

Conservation Commission Draft Meeting Minutes July 12, 2022 6:30 PM Town Hall

The Meeting was called to order at 6:35pm by Ms. Mary Ann Hill, Chair

Present: Mary Ann Hill, Ann Ries, Paul Melanson, Shawn Hanson, Cathy Golas, Karen Ayers arrives 6:45pm- not a voting member

Also Present: Mark Sikorski, Building Inspector; Brianna O'Brien, Minute Taker/ Conservation Coordinator

39 Old Stage Rd: Sophia Zlatin, property owner, was present. It came to Mr. Sikorski's attention that there was building going on at this property, he took a site visit with Mary Ann the first week of July. That area has protected waterways so there are specific setbacks and regulations.

Ms. Zlatin, Property Owner, explained that the platform was inspired by those in the White Mountains, specifically at Mt. Guyot. It is great for bird watching, and star gazing. It is pile driven, there is no cement and there were no trees taken down, it is inspired by leave no trace guidelines. This spot was chosen carefully.

Ms. Hill explained that the property is on the Taylor River and any work in the buffer of the river requires a permit from DES. There is also a trail cut into the soil down to the stream where the stream enters the river which creates a large risk for erosion. This is a violation in and of itself. Part of the work of the Commission is to educate the public because many don't know. The platform that was constructed is 20x20', this is likely restricted

Ms. Zlatin stated that she did not cut into the ground to make the trails it was from use of the ATVs.

Mr. Hanson stated that the Town would not issue a permit because it would require a permit from the state first.

Mr. Sikorski stated that David (the gentleman who facilitated the site visit) was given literature about the needs for state permits.

Ms. Golas asked if the literature explains the reason for these things. It was confirmed that it does.

Mr. Sikorski mentioned that the goal is to keep the bank in the best shape as possible, it is very vulnerable. He also stated concerns about the wall (picture was shown) it looks to be about 20 ft tall. It is causing essentially the same damage as the platform.

Ms. Hill explains that the Commission will send a report to DES outlining their objections. There is also an option for the property owners to file an after-the-fact Standard Dredge and Fill.

Ms. Zlatin asked what the permit was that she filled out. It was the building permit application

Mr. Sikorski explained that to be granted the building permit, the homeowner would need the permit from DES and relief from the ZBA to several ordinances.

Mr. Hanson explained the DES complaint report process. Ms. Ayers added to that and asked if there was a cease and desist issued.

Mr. Sikorski answered that there isn't but that it is well understood nothing should be done at this point. It was mentioned that Eben Lewis with DES is very helpful, he can guide this process. He added that motor vehicles are also prohibited in the wetland buffer.

Ms. Zlatin asked about the use of motor vehicles at Hurd Farm. It is explained that those uses are pre-existing before the regulations were enacted.

Ms. Ayers emphasized that new homeowners must be educated about the wetland regulations. Mr. Sikorski explained that new homeowners can be provided this information when they register their vehicle for the first time at the Town Hall. It is agreed upon that education is absolutely needed; most people do not know.

Mr. Hanson stated that a letter should still be sent to the family at 39 Old Stage Rd. Ms. O'Brien will re-format the violation letter template for this issue and send it to Mr. Sikorski to send to the family.

It was discussed if emailing newsletters or education would be effective.

Updated land use guide: The Hampton Falls Land Use Guide from 2009 was reviewed. It was discussed if this could be used as the education piece for wetland regulations. Ms. O'Brien has a draft in progress. It uses the same information but just updates it to reflect current regulations. Theresa Walker is the contact from RPC that may have a digital, editable copy of this file

Marsh Lane: The Interns have been working hard. They have cleared the trails. They are working on removing invasives and they can't pull anymore until it rains enough for them to be able to burn the existing pile. Ms. Hill would still like to move the dog sign to make it a hindrance for ATV and hopefully deter that activity.

The Interns cleared the invasives along the right of way and Ms. Hill would like to move forward with putting woodchips down. Mr. Hanson does not think that putting the wood chips down is as simple as it sounds and that the Commission would need a plan to implement that, machinery will likely be required. Ms. Hill believes the Interns can do it. Mr. Hanson asked if there was an electronic copy of the survey that Tocky did for this area? Ms. Hill is not comfortable about where the property line is to put wood chips down. Ms. Hill has a hard copy of the plan for the right of way.

Raspberry Farm: RCCD applied foliar spray last week. Ms. Hill and the Interns will continue to cut Autumn Olive to ready it for stump treatment in two weeks, the Autumn Olive was cut but was so caught in Bittersweet that it didn't fall down. They will continue to work on removing invasives.

Ms. Ries asked about the follow up for the car show that was discussed last month. Ms. Hill explained that the easement prohibits motor vehicles so she will reach out to Mr. Sabatini and let him know that he cannot pursue that location.

Ms. Golas followed up about the greenfly head traps- the Scouts disbanded but someone put the traps out. She will do more research as to who put them out. She would like to reach out to WHS about getting volunteers to do it. Ms. Ayers mentioned a company that they had looked at hiring to do it before, they were always an option but the Commission chose to give their money to the Scouts instead, but if they are disbanded it might be appropriate to hire that company now.

Mitigation project: The Brady Property is still an ideal option. Someone will need to reach out to the Brady Family. Mr. Hanson will do that.

Raspberry Farm: Mr. Hanson asked if it would be hayed soon. Ms. Hill said it was done today. It was asked why it was done so late. It was discussed that there are Bobolinks there, but that Steve's contract allows him to mow whenever he would like. It is his decision; the Commission did not put parameters around when he could mow because of wildlife. If that is something the Commission wishes to prioritize, they should consider amending the application when it expires.

Rail Trail: Ms. Ries reported back from the Rail Trail meeting she attended. The project is being done in three phases- Hampton to Portsmouth should be done in the next year or so, Seabrook shortly after, the Hampton Falls and marsh section is 10 years down the line. Hampton Falls is not expected to have a large trailhead. It will be up to the town what they want for their trail head. There was a question of what parking would look like. Another question was if there was interest in diverting the trail away from the marsh along Route 1 but the general consensus is that Route 1 is not a great alternative. The Depot Rd boat landing parking area has to be resolved before the rail trail can be implemented. This process started in 2008. The National Historical society wants to preserve the railroad abutments because of the construction style. The plan also needs to include the elevation of the trail to account for sea level rise.

The Commission received two volunteer applications- Louise Vance (Weezie) and Beverly Turner. Next steps should be to invite them to the next meeting.

Financial Reports:

1. CC Fund Balance: They are still not correct but as of the end of the May it was \$160,900.16

2. Budget Balance: This is also not correct because several bills were paid but they do not show up. The total that they have is \$9,549 but it should be \$9,200 and something, it will get corrected.

3. Conservation Land Capital Reserve Fund beg. Bal. \$45,148.67 Current Balance ~ \$92,000.

Minutes from June 14, 2022- Minutes were not sent out. They will be voted on next month.

Mr. Hanson Moves to Adjourn at 7:49pm, Ms. Golas Seconds, all in favor.