



TOWN OF PELHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION Pelham, Massachusetts

Minutes for July 11, 2019

Present: Tilman Lukas, Richard Seelig, David Gross

Also present: Chris Volonte (Kestrel Land Trust), Hollie Sutherland, Rick Light, Margaret Light, Alyse Bynum, Lee Halasz, Jo Leslie Hirsch

The meeting was brought to order by Commissioner Lukas at 7:07 PM.

Public Meeting for a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) for a proposed parking area on Boyden Road at the entrance to the Buffam Brook Community Forest (BBFCF) (Map 10 Parcel 16)

Commissioner Lukas outlined the proposed work described in the RDA. He opened the public meeting at 7:08 PM. The Commission described the parking area work that will remove several inches of soil in a 10 ft by 40 ft area adjacent to Boyden Road at the entry point to the BBFCF. Geotextile will be laid down on the excavated area and it will be filled with coarse trap rock gravel. Commissioner Gross added that DPW Chief Adamcek had been consulted about the location and maintenance of the parking area, which will not be plowed or salted in the winter months. Ms. Volonte noted that there had been discussion between herself, Chair MacDonald and the Lights (abutters) about the location of the parking area to mitigate headlight intrusion into the Light's windows. Ms. Volonte said that not many visitors are expected to visit this entrance, and the primary aim for this parking area is to keep visitors' cars off the road and to limit potential damage to the wetland by individuals parking near the vernal pool and walking along paths not designed to minimize impact. She said that a private contractor will be doing the work. In response to a question from Commissioner Seelig she said that the purpose of the geotextile fabric is to facilitate stabilization of the gravel surface. She added that an entranceway kiosk will be placed near the parking area at a future date. There were questions and comments from the visitors:

Is there parking on the other side of the BBFCF and is it connected to the proposed parking area by a trail? Ms. Volonte said that there will be another parking area on the east side of the BBFCF. The two areas aren't yet linked by trails and there is no plan to make a connection. Each parking area will have its own kiosk and also its own loop trail. The public will be encouraged to stay on the trails.

Will the slope of the parking area cause slippage of the gravel? Ms. Volonte responded that the geotextile fabric and coarseness of the trap rock will help to limit any slippage.

A concern is that more traffic on Boyden Road will further degrade the already bad condition of it. Also, there is concern that there will be parking on the road near the trail head. The

Pelham Conservation Commission minutes

July 11, 2019

Commission noted that our aim is to get visitors' cars off of the road. Perhaps having information on the kiosk about Pelham's on-street parking ban would be useful.

There was a concern that school bus travel on Boyden Road will be impeded due to activity at the proposed parking area. The Commission felt that the usage of the proposed parking area will be very low and that congestion leading to impeded traffic will be highly unlikely.

Are there concerns about fluid leaks from cars parked at the proposed area given its proximity to the nearby vernal pool? Commissioner Lukas said that, as with all projects, it is impossible to prepare for all possible scenarios. He stated that the town will respond to a spill as it would at any other town-owned parcel.

How can work be done so close to a vernal pool? The Commission noted that the parking area will be at the edge of the buffer zone, and that the purpose of an RDA is to make a determination if such work will impact the wetland. Given that a pervious surface will be created and there is minimal slope at the site, the Commission concluded that the impact on the vernal pool will be minimal.

What about having signage that says "no parking on street", "children", "pedestrians" or the like? The Commission said that this could be done. Commissioner Gross asked who would put up any such signs. Ms. Volonte responded that the town would need to do that. Commissioner Lukas expressed concern that adding lots of signs on the road will change the rural nature of the road.

Would more funding for road upkeep be possible? Could the area where people are currently parking be made to prevent parking there? The Commission noted that road maintenance is the responsibility of the DPW, and requests for improvements to Boyden Road should be taken up with the Select Board. After some discussion, the idea that some large rocks might be placed on the area where people now park (on the east shoulder of Boyden Road just south of the proposed parking area) in order to discourage on-street parking.

Is there another entry point that could be used? Commissioner Gross noted that Chair MacDonald had studied the other two potential western access points and had determined that the upper Boyden Road parking area would be the best site given accessibility and site issues for the other two potential access points.

Where will the BBCF trail system be advertised? Ms. Volonte said that the only place currently planned would be on Kestrel's website. Commissioner Lukas noted that the Commission has discussed creation of town-wide trail maps that would be available on the town's website, but that little progress has been made to create these.

It was moved that the Commission approve the RDA for creation of a parking area on Boyden Road as a negative 3 recommendation, with the condition that the gravel surface of the new parking area be at the same grade as the present surface, that boulders be placed at the current ad-hoc parking area just down the road, and that all work be done during dry conditions. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

July 11, 2019

Ms. Volonte requested that the Commission provide a letter approving the construction of the parking area since Kestrel holds the Conservation Restriction on the property owned by the town. The Commissioners signed a draft letter giving that approval. Ms. Volonte also provided a draft public access plan for the BBCF for the Commission to consider.

Discussion of the work to install a parking area at the Pemberton Memorial Forest

Commissioner Gross noted that the RDA for the Pemberton Memorial Forest parking area on Arnold Road contains language that spoils from the construction may either be dispersed on site or removed. He said that the Commission's vote to approve the RDA included a stipulation that spoils be removed from the site. Ms. Volonte expressed concern that there was not enough money in the construction budget to truck removed material off site.

It was moved that Conservation Commission funding to cover the extra cost of removing the construction spoils off site be provided. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Ms. Volonte provided a letter from Kestrel approving the work for the parking area as they are the owners of the land and the town holds the Conservation Restriction.

Discussion of the Planning Board meeting about vehicles and trailers stored at 117 Buffam Road

Commissioner Gross reported that he had attended the Planning Board meeting on July 8 at the request of the chair of the Planning Board. He noted that Mr. Bill Wilson, the owner of 117 Buffam Road, was present and described his reasons for storing the vehicles and machinery, which are to allow him to refurbish government surplus equipment. David Waskiewicz, the Zoning Board of Appeals inspector, described his site visit to 117 Buffam Road. There are two vehicles stored near the house site and several trailers, eight of which are registered for road use. The trailers contain generators, pipe, and other assorted equipment. Inspector Waskiewicz said that some batteries are stored on the site at a central location. The Planning Board, after some discussion, requested that the Conservation Commission do a site visit to assess the location of wetlands and buffer zones. Commissioner Gross noted that Planning Board Chair Eiseman had requested in an email that the Planning Board and Zoning Inspector Waskiewicz be invited to join in the site visit.

The Commission discussed next steps, and concluded that a site visit was warranted. It was agreed that the full Commission including Agent Borenstein should be present for the site visit.

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:47 PM. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by David Gross.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Gross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being more prominent than the last name "Gross".