

TOWN OF AMHERST
Conservation Commission

April 13, 2022

APPROVED

In attendance: Rob Clemens – Chair, John Harvey (remote), Jared Hardner, Lee Gilman, Rich Hart, Bill Widmer, Peter Lyon – BOS Ex-Officio, Christian Littlefield (Alternate), and Steve Lutz (Alternate).

Staff present: Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote).

Chairman Rob Clemens called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

1. Chair Comments

Rob Clemens stated that Mike Cohen has stepped down from the Commission, due to other work commitments. Steve Lutz was appointed by the Board of Selectmen on Monday night.

Christian Littlefield sat for Frank Montesanto.

2. Minutes: March 23, 2022

Bill Widmer moved to approve the meeting minutes of March 23, 2022, as presented. Lee Gilman seconded.

Voting: 5-0-1 motion carried (J. Hardner abstaining).

3. Treasurer's Report

Bill Widmer noted that the Town's report shows that the Commission's current budget has been overrun, however he believes there is actually a balance of approximately \$9,700. He recently met with the Finance Director and believes prior issues regarding the Commission's budgets are being worked through. \$325,000 should shortly be added into the Conservation Account.

Jared Hardner noted that he has recently spent time looking at how best to create an entrance into Buck Meadow from Stearns Road. The proposal is to place a split rail fence, allowing for two cars to park and a kiosk. This split rail fence will match adjacent fences. An existing swinging gate will need to be rebuilt to be made functional.

Christian Littlefield noted that there are some fences that need to be fixed at Bragdon Farm as well.

Jared Hardner moved to expend up to \$1,500 from the Water Crossing and Maintenance line to fix the split rail fence at Bragdon Farm, and install a split rail fence and rebuild the swinging gate at Buck Meadow. Bill Widmer seconded.

Discussion:

Acting DPW Director Eric Slosek noted that there is an insurance claim in for replacement of the fence. He will send along details from the quote for this item.

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In response to a question from Rob Clemens regarding the area at Buck Meadow, Christian Littlefield explained that there is an existing gate that needs to be replaced. No additional improvements to the parking area are needed.

Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.

Jared Hardner moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, as presented. Lee Gilman seconded.

Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.

4. Planning & Permitting

a. DPW Culvert Replacement Projects: Thornton Ferry 1 and Mont Vernon Rds. – Hoyle Tanner Assoc.

Eric Slosek explained that the DPW is planning to replace the bridge along Mont Vernon Road over Caesar's Brook. Joe Ripley, Hoyle Tanner, explained that he will present more regarding the Thornton Ferry I bridge later this summer as the project progresses. Regarding the Mont Vernon Road bridge, the area currently consists of 26' span by 4' rise corrugated metal pipe arch culverts. The proposal is for a 24' clear span bridge with two lanes of traffic, each 22' wide. The current crossing is on the NHDOT Municipal Red List with a rating of "Serious Condition." This crosses an NHDES designated tier 3 stream. As this is a State Aid bridge funded project, the State will fund 80% of the project and the Town will match 20%. In order to qualify for the State Aid funding, the new bridge must have a 75-year design service life. This will be a concrete arch with concrete wing walls.

The new span bridge will meet the NHDES wetland rules for increasing the hydraulic opening, having an open bottom structure, having mostly temporary impacts to the streambed, creating/restoring the streambed and streambank, conveying the 50-year and 100-year storm events, and not being a barrier to sediment or aquatic organism passage. During creation of this bridge, traffic will be managed with a road closure and a 4.75-mile detour.

The Environmental Resources Review of the site has shown no federal or State listed species of concern, and no invasive species. A Cultural Resources Review found that the existing bridge is a common post-1945 concrete and steel bridge that lacks historic significance. No historic or archaeological properties will be affected by this construction. The proposed erosion and sediment controls will meet State and federal requirements. An NHDES Standard Dredge and Fill Wetland Permit and US Army Corps of Engineers General Permit are required. No other NHDES permits are required for this project.

In terms of wildlife considerations, erosion control during construction will be wildlife friendly. Rip rap placed in the stream will be buried with native excavated materials. A natural stream bottom will be created and there will be space provided on each side of the new bridge opening for wildlife to cross under the road above the waterline. Aquatic organism passage is enhanced with a wider opening.

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88 The proposed wetland and buffer impacts from this project are approximately 1,300 s.f. These
89 are mainly being kept to temporary impacts from construction.
90

91 A temporary easement will be needed on the Roland Frasier Memorial Land for construction
92 access. This easement was given to the Town in 1979 for recreation purposes, 15' on either side
93 of the channel of Caesar's Brook. The ACC is the grantee of the easement. All of the impacts to
94 this area will be temporary. The proposal includes the removal of four trees and brush clearing
95 within the Town right of way. The disturbance area will be loamed and seeded post-construction.
96

97 The intention is to put the plan out to bid in January 2023, with construction beginning in
98 Spring/Summer 2023.
99

100 In response to a question from Bill Widmer, Joe Ripley stated that a general contract window for
101 this type of project is 120 days. This can be worked on with the Town to shorten, however, this
102 could lead to larger incurred costs.
103

104 Jared Hardner noted that the ACC was unaware the Roland Frasier Memorial easement
105 mentioned exists. He asked that information on the easement and the proposed temporary access
106 easement be submitted to the Commission.
107

108 In response to a question from Rob Clemens regarding including a wildlife shelf, Kim Peace,
109 senior environmental coordinator for Hoyle Tanner, explained that the existing slope is 4:1.
110 Sloped openings are allowed from DES, and this will allow for a lot of room for wildlife. She is
111 willing to look into a wildlife shelf option for this project.
112

113 In response to a question from Rob Clemens regarding species found on site, Kim Pease stated
114 that there are no statutory requirements to complete additional surveys of the site, as no federal
115 or State listed species were found on site.
116

117 In response to a question from Rob Clemens regarding how this bridge will be constructed with
118 floods associated with climate change in mind, Joe Ripley stated that these types of bridges must
119 accommodate the 50-year flood with 1' clearance and the 100-year flood with 11" clearance.
120 This bridge must be built to last for 75 years but will likely last much longer than that.
121

122 Will Ludt noted that a timber frame bridge was requested from the contractor for the recently
123 constructed Mack Hill Road bridge. This was agreed upon. Joe Ripley stated that he was the
124 design engineer for that project. The Mack Hill Road bridge was concrete, stained to look like
125 wood. Due to the fact the NHDOT wants a 75-year life bridge, it will not support a timber bridge
126 as it will not last that long. The existing headwalls will be written into the contract to be
127 maintained by the Town if it so chooses.
128

129 There was no public comment at this time.
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b. CUP Permit Application, 17 Thornton Ferry Road I (Lot 5-6) – Sam Foise, Meridian Land Services

Sam Foise, Meridian Land Services, explained that the lot is roughly 7 acres. It is located in the Rural/Residential Zone, along with three overlay zones: the Wetland and Watershed Conservation District, Aquifer Conservation and Wellhead Protection District, and the Flood Plain Protection District. The goal of this project is to construct a pool and patio in the rear of the property. This property was built in 1870. This installation is proposed to be located within the 100' wetland buffer. This currently exists as manicured lawn and not native vegetated buffer. The proposed impacts are approximately 2,100 s.f. To mitigate for these impacts, a stormwater treatment system is proposed to collect 100% of the proposed area. The house will have gutters and roof drains to the infiltration basin. A stormwater permit and waiver to water quality on site are also being sought. It is difficult to manipulate the existing grades to flow toward the floodway on this site. If the floodway is impacted, a larger permitting process is needed. The intent is to stay out of the floodplain and mitigate for the new impervious area. A pipe and stone infiltration system will treat for 90% total suspended solids, 60% nitrogen, and 65% phosphorus for the contributing impervious area. The existing impervious area does not have any removal. There is likely no threat to threatened/endangered species on site, but he is waiting for the final report on this.

In response to a question from Rob Clemens regarding the proposed stormwater treatment process, Sam Foise stated that the waters will flow toward the system either via the drains or sheet flow. The underground system will then create the necessary volume and infiltrate it into the ground. There is no treatment material within the infiltration gallery.

In response to a question from Rob Clemens regarding the water and chemicals within the pool, Sam Foise stated that the berm is proposed downhill from the pool. Overflow from the pool will go into the discharge basin and will not have an impact on the adjacent wetland system.

Rob Clemens expressed concern regarding chemicals used and chemicals stored for the pool. He stated that it seems unclear that there will be no impact to the wetlands from these items.

The Commission agreed to compile comments on this item and send them to the Planning Board.

TOPICS

5. Amherst Town Clean Up Day Plans

Bill Widmer stated that there are blue bags and gloves available at Moulton's Market, the Homestead Market, and the Library for pickup. He and Kristan Patenaude will be at the two drop off sites on Clean Up Day from 9am – 1pm, at the Stearns Road Fire Station and the Town Green. He noted that Kristan Patenaude recently went to meet with the Souhegan High School Environmental Club to drum up support from the high school students. Kristan Patenaude mentioned that the meeting went well and that the group plans to host a table for Clean Up Day

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sign ups at school. The group is also very interested in helping out the Commission in other ways in the future.

Bill Widmer explained that there is to be a Town Rabies Clinic hosted at the Stearns Road Fire Station on April 23rd as well. He contacted the Town Clerk in hopes of having these two events hosted cooperatively, but was informed that, due to safety issues, this would not be possible. He was asked to make it clear that bag drop offs will not be allowed at the Stearns Road Fire Station site until 12pm on the 23rd. The Commission discussed if there are alternate locations for the dumpster for Clean Up Day to make the site more easily accessible for both events. Eric Slosek stated that he will reach out to Fire Chief Conolly regarding this item.

6. Grater Woods Overlook – Clearing and Panorama Display Repair

Rob Clemens explained that there was a request regarding the poor condition of the panorama at Grater Woods. It was noted that the panorama may be located on Merrimack's land. Rob Clemens stated that he would reach out to the Merrimack Conservation Commission. Rob Clemens explained that there are some trees located in the area that are reported to be blocking the view. Lee Gilman stated that he will reach out to the landowner whose land the trees are on regarding this item.

7. Trail Head Parking Area Improvements

Christian Littlefield stated that a split rail fence that matches the neighboring properties will be installed at Buck Meadow, after speaking with the abutters. Some of the backstops around Buck Meadow have begun to be removed. Some of the fences will be fixed at Bragdon Farm. He explained that the parking area at Spring Road/Pond Parish will need to have items updated. The Boston Post Road canoe port sign does not show a picture of a canoe. Rob Clemens stated that he has an extra canoe sign that can be installed there.

8. Other Business

Bill Widmer stated that he is reviewing the location at Bragdon for installation of two new elm trees.

Jared Hardner noted that there is a large gravel dump on the Bicentennial Trail, off Blueberry Hill Road. The Commission agreed to ask around about this item.

Rich Hart stated that three workshop sessions were held at Lindabury Orchard. A number of trees were pruned, and these sessions were fairly successful.

The Commission discussed its participation in the July 4th events this year. Rich Hart agreed to help with this item.

Lee Gilman stated that he received proposals for vegetation management options for new areas, Bertha Rogers, and Luby Lot, in Town and to improve items at Lindabury Orchard. These areas need forestry mowing to start. The Commission can review these proposals in greater detail at its next meeting.

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Rob Clemens stated that he received information from Doug Brodeur regarding a site walk on the Bon Terrain property of the proposed warehouse location. The Commission will need to decide when it would like to do this. He asked that the Commission take a good look at this proposal for future discussions.

Rob Clemens moved to enter Non-Public Session, pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II (1) to review potential property acquisitions at 8:51pm. Bill Widmer seconded. Voting: Bill Widmer – aye; Rob Clemens – aye; John Harvey – aye; Christian Littlefield – aye; Lee Gilman – aye; Rich Hart – aye; and Jared Hardner – aye; 7-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

**7. Non- Public Session (pursuant to NH RSA 91-A:3 II (1))
- Review of potential property acquisitions.**

Bill Widmer moved to exit Non-Public Session at 9:20pm. Christian Littlefield seconded.

Voting: Bill Widmer – aye; Rob Clemens – aye; John Harvey – aye; Christian Littlefield – aye; Lee Gilman – aye; Rich Hart – aye; and Jared Hardner – aye; 7-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

No actions were taken, no motions were made during Non-Public Session.

Bill Widmer moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:23pm. Jared Hardner seconded.

Voting: Bill Widmer – aye; Rob Clemens – aye; John Harvey – aye; Christian Littlefield – aye; Lee Gilman – aye; Rich Hart – aye; and Jared Hardner – aye; 7-0-0 motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*

Minutes approved: July 13, 2022