

Weston Conservation Commission (WCC) - Public Meeting Minutes

July 11th, 2023

Approved: July 25th, 2023

Members Participating: Joe Berman (Chair), Ellen Freeman Roth, Rob Mosher, Sean Rush, Glenn Butcher

Members Absent: Alison Barlow, Rees Tulloss

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.

7:30 pm Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Review

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator, provided a basic overview of the Conservation Department's operating budget for Fiscal Year 2024, covering the general breakdown of spending across the Department's activities. Joe Berman, Chair, and Glenn Butcher, Commissioner, suggested that a sub-committee be formed to work on strategic planning and budgeting along with Mr. McCarron and his staff.

7:45 pm Cont. Notice of Intent: 120 Radcliffe Road, DEP 337-1471; S. Meyers

A motion to continue the Notice of Intent hearing for 120 Radcliffe Road, DEP 337-1471, to July 25th, 2023, at 8:45 pm, was made by Ellen Freeman Roth; seconded by Glenn Butcher. Roll call vote 4-0-1.

8:00 pm Cont. Notice of Intent: 169 Ridgeway Road, DEP 337-1470; M. Harkins

Diane Simonelli, Field Resources, Inc., introduced Gigi Munden, Septic Pros, to provide an updated overview of the project and its changes since its initial hearing on 6/6/23. Ms. Munden explained that the catch basins on site would be protected during construction with silt sacks and that a straw wattle would be installed at the toe of the driveway to prevent run-off into the street. Ms. Mendon confirmed that no upgrades to the existing septic system would be required as part of this project.

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator, requested that the site plan be updated to show all erosion control detail. Additionally, Mr. McCarron pointed out that the project still had not been reviewed by the Town's stormwater engineer. Further, Mr. McCarron asked that the applicant/consultants confirm with the Historic Commission that they have approval to demolish the existing one-car garage on site.

A motion to continue the Notice of Intent hearing for 169 Ridgeway Road, DEP 337-1470, to August 8th, 2023, at 7:45 pm, was made by Ellen Freeman Roth; seconded by Glenn Butcher. Roll call vote 5-0.

8:15 pm Notice of Intent: 12 Robin road, DEP 337-1474; K. Zhao

Vito Colona, Connorstone Engineering, provided an overview of the project, which involves the construction of a new single-family house and driveway, landscaping and utilities, as well as the demolition of an existing barn and stable area. The new house will connect to the existing Title V compliant septic system, pending Board of Health approval.

The construction would create 1,100 new square feet of new impervious area within the Buffer Zone and a total of 6,980 square feet of disturbance, both temporary and permanent, within the Buffer Zone during and after construction. The plans include a “Selective Thinning Area” within the Buffer Zone covering approximately 9,240 square feet- approximately 40 canopy trees would be removed from this area.

Members of the Commission commented that the Buffer Zone on site appeared to have good plant diversity and low invasive plant pressure and that a selective thinning of this area could have an adverse impact on the ability of the wetland on site to support wildlife habitat, among other values. Mr. Colona indicated that his client had proposed the selective thinning to provide a buffer for the proposed pool as well as to improve the view from the house.

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator, then read comments from Jamie O’ Connell, Cambridge Water Department, into the record. In summary, the Cambridge Water Department expressed concerns over the septic system which is currently located within a Zone A Surface Water Protection Area and cannot be expanded per Zone A regulations. Ms. O’ Connell also pointed out the entire project is subject to the state’s drinking water regulations under 310 CMR 22.20B(3)(b), and that sewer lines and septic systems are expressly prohibited under those regulations. Additionally, Ms. O’ Connell expressed concern about the Selective Thinning Area and requested additional information, including proposed mitigation, for the clearing. Ms. O’ Connell concluded that the Cambridge Water Department could not support the project in its current form.

Todd Hadden, 21 Robin Road, raised concerns over traffic caused by the construction phase of the project, as well as the extensive tree removal. John Stevenson, 27 Robin Road, shared Mr. Hadden’s concerns and expressed surprise that the lot was being considered for development. Both were informed that they were welcome to review the materials of the project and to attend the next public hearing on the project.

A motion to continue the Notice of Intent hearing for 12 Robin Road, DEP 337-1474, to August 8th, 2023, at 8:00 pm, was made by Glenn Butcher; seconded by Sean Rush. Roll call vote 5-0.

8:30 pm Notice of Intent: 8 French Road, DEP 337-1473; J. Fiske

Mike Di Modica, MJ DiModica Excavation, provided an overview of the project, which involves the removal of the existing failed septic system components as well as several trees for access- the removal of the existing system, site access and tree removal will occur partially within the 25-foot No Disturb Zone. Four shrubs will be planted as mitigation for the removal of the trees and all disturbed areas will be allowed to revegetate naturally. The new septic system will be installed further away from the resource area, with the new leaching field completely out of the buffer zone associated with an on-site Bordering Vegetative Wetland.

There were no substantial comments from either the Commission or the public.

A motion to close the Notice of Intent hearing for 8 French Road, DEP 337-1473, and issue an Order of Conditions subject to the issuance of a septic permit by the Board of Health, was made by Glenn Butcher; seconded by Sean Rush. Roll call vote 4-0-1.

8:45 pm Request for Determination of Applicability: Park Road, DOA 2023-010; Greatland Realty Partners

Tim McIntosh, VHB, provided an overview of the project, which involves general improvements to Park Road between Orchard Avenue and South Avenue including a new sidewalk, raised separate bike lane, re-striping, new traffic lights, and other alignment improvements. The project does not propose any

enlargement of the existing paved right-of-way and will utilize, albeit improve/replace, existing stormwater drainage. The project is waiting on several approvals including an access permit from MassDOT.

Taylor Donovan, VHB, then explained that all work areas are substantially elevated above any resource areas. The project would create a reduction of 2,800 square feet of impervious area within the 25-foot No Disturb Zone to Stony Brook at the intersection of Park Road and South Avenue by removing and planting existing pavement.

Judy Nitsch, 17 Blake Road, inquired whether the bicycle lane would be installed on the east side of Park Road, to which Mr. McIntosh explained that it was proposed for the west side.

A motion to issue a Negative 2 Determination of Applicability for Park Road by Greatland Realty, DOA 2023-010, was made by Glenn Butcher; seconded by Sean Rush. Roll call vote 5-0.

The following administrative matters were discussed throughout the meeting:

Approval of 6/20/23 Conservation Commission meeting minutes:

A motion to approve the 6/20/23 Conservation Commission meeting minutes was made by Glenn Butcher; seconded Joe Berman. Roll call vote 5-0.

Request for Certificate of Compliance; 51 Cedar Road, DEP 337-1434:

A motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 51 Cedar Road, DEP 337-1434, was made by Ellen Freeman Roth; seconded by Sean Rush. Roll call vote 5-0.

Approval: 225 Winter Street Tree Planting within 25-foot No Disturb Zone

The owners of 225 Winter Street have requested to plant over 30 trees to provide a visual and auditory screen from Route I-90. The plantings would occur approximately along the 25-foot No Disturb Zone and is to be a mix of blue spruce, red cedar, white pine and green giant arborvitaes. The Commission requested that no more than 50% of the planted trees be arborvitaes and then authorized Jordan McCarron to issue an administrative approval for the project.

Request for Extension of Order of Conditions; The Rivers School/Nonesuch Pond, DEP 337-159:

A motion to extend the Order of Conditions for Nonesuch Pond/Rivers School, DEP 337-0159, until 7/20/26 was made by Ellen Freeman Roth; seconded by Glenn Butcher. Roll call vote 0-5.

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator, provided the following land management updates:

- Jim Anza has been awarded both the meadow management and land maintenance contracts for FY24
- WFTA has hired a part-time trail maintainer to augment the new “Park Steward” volunteer trail maintainer program
- Susan Erickson was awarded a WEEFC grant to fund the wildflower/pollinator habitat project that is being cooperatively conducted with the Commission at the Case Estates. Ms. Erickson and Jordan McCarron purchased plant stock from Garden in the Woods and Mr. McCarron is growing sweet fern for the project at his home. All other plant stock will be procured through Zoo New England and Arnold Arboretum in the fall.
- The Conservation Staff has finished detailed field assessments and are currently in review to identify priority projects for funding in FY24.

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 pm.