

Weston Conservation Commission (WCC) - Public Meeting Minutes

August 10, 2021

Approved: August 24, 2021

Members Participating: Joseph Berman (Chair), Rees Tullos, Becca Loveys, Ellen Freeman Roth, Cynthia Chapra

Members Absent: Josh Feinblum, Alison Barlow, Becca Loveys (left meeting at 8:00 pm),

Conservation Staff: Sandra Gonneville, Emily Schadler

Notes: Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, which includes an extension of Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, this meeting was held via an online meeting platform (Zoom). No in-person attendance of members of the public was available.

Joe Berman, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. with an opportunity for public comment. Hearing none, the Commission commenced with the following hearings and meetings:

Cont. Request for Notice of Intent, 31 Green Lane, 337-1413, John McGeough

On July 26th the Cambridge Water Department forwarded a comment letter that identified concerns about the design of the proposed new home. In order to address concerns raised by the Cambridge Water Department and the Conservation Commission, the Applicant submitted a revised site development plan and O&M plan both dated 8/5/2021. Mr. Lavoie, the project engineer, provided an overview of the revised plan changes and updates made to the O&M plan. The updated site plan includes a reduction in impervious material in the parking court and reduced impervious material in the walk-out patio. The revised Operation and Maintenance Plan, calls for the use of a cartridge to maintain the pool. The filters shall be removed and replaced or removed and washed by hand outside the 100-foot buffer zone only. Prior to discharging the 8"-10" of pool water for pool winterization at the end of the season, chemicals will be added to the pool to neutralize the chlorine and balance the pH. The revised submission also addressed comments Mr. Sweeney had in regards to the storm water management program.

Several discussions have occurred between the Applicant, Conservation Office and Jamie O'Connell of Cambridge Water Department (CWD) regarding CWD's issues with the project. CWD is concerned that the proposed increase in impervious area within the buffer zone will permanently diminish its ability to serve the interests of the Act. In order to mitigate these concerns, the Applicant has proposed to provide native plantings in the 25-foot NDZ and expanding the naturalized buffer further into the currently proposed lawn area. Vegetation in the buffer zone not only provides important habitat, but also serves to help to provide thermal protection of the resource, uptake of nutrients and pollutants, stormwater interception and uptake for flood prevention. All parties agree that adding more native trees, shrubs, and ground cover will help mitigate the loss of these values from the development. Additionally, the Applicant has proposed the installation of a heated driveway for the project. Given that this project is moving a driveway from outside the buffer zone to inside the buffer zone, the heated driveway would eliminate primary water quality concerns. CWD supports the heated driveway installation.

A motion to issue an Order of Conditions for demolition and construction of a new house at 31 Green Lane, DEP File 337-1413, was made by Cynthia Chapra; seconded by Rebecca Loveys. Roll call vote: 5-0.

Appeal of Community Garden Policies for Gas Grill Use: Marie and Edison Forbes

At the July 27 meeting, the Commission temporarily approved use of a gas grill at the Community Gardens, contingent on maintaining a “Class B” fire extinguisher on site at all times as well as any specific guidance from the Fire Department. Chief David Soar does not have any issue with gas grill use as long as a fire extinguisher is on hand and spare tanks are not stored at the gardens. The Commission requested input from the Community Gardens coordinator Freddie Wiss (who has submitted a written statement to the Conservation Commission) and any other gardeners that wish to comment on this issue for a final discussion at this meeting.

Marie Forbes, Wayne Johnson, and Henry Viles were present at the hearing to discuss this item. Mr. Johnson indicated that based on his discussion with various community garden members, that in general there is support for allowing gas grills at the gardens. The Chair indicated that the Commission does not want the presence of gas grills to be disruptive to the garden environment and suggested that maybe there be a limit to the number of people that can gather. The Chair also indicated that it is not the Commission’s job to regulate what happens at the Community Garden, and that the Commission can only indicate that they do not have an issue with the use of gas grills and let whoever regulates the Community Garden oversee the details.

A motion to indicate to the Community Gardens that the Conservation Commission does not have an objection to the Community Gardens allowing gas grills with the caveat that the Community Gardens must determine how they will regulate grill use was made by Rees Tulloss; seconded by Ellen Freeman Roth. Roll call vote 4-0.

Cont. NOI: 5 Warren Place; (DEP# 337-1411); Sayem Kahn.

The Applicant has filed this Notice of Intent for the construction of an addition to an existing single-family home. A portion of the work falls within the 100-foot Wetland Buffer Zone, 200-foot Riverfront Area and floodplain.

A motion to continue the Notice of Intent hearing for 5 Warren Place, 337-1411, at the request of the applicant to the August 24th hearing at 8:30 pm., was made by Cynthia Chapra; seconded by Ellen Freeman Roth. Roll call vote 5-0.

New Trail Proposal at Highland Forest/Regis College; Weston Forest & Trails Association

Joel Angiolillo of 69 Conant Road and President of Weston Forest and Trails Association presented the project, which seeks to relocate a section of wet trail at Highland Forest/Regis College to higher ground. This project is permitted through an Order of Conditions, DEP File 337-1016, which requires notification to and approval by the Commission. Mr. Angiolillo indicated that they would be moving the trail out of a wetland to higher ground. Nothing larger than a sapling will need to be removed for the proposed trail relocation. The old trail will be blocked off and decommissioned.

A motion to authorize the WFTA to relocate a portion of the trail that is partially on Weston land and partially on Regis College land under the existing OOC (DEP File 337-1016), was made by Ellen Freeman Roth; seconded by Cynthia Chapra. Roll call vote 5-0.

Request to place beehives at Sears Driveway Field; Weston-Wayland Rotary Club

Charles Hamlin was present on behalf the Weston-Wayland Rotary Club to request to place beehives at the Sears Driveway Field as part of their ongoing pollinator habitat ecological restoration program at this field. The two beehives have been donated to the Rotary for installation in the Spring of 2022 would be a great addition to the future pollinator garden. Staff suggest that the Rotary commit to mowing a path around and to the hives to maintain easy access. This field is not directly accessible through Conservation Land trails;

however, it can be easily viewed from the Sears Land driveway. Therefore, a sign notifying the public about the hives and asking visitors to keep their distance as well as some fencing to keep both people and bees safe is suggested. Also, the Rotary plans to use this field as an invasive removal/pollinator demonstration so eventually there may be more public activity. There are four years left to the Rotary's six-year commitment to care for the Sear Driveway. The Rotary agrees to move the beehives out of the field should the Commission need them removed at any point and time.

Motion to allow the placement of two beehives at the Sears Driveway Field by the Rotary as long as they maintain ownership of the beehives, was made by Ellen Freeman Roth; seconded by Cynthia Chapra. Roll call vote 4-0.

The following administrative matters were then addressed in order:

Opportunity for Public Comment

- Barbara Fullerton, resident of 3 Winter Street, brought up concerns regarding the proposed synthetic turf composite that is proposed to be used in the dog walking area at the proposed 40B project on Route 30. She questioned whether the Commission is looking into the environmental implications of this being sited near the edge of the 25' NDZ, indicating that the chemicals in these synthetic materials can wash into wetlands with heavy rains. The Chair informed Ms. Fullerton that the Applicant is not present to respond and that the Commission will address this question when the Applicant for the project comes before the Commission next.

Approval of Con Com minutes: 7/27/2021

A motion to approve the minutes from 7/27/2021 was made by Cynthia Chapra; seconded by Becca Loveys. Roll call vote 4-0-1.

Request for Certificate of Compliance – 105 Newton Street (DEP #337-1299)

This Order of Conditions was issued for the reconfiguration of an existing residential driveway with associated site work and grading. The Agent conducted a site visit with the engineer, landscape architect, and landscape contractor on 8/10/2021. The Agent confirmed all conditions have been met except for the requirement that the applicant install some type of monumentation to demarcate the restoration area. The monumentation installed was not fixed in place as had been previously approved. Alternative methods of monumentation were discussed. Through discussions with Kevin O'Leary, the Applicant has committed to improving the monumentation at the restoration area, most likely by use of permanent survey stakes/markers. The property owner should be notified of what is required for the monumentation. A motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 105 Newton Street, DEP file 337-1299, was made by Rees Tulloss; seconded by Cynthia Chapra. Roll call vote 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.