

Weston Conservation Commission (WCC) - Public Meeting Minutes

June 6th, 2023

Approved: June 20th, 2023

Members Participating: Joe Berman (Chair), Rees Tullos, Glenn Butcher, Alison Barlow, Josh Feinblum, Sean Rush (joined at 8:45 pm)

Members Absent: Ellen Freeman Roth

Conservation Staff: Jordan McCarron, Joshua Baker

Notes: Under current state law public bodies may continue holding hybrid and fully remote meetings, without a quorum of the public body physically present, as long as adequate, alternative access is provided. As such, no in-person attendance of members of the public is available but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time including a dial-in option.

Joe Berman, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:30 pm with an opportunity for public comment. Hearing none, the following hearings and meetings were taken up in order.

Presentation: Land's Sake Phase II Site Development Plan

Following a brief review of Phase I, Pam Hess, Executive Director of Land's Sake, provided the Commission with an update on Phase II of Land's Sake's planned infrastructure and programmatic improvements at its main farm site at 40-Acre Field/90 Wellesley Street. The second phase will include the construction of an updated farm stand which will be designed as a net-zero building. It is planned to be a model for and incorporated into the sustainable education that Land's Sake offers. The building will include a 3,600 sq. ft sales area, a small office, CSA distribution, wash station, and a farm stand while being designed to blend into the landscape and aesthetic of the property. The erosion control barriers are in place and ground breaking will commence as soon as possible. Additionally, an equipment barn is planned to be built towards the back of the property. The grand opening of the farm stand is planned 2024.

The Commission inquired about the septic status of the property, with Ms. Hess explaining that the property already has year-round water from the Town and a new septic system already installed, with bathrooms to be installed in the barn and farm stand. Further, the Commission inquired about funding. Ms. Hess explained that the funding for the farm stand is complete; fundraising for the entirety of Phase II is ongoing with \$500,000 remaining to meet the \$6 million goal. The remaining funds will be used to convert the animal barn to its intended use and to get the equipment barn its final components. It was suggested that CPA might be an option for the remaining funding. It was noted that the buildings will depreciate over the life of the lease and return to the Town at the end of the lease or if the lease ends prematurely.

Cont. Notice of Intent: Mass Central Rail Trail, DEP# 337-1468; DCR

Gerald Autler, Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), reviewed the permitting process thus far. The hearing opened on 5/23/23 and was continued to allow the DCR legal team and conservation staff time to agree on an Order of Conditions as well to allow time for the Town's stormwater engineer to review the project for compliance with the Town's stormwater and erosion control bylaw. Mr. Autler relayed that a final Order of Conditions had been agreed upon by the DCR legal team and Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator and Mr. McCarron relayed that the project was exempt from review under the Town's stormwater bylaw.

As a final note, Dan Wells, LEC Environmental, noted the presence of an additional buffer zone cast from a jurisdictional stormwater BMP found on site. However, the additional buffer zone does not impact the project; Mr. McCarron agreed with this assessment.

A motion to close the Notice of Intent hearing for the Mass central Rail Trail Extension, DEP 337-1468, and issue and Order of Conditions was made by Josh Feinblum; seconded by Glenn Butcher. Roll call vote 5-0.

Request for Determination of Applicability: 232 Conant Road, RDA 2023-007; B. Acharya

Bijay Acharya, Owner and Applicant, provided an overview of the project which involves the construction of a 14x18 composite deck over an existing stone patio located behind the house. In addition, Mr. Acharya requested to install a chain-link fence at key areas at the edge of the back lawn and on the side of the house to prevent their children and pets from accessing the wetland areas. Native plants to provide screening were also requested to be planted near the rear of the yard.

The Commission noted that the fence should not inhibit wildlife movement but otherwise stated that the project seemed appropriate for the property.

A motion to issue a Negative 3 Determination of Applicability for 232 Conant Road, DOA 2023-007, was made by Glenn Butcher; seconded by Josh Feinblum. Roll call vote 5-0.

Notice of Intent Application: 169 Ridgeway Lane, DEP# 337-1470; J. DiGregorio

Diane Simonelli, Field Resources, provided an overview of the project. The project includes the construction of a two-car garage with upstairs living space, associated appurtenances, and parking area. A portion of the work will take place within a 200-foot Riverfront Area associated with a perennial stream. Septic approval and stormwater permitting are in-process but the applications have not yet been submitted.

The Commission inquired about the proposed plan, citing that there are no erosion control barriers depicted and that in addition. Additionally, the Commission requested that the project plans be updated to include a chart with total square footage of degraded areas separated by type (driveway, existing patios, proposed structure, etc.) and verification that they meet the Riverfront Area redevelopment performance standards. Finally, the Commission noticed that the septic connection will need trenching and inquired if the process will need stockpiling within the jurisdiction of the Commission. Ms. Simonelli acknowledged the question and agreed to relay it the project engineer. Joe Berman, Chairperson, requested the engineer attend the next meeting.

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator, informed Ms. Simonelli that the Historic Commission would need to approve the demolition of the existing garage and requested that Ms. Simonelli discuss it with the Historic Commission prior to the completion of the hearing with the Conservation Commission. Additionally, Mr. McCarron requested that the Applicant submit applications for septic approval with the Board of Health and a local stormwater permit with the Town's Stormwater Engineer and that the Commission would need to see those permits either in place or in process with no significant issues before the Commission would be able to approve plans for the project.

A motion to continue the Notice of Intent hearing for 169 Ridgeway Road DEP 337-1470, to June 20th, 2023, at 8:45 pm, by request of the Applicant, was made by Josh Feinblum; seconded by Glenn Butcher. Roll call vote 5-0.

Request for Determination of Applicability: 33 Rolling Lane, RDA 2023-008; C. Avery

Christopher Avery, Applicant and Owner, provided an overview of the project. The project includes the removal of several hazardous trees, extension of lawn and relocation/planting of native vegetation. Mr. Avery implied that the project at its core was a beautification of his property.

Jamie O'Connell, Cambridge Water District (CWD), commented that the rhododendron relocation from one side of the stream to the other may impact the stability of the bank and potentially alter the characteristics of the stream. Because of this, the CWD would be more comfortable if a Notice of Intent was filed to ensure the long-term success of that portion of the project. In addition, the CWD requested a more in-depth and thorough plan, as they found the current plan to be lacking in sufficient detail.

Commissioners Alison Barlow and Rees Tulloss offered comments based on their impressions of the project at the site visit, both indicating that the project appeared minor in scope and should be permissible as a Determination of Applicability. It was suggested that the hearing be continued and Mr. Avery, the Weston Conservation Administrator, and Ms. O'Connell convene to construct an acceptable plan for the CWD without fundamentally changing Mr. Avery's plans or need for a Notice of Intent. Mr. Avery indicated his preference for withdrawing his application, and no motion or vote was taken on this matter.

Cont. Notice of Intent: 27 Golden Ball Road, DEP# 337-1469; A. Leblanc

Aidan Schlotman, Stamski & McNary, reviewed plan updates based on Richard Sweeney's (Town Stormwater Engineer) comments. Mr. Sweeney issued a Stormwater Minor Project Permit on 6/1/23 with minor comments that were then addressed by Stamski & McNary and reflected on revised plans.

A motion to close the Notice of Intent hearing for 27 Golden Ball Road, DEP 337-1469, and issue an Order of Conditions was made by Josh Feinblum; seconded by Glenn Butcher. Roll call vote 5-0-1.

The following Administrative Matters were brought up throughout the meeting

Approval of 5/9/2023 Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve the 5/9/2023 Conservation Commission meeting minutes was made by Glenn Butcher; seconded by Josh Feinblum. Roll call vote 5-0.

Approval of 5/23/2023 Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve the 5/23/2023 Conservation Commission meeting minutes was made by Glenn Butcher; seconded by Josh Feinblum. Roll call vote 5-0.

Partial Certificate of Compliance; 2 Legion Rd, DEP 337-1464:

A motion to issue a partial Certificate of Compliance for 2 Legion Road, DEP 337-1464, was made by Glenn Butcher; seconded by Rees Tulloss. Roll call vote 5-0.

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator, provided the following Land management Updates:

- The four-part Invasive Plant Training Series is complete and available for viewing at www.westonmedia.org
- The next Stewardship Saturday will commence June 10th- the project will involve assisting the Weston- Wayland Rotary club with their long-term management of the Sears Field. This will be the final Stewardship Saturday for the season, with the next series tentatively starting again in September.
- Vegetation Control Service (VC) is returning for their fourth year to treat black swallowwort at the Case Estates this June. This will be a minor treatment as previous treatments have overall been a success.

Other Matters:

- The Weston Wetland Bylaw's next step is to draft regulations in preparation for when the Bylaw is ready for public meeting.

- Josh Feinblum gave official notice of his resignation from the Commission was given a sendoff for his appreciated participation and service to the Town.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.