was concerned that the date of the vote by the Commission was different than the signing and notarizing date. Chair MacDonald will call Mr. Joya to clarify the Commission's procedures that explain why those events were on different days.

Ms. Volonte also presented the Baseline Documentation Report for the Conservation Restriction on the Pemberton Forest. There was discussion of its contents and of sites for a parking area for the property. She also handed out the revised Public Access Plan for review. The Commission discussed the hunter registration language, which will be stricken from the final access plan. A welcome kiosk near the property entrance will have a note about an online form for hunters and other visitors to complete in order that the Commission can obtain information on the reasons for the visit to the property. A motion that the changes to the Public Access Plan be approved was moved, seconded and unanimously approved. The plan will be posted on the Conservation Commission portion of the Pelham Town website.

Wetland setbacks and trail improvements on the Well-Away Farm trail

Ms. Volonte described to the Commission a plan by Kestrel Trust, in collaboration with the Keyes family, to restructure a trail at the Well-Away Farm property. An issue to be resolved is that the public accesses a trail through the north field adjacent to the parking area. No mown path is maintained through the north and south fields. Kestrel proposes to put a gravel path across the north field and to reroute the south field portion of the trail to the west in the woods. Chair MacDonald noted that the town is considering placing trap rock in the parking area to improve drainage on South Valley road and to reduce infiltration into the small wetland across the street from the parking area. Kestrel has discussed the parking area with the Keyes family, and suggests that it be moved slightly to the north. The commission will take a field trip to Well-Away Farm to review the proposed changes. Invited to join the Commission will be a representative from Kestrel, Rick Adamcek from the Pelham Department of Public Works, and Keyes family members.

There was further discussion about setting up procedures for Conservation Commission members to comment on changes to public access areas prior to a Commission open meeting. Someone from Kestrel will email all members and then anyone one member can suggest that a point should be brought before the Commission at an open meeting.

ATV activity at Butterhill, Amherst watershed, and the Casagrande CR property

The Commission discussed issues at the town's Butterhill property. Signage indicating that hunting is prohibited on the property may need to be refreshed. As the town owns the property, the town is responsible for the funding of this project. The Commission discussed the possibility that Community Preservation funding will be available for this.

Chair MacDonald noted that it has been reported that ATV riders have been riding through the Butterhill property. The riders then continue through Amherst watershed land as well as the Casagrande Conservation Restriction parcel. The Commission discussed the need to place signage that off-road vehicles are not allowed on the Butterhill parcel. If that does not stop ATV use on the property, then the Commission will ask the Pelham police to patrol the property and enforce the rules.

Mosquito spraying on Pelham roads

Chair MacDonald reported that trucks have been seen apparently spraying for mosquitoes on South Valley and Harkness Roads. He noted that there are bylaws in place that restrict insecticide spraying in wetland areas. He was unsure who is doing this. He said that he will contact the Board of Health to determine whether they are doing this spraying.

Update on an oil spill on the Fleury property

Police Chief Thomann, Chair MacDonald and a representative of the Department of Environmental Protection walked the Fleury property in the past month. There was a strong smell of oil near an area at which fire residue was seen. Owner Fleury agreed to have DEP test the soil near the oil spill area.

Update on the sale of properties near the corner of North Valley and Amherst Roads

Commissioner Lukas informed the Commission about the current status of the sale of the trailer park property formerly owned by Thomas Lederle. Some issues about zoning compliance have arisen. There will be a meeting of all board chairs with the Select Board next week to discuss these issues that may complicate a private purchase of the property. The meeting's purpose is to determine what restrictions and regulations are in place for permit approval by various boards. There also may be discussion of a possible purchase of the trailer park by a nonprofit that aims to remove the trailers and install affordable housing on the site.

Commissioner Lukas also reported that the HRD Press property adjacent to the trailer park has come on the market. There has been discussion that the HRD property could be a site for elderly housing. The riparian setting of these two properties will require Conservation Commission review and permitting if either or both projects move forward.

Meeting adjourned at 9:26 PM

Respectfully submitted by David Gross

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Gross", written in a cursive style.