

TOWN OF AMHERST  
Conservation Commission

May 11, 2022

**APPROVED**

In attendance: Rob Clemens – Chair, Jared Hardner, Lee Gilman, Rich Hart, Bill Widmer, and Steve Lutz (Alternate).

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

Chairman Rob Clemens called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

**ADMINISTRATIVE:**

**1. Chair Comments**

Rob Clemens thanked Bill Widmer and Kristan Patenaude for their work during Town Wide Clean Up Day. He also thanked Jared Hardner, Frank Montesanto, and Christian Littlefield for their work on the new entrance way access into Buck Meadow from Stearns Road.

**2. Minutes: April 13, 2022**

This item was tabled to the next meeting.

**3. Treasurer's Report**

Bill Widmer stated that the Town, under the new Finance Director, has been researching a number of problems in the Commission's budget and fixing them. There have been tremendous improvements. The Commission has spent approximately \$12,800 of its budget and has approximately \$4,000 left to spend this year. There are still a couple of items yet to be expended for building expenses, which should show up on next month's report. The changes to the budget included approximately \$325,000 added into the Land Account. There are still four LUCT additions that need to be made, which should bring the Land Account to approximately \$889,000. There was also approximately \$15,000 added to the Gift Account from recent donations.

Rob Clemens noted that Frank Montesanto will be receiving a lumber estimate from Currier Lumber for items in need of repair at Peabody Mill Environmental Center.

*Steve Lutz sat for Frank Montesanto.*

**Bill Widmer moved to expend up to \$1,500 on additional lumber supplies from the Water Crossing and Maintenance budget line. Jared Hardner seconded.**

**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**

Steve Lutz stated that the Planning Board recently heard a conceptual design for an 18-unit subdivision on Brook Road. There was concern on the Board regarding the applicant being able to meet the Planned Residential Development (PRD) requirements, while planning to sell off a

May 11, 2022

**APPROVED**

large conservation lot as part of the proposal. It was made clear to the applicant that the plan should be presented to the Conservation Commission. It was also noted that all impact studies will likely be required of the applicant.

Steve Lutz stated that the Planning Board also heard an application from a property on Thornton Ferry Road I looking to install a pool/patio. Comments from the Conservation Commission regarding concern with chemicals from the pool leaking into the nearby wetlands were mentioned by the Board. The applicant noted that the pool will sit idle for two weeks before being drained each year. The pool will also include a change of media, so there is no concern regarding backwash. There was no discussion regarding the Commission's concern with pool overflow. The Planning Board asked the applicant to come back after reconsideration of the project's size and scale. The Planning Board also made comments suggesting the applicant consider using saltwater in the pool instead. This item was continued to May 18, 2022.

Steve Lutz stated that the Planning Board also heard from the Clearview applicant, regarding the proposed 43-unit subdivision. The applicant requested two votes from the Board, regarding a potential requirement for a community water system, and pretreatment septic systems. The Board voted to allow the applicant to pursue individual wells, as long as they receive the proper quality and quantity treatments required. Bill Stoughton submitted a particular list of chemicals to consider. The consideration for pretreatment septic systems was tabled due to inconsistencies made by a third-party consultant.

Steve Lutz explained that the Planning Board will next hear the continued pool/patio application, a regional impact to 10 Clark Island, a conceptual design for a 6-lot subdivision on Cricket Corner, and a Master Plan update. There is also a ZBA hearing on May 17, 2022, regarding a proposed warehouse on Bon Terrain Drive.

**a. CUP application for 10 Clark Island Road (Lot 8-107-1) – Taylor Hennas, Meridian Land Services**

Taylor Hennas, Meridian Land Services, addressed the Board.

In response to a question from Bill Widmer regarding the State's permitting approval process, Jared Hardner explained that DES' process is typically more rigorous than the Town's. DES deals with the shoreland side of permitting, while the Town deals with the wetland permitting process.

Taylor Hennas stated that this item will be heard by the Planning Board next Wednesday evening. The parcel sits within the 250' Shoreland zone of Baboosic Lake and within the Wetland and Watershed Conservation District. Most of the existing structure sits within the 100' wetland buffer of the Baboosic Lake Conservation District. This is a preexisting, nonconforming lot of record. In 2009, a CUP was granted for this property to allow for the installation of the existing single-family home, pretreatment system, and other parcel improvements. The existing impervious area is 16.5%. There are existing stormwater management techniques on the site,

May 11, 2022

**APPROVED**

such as the pervious driveway installed in 2009 to minimize runoff and enhance stormwater storage and infiltration.

Taylor Hennas explained that the proposal is to construct a 157 s.f. addition onto the preexisting, nonconforming home. This proposal will not increase the bedroom count for the property. It will increase the amount of impervious area of the site to 16.9%. The existing pretreatment septic system installed in 2009 will remain in use. This was voluntarily installed by the homeowners outside of the wetland buffer to help with treatment of effluent. Per DES regulations, remaining under the 20% impervious threshold means that stormwater management techniques are not required for this site. However, the applicant is proposing to install two additional drip edges along the new addition. The footprint of the addition will be placed on existing areas of disturbance of the lot. No undisturbed areas of the lot will be permanently altered. Proposed permanent impact areas include 127 s.f., and temporary impact areas include 2,293 s.f. in order to access the construction areas. 1,945 s.f. of the approximately 2,300 s.f. of impacts are proposed to be located within the 100' wetland buffer. The closest encroaching corner of the addition structure to the Lake will remain at 85'.

Taylor Hennas explained that, prior to construction, the area will be bounded with double erosion controls, using silt socks and silt fences. Using Fish & Game's BMPs, there will be no plastic used in this control to allow for wildlife species movement. No vegetation will be removed throughout the project and all woodland areas will remain unaltered. There will be no work done within the 50' DES buffer to the lakefront. All of the work will follow the erosion control notes on the plan set. The erosion controls will be removed once the project is complete, and the area is stabilized. There were certain species of interest identified by NHB to be potentially located on this site, but based on the scope of this project, it was determined that there would be no negative impact. The DES Shoreland Permit was submitted and approved on April 14, 2022.

In response to a question from Jared Hardner, Taylor Hennas explained that the CUP was triggered due to work proposed within the 100' buffer of Baboosic Lake.

In response to a question from Jared Hardner, Taylor Hennas explained that the net increase to impervious surface area from this project is 127 s.f. This is an increase from 16.5% to 16.9%. There is some impervious surface already located within the area of work proposed. This amount is below the threshold to trigger review by the State.

Jared Hardner stated that Baboosic Lake is an impaired water body. Every year several similar proposals are received from residents of the Lake, which are each moderate and reasonable when viewed individually. However, when viewed cumulatively, these projects could have an impact to the already impaired water body. While the Commission has no authority on this proposal, it will pass its comments to the Planning Board. He suggested that the applicant include something else in the proposal to generate a net benefit to the water quality of the area.

May 11, 2022

**APPROVED**

Taylor Hennas stated that the applicant is already proposing two additional drip edges. The existing driveway is a pervious surface. The drip edges will be sized for a 2-year storm event, based on the impervious area to be added to the site.

Jared Hardner asked if the net effect of these drip edges will be neutral or a benefit. Taylor Hennas stated that this will be a neutral effect. The applicant voluntarily added the existing pretreatment system to improve water quality on the site in 2009. There is vegetation and a natural woodland within the 50' buffer, which helps with shoreline stabilization and runoff. Many other homes in the area do not necessarily have this.

Jared Hardner suggested that, before presenting this to the Planning Board, the applicant consider some additional ways to manage stormwater and nutrient loading to the Lake from this proposal. The Town is trying to maintain consistency for everyone on the Lake and try to move it away from being an impaired water body. This could come in the form of additional buffering or additional vegetation to the shoreline. Small items such as these could be considered by the applicant to help toward a net benefit to the Lake, while also allowing similar items to be considered for future applicants.

Taylor Hennas stated that the applicant could consider increasing the volume of the proposed drip edges. A perc test showed this area to perc at less than 6 minutes/inch.

In response to a question from Rich Hart regarding the specific calculations for stormwater running into the Lake from this site, Taylor Hennas stated that there is no specific calculation for this. The pervious driveway is 1,500 s.f. It takes 144 minutes for total recharge of the driveway itself. The driveway can recharge the groundwater 4,353 gallons, ten-times per day.

Rich Hart suggested the applicant consider rock gardens to accept the stormwater from the roof and other impervious surfaces.

Lee Gilman asked about the exposed bedrock within the 50' waterfront buffer. He asked about the vegetation in this area. Taylor Hennas stated that there are mostly mature trees within this area. Lee Gilman suggested some additional vegetation in the buffer to help filter the runoff. It was noted that there are some low-lying bushes along the shoreline already.

In response to a question from Rob Clemens, the applicant noted that the structure was newly built in 2009 and has an onsite septic system, instead of being hooked into the Baboosic Lake community septic system. There are no stormwater management features on the property, aside from the pervious driveway. There are no drip edges along the existing house. Rob Clemens suggested that the applicant consider installing drip edges along the rest of the house.

Jared Hardner noted that the applicant does not need to come back before the Commission, but that the Commission will pass along its comments and suggestions to the Planning Board.

## **TOPICS**

May 11, 2022

**APPROVED**

Andrew Strauss presented to the Commission an idea for his senior project. He explained that he would like to build a bench along the Caesar's Brook trail, as part of his project on Forest Bathing. He explained that Forest Bathing began as an idea in Japan in 1982. It involves a slow and focused walk, with the person being present in the moment. Having one's senses stimulated by the forest will allow for daily stressors to fade. The area of Caesar's Brook would be a good place to install a Forest Bathing exercise for the community. His proposal is to create a "sit spot" along the trail to allow people to be one with the environment and give gratitude for the moment. His proposal is to locate a bench along the brook, along with an infographic about Forest Bathing, and a place for people to record how they feel before and after the experience.

In response to a question from Bill Widmer, Andrew Strauss explained that the bench has already been built and is quite heavy, approximately 200lbs. The bench is made of pressure-treated wood, which will then be sanded and coated. It should last for a long time. He is also considering planting some evergreens around the bench to attract birds.

Wendy Rannenberg explained that she sits on Andrew Strauss' senior project panel. In order to pass, the bench only needs to be placed along with an infographic. Additional plantings are not required for the project. She would like a member of the Commission to walk along the trail to help identify a good location to place the bench. The project needs to be finished this week.

Jared Hardner stated that Vick Bennison, who passed away last year, was instrumental in the forming of the Caesar's Brook trail system. The Commission owes him a bench placed in a very specific location along the trail, and this could be a great opportunity for that. All benches have something under them, but he would recommend finding flat rocks along the trail instead of concrete blocks.

The Commission discussed the possibility of including a QR code for Forest Bathing on the infographic that linked to the Commission's webpage. The group discussed that it might prefer a small write up as part of the infographic instead. Jared Hardner suggested that the infographic be printed on PVC using Speed Pro.

Rob Clemens noted that motorized vehicles should not be used to bring the bench to the site.

**Rob Clemens moved to approve the proposed concept by Andrew Strauss, with the understanding that a specific location will be determined. Bill Widmer seconded. Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.**

##### **5. Invasive Projects Cost Proposals**

There are two VCS proposals for the Lindabury Orchard property, the Luby Lot and the Bertha Rogers property. Bill Widmer stated that he would like to specify that all treatments are completed by September 1, 2022, at the latest. Lee Gilman stated that some of the treatments involve mowing and would be completed once the ground is hard. Then the foliar treatments would be done the following year. Bill Widmer stated that he doubts that enough herbicide will be taken in when leaves are falling from the trees. Lee Gilman stated that September is actually a

May 11, 2022

**APPROVED**

good time for treatment, as there is a reverse flow with nitrogen. A constraint could be before the end of September. Rob Clemens asked if the Commission is comfortable approving multi-year projects. These will likely be funded through the Conservation Fund. The group agreed that multi-year projects through the Conservation Fund would be appropriate.

Rob Clemens noted that there needs to be notification to abutters. Lee Gilman noted that the first treatment will be to poison ivy in Lindabury mid-summer. Signage will likely be placed along the trails for this work. Coordination with mowing at the orchard will be critical.

**Jared Hardner moved to approve the three VCS proposals for invasives treatment, as written, with funding from the Conservation Fund. Bill Widmer seconded.  
Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.**

There was discussion regarding walking nearby property with high schoolers to educate them on the spread of invasives.

Rob Clemens explained that there is a champion tree next to PMEC which has received emerald ash borer treatment in past years. Two bids were received from Lee Gilman and Bartlett Tree Services, with the latter being the low bidder.

**Rob Clemens moved to accept Bartlett Tree Services' proposal as the low bidder for this project, from the Invasives budget line. Bill Widmer seconded.  
Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.**

#### **6. Amherst Fourth of July Preparations**

Rich Hart stated that he has started to collect materials for the Commission's presence at the Fourth of July. The group discussed making a large copy of the trail map to post at the event. There will be a sign-up sheet posted for Commissioners to detail which hours they will be available to man the tent during the event.

#### **7. ACC Officer Elections**

**Bill Widmer moved to renominate the current slate of offices: Rob Clemens – Chair, Jared Hardner – Vice Chair, and Bill Widmer - Treasurer. Rich Hart seconded.  
Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.**

#### **8. Other Business**

Jared Hardner stated that there is a parcel of Town-owned land, not managed by the Commission, that sits between Parkhurst Place and Buck Meadow. It would be simple to place a trail on this land to the existing trail system at Buck Meadow. He would like to do this along with some students who need to complete volunteer hours. Abutters will need to be informed. Rob Clemens stated that he met with Board of Selectmen Chair Peter Lyon on this topic. This will also need to be addressed with the Board. It will be a useful trail for mobile seniors to make their way to Buck Meadow. The Board of Selectmen next meets on May 31, 2022.

TOWN OF AMHERST  
Conservation Commission

May 11, 2022

**APPROVED**

262

263

Rob Clemens stated that he recently took a site walk of the Bon Terrain site where the large warehouse is proposed. This is a project that the Commission needs to stay informed about.

265

266

Bill Widmer stated that he has planted two small elm trees at the ridge on the Bragdon property.

267

268

The group discussed having a meeting with DPW Director Slosek and Frank Montesanto regarding mowing at Lindabury Orchard this spring. Jared Hardner stated that Christian Littlefield will facilitate this conversation.

269

270

271

272

Rob Clemens stated that the Commission will likely only meet for its second meeting of the month in June, due to vacations.

273

274

275

**Bill Widmer moved to expend an amount not to exceed \$500 to support preparations for the Fourth of July event. Jared Hardner seconded.**

276

277

**Voting: 6-0-0 motion carried.**

278

279

**Jared Hardner moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:47pm.**

280

281

**The meeting was adjourned.**

282

283

*Respectfully submitted,*

284

*Kristan Patenaude*

285

286

Minutes approved: July 13, 2022