



TOWN OF PELHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Pelham, Massachusetts

Minutes for August 8, 2019

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

Also present: Janice Gifford, Chris Volonte (Kestrel), Judith Eiseman (Planning Board), Tom Kegelmann (Home City Development), Mark Darnold, Peter Serafino

The meeting was brought to order by Chair MacDonald at 7:05 PM.

Review previous meeting minutes

June 13, 2019: Motion to approve, seconded, approved unanimously (Gross abstains).

June 27, 2019: Motion to approve, seconded, approved unanimously (Lukas abstains).

July 11, 2019: Corrections of a typo and description of letters to and from Kestrel Land Trust.
Motion to approve as amended, seconded, approved unanimously (MacDonald abstains).

Discussion of Recommendations for Determination for Kestrel Land Trust

There was discussion of the two Recommendations for Determination (RDAs) for parking areas on Arnold Road (for the Pemberton Memorial Forest) and Boyden Road (for the Buffam Town Forest). It was agreed that the date on the Pemberton RDA should be corrected.

Arnold Road and Boyden Road parking areas

Chair MacDonald reported that DPW Supervisor Adamcek determined that the Arnold Road parking area is appropriate, however, it violates the town bylaw restricting parking within 6 feet of town roads. Chair MacDonald said that the Select Board is working on rescinding the bylaw regarding parking on town roads. He also noted that Supervisor Adamcek said that Dig Safe needs to be engaged before work can commence. It was agreed that the Commission should visit the site with Supervisor Adamcek. Chair MacDonald will set up the meeting.

The RDA approving the Boyden Road parking area for the Buffam Forest has been challenged by an abutter. Additionally, Supervisor Adamcek has raised concerns about the design of the parking area. Commissioner Lukas noted that the Commission has already approved the parking site, but we should resolve any construction issues with Supervisor Adamcek. It was agreed that the Commission should meet on the site with Chris Volonte of the Kestrel Land Trust to review the parking area plans. It was agreed that Supervisor Adamcek should also be present during the site review. Ms. Volonte said that Kestrel agrees that there should be a pause before construction commences. Should there be changes that alter the northern parking area for the Buffam Town Forest, Ms. Volonte said that would necessitate changes to the northern trails section of the forest. She said that plans for trail changes should be completed by the end of the year in order that the trail work can be done next year (due to timing restrictions on the grant that will pay for the work).

Review of proposed senior housing project at 22 Amherst Road

Tom Kegelman, Executive Director of Home City Development, described current plans for the development of the former fish rod factory site at 22 Amherst Road and an adjacent property. The project aims to construct senior housing. An adjacent parcel, the so-called Petersen property at 18-20 Amherst Road, is included in the plans. The proposed development area is sensitive as it abuts Amethyst Brook. Mark Darnold of The Berkshire Design Group described the site and the proposed work to be done there. The current draft plan is to reduce the size of the degraded area at 22 Amherst Rd and 18-20 Amherst Rd. from the present 39,000 sq/ ft. to 36,000 sq. ft. The plan is also to reduce the stormwater discharge from the site. Chair MacDonald noted the Commission's desire to have the engineering design for stormwater to account for projected increased rainfall events over the life of the project, say through 2090.

Mr. Kegelman indicated that the projected closing dates for the purchases of the two properties are within 4-6 weeks. Mr. Darnold indicated that the Commission will be getting the Notice of Intent for the project in December or January if the purchases move forward as expected. After some discussion, the Commission agreed that members and the agent should walk the site with the developer in order to review the project and to attempt to delineate the wetlands boundaries. This will be scheduled for a date late in August or in the Fall at the latest. An RDA will be issued for the determination of the boundaries. There was discussion about the northern boundary of the brook, and the necessity of having an accurate survey of it. The Commission suggests that an approximate boundary location would be sufficient given that no work will be done on that side of Amethyst Brook, but the Commission notes that the Department of Environmental Protection should be consulted to get their agreement on this conclusion.

Stormwater bylaw issues

The chair of the Planning Board, Judith Eiseman, reported that the Planning Board has decided not to bring the Stormwater Bylaw to Fall Town Meeting as they had originally planned. They feel they need more input and that the text of the bylaw should be written more succinctly. The planning board is rewriting the bylaw to make it shorter and simpler to understand. Although there is some dissent about which board should oversee permitting under the stormwater bylaw, the majority of the board agree that review for Village Center projects should be done by the Conservation Commission. That is, the Conservation Commission would be the permitting authority for the stormwater portion of projects covered under the bylaw. After some discussion, the Commission agreed that this plan makes sense.

Ms. Eiseman also noted that the Planning Board is working to produce a guide to its functioning and purview (as it has several new members). She said that she believes it would be helpful to have a handout covering what the various town commissions and boards have as duties and authority. Her motivation is to provide the institutional memory to inform town commissions and boards, along with town residents, which commissions and boards to consult for various aspects of review and permitting. Chair MacDonald said that former commissioner Steve Funderburk wrote a summary such as she described for the Conservation Commission. Chair MacDonald said that he will send a copy of the summary to Ms. Eiseman.

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Review of site visit to 117 Buffam Road

The Commission discussed the site visit to the Wilson property at 117 Buffam Road. It was noted that there is considerable storage of vehicles and materiel on the site. Commissioner Gross said that there was some storage of equipment beside the stone wall at the south end of the property, and that storage is likely within the buffer of the vernal pool downhill from the wall. He also note that a dirt road that circles the property among the vehicles and equipment has a steep section that appears to drain toward Buffam Brook. Agent Borenstein commented that the Commission has requested that Mr. Wilson apply bark mulch to the steep portion of the dirt road in order to slow the flow of water and sediment downslope during heavy rains. Commissioner Gross noted that fuel barrels and fuel carriers on the site were empty and that there were no signs of fluid leakage from the stored vehicles. The Commission concluded that a letter to Mr. Wilson outlining the need for bark mulch application to the steep portion of the dirt road is in order.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted by David Gross

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Gross", is positioned to the right of the typed name.