

**Stow Conservation Commission
Minutes
February 20, 2024**

A meeting of the Stow Conservation Commission was held on February 20, 2024 at 7:30 pm remotely VIA Zoom Videoconferencing in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order on Remote Meeting participation.

There were present: Matt Styckiewicz, Chair
Holly Clack, Vice Chair
Serena Furman
Liza Mattison
Ingeborg Hegemann Clark
Jeff Saunders
Stephanie Lynch

Also Present: Kathy Sferra, Conservation Director
Jacquie Goring, Conservation Assistant

Minutes – *Holly Clack moved to approve the minutes of January 30, 2024 as amended. Liza Mattison seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*

Wetlands Permitting Issues:

- Enforcement Order Follow Up – 74 Pine Point – Goring reviewed the Enforcement Order which was issued for work on the property that was done after the Order of Conditions expired, not in accordance with the Order of Conditions, and not included on the approved plan. They have responded with a restoration plan and have replaced the erosion controls that were removed without Commission approval. They have also agreed to complete the planting plan as required by the Order of Conditions. Goring noted that sod is now proposed to replace the unpermitted gravel area constructed between the patio and lake. The approved plan notes the area was to be loamed and seeded. The restoration plan includes removal of 30 square feet of a lower concrete wall and planting of blueberry bushes as was required by the Order of Conditions. Swales and peastone bladders will also be installed as required. Goring noted that they plan to keep the wider walkway and stone wall along Pine Point Road, which was not on the plan, but neither is located outside the 35' no disturb buffer. John Plifka, McCarty Engineering, said they are waiting for better weather to start the restoration work. *Holly Clack made a motion to approve the restoration plan and require the work to be completed by May 31, 2025. Serena Furman seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*
- Enforcement Order Follow Up – Recreation Department/Town Center Park – Sferra has been working with Recreation Director Laura Greenough who has reached out to a number of contractors about repairing the trail washout at Town Center Park. JAM Corporation quoted a price, but after changes were made to the plan, it resulted in a higher quote. Greenough is working with the Town Administrator on the cost of the project and potential need to formally

bid the work. Greenough will be asked to come to the Commission when she has more information.

- Ratify Enforcement Order – 47 Gates Lane – Sferra visited the property with the Building Inspector. A foundation hole had been dug for an addition to the house. Debris was close to the pond. Sferra met with the contractor and issued an Enforcement Order asking them to install erosion controls and move the stockpile that was close to the wetland on the adjacent property. They moved the pile to the rear of the lot further away from the wetland and stopped work. They will be filing a Notice of Intent. *Ingeborg Hegemann Clark made a motion to ratify the Enforcement Order. Liza Mattison seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*
- Request for Extension – Alaka'i – Minute Man Air Field – DEP #299-697 – Having no concerns, *Serena Furman made a motion to extend the permit for three years. Holly Clack seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*
- Request for Redline Change to Approved Plan – 206 Barton – The property owner has requested a modification to the approved dock configuration. They have requested to install four removable dock steps for access using the existing stone steps on the property and to move the dock closer to the property line. The Commission noted that the plan provided by the homeowner is not scaled and does not include dimensions for the steps. Goring will ask for a revised plan to include the step dimensions.

Requests for Certificate of Compliance:

- 68 Hudson Road – DEP #299-688 – The proposed garage work was never done. *Ingeborg Hegemann Clark made a motion to approve the Certificate of Compliance for 68 Hudson Road. Holly Clack seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*
- Joanne Drive Lots 6 and 7 – DEP #299-715 – Everything was constructed as shown on the plan; approval was recommended. *Serena Furman made a motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for Joanne Drive Lots 6 & 7. Holly Clack seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*
- Joanne Drive Subdivision – DEP #299-636 – Deferred until all issues with the Planning Board are satisfactorily addressed.
- Siewierski – 178 Barton Road – DEP #299-601 – Goring visited the site and confirmed that everything was built in accordance to the plan, but found areas of turf where the approved plan called for loam and seed. The Commission did not approve a plan change to allow for turf. Siewierski said the reason he did it was so that he wouldn't have to fertilize it to keep it green and wanted to keep fertilizer away from the lake. He said it was purchased from Georgia and doesn't have contaminants; it's filled with sand and not backed with black plastic. Siewierski was asked to provide the product name so the Commission can do more research on the environmental impact prior to issuing a Certificate of Compliance.
- Roussel – 114 Barton Road – DEP #299-648 – Goring visited the site. Everything was constructed as shown on the plan; approval was recommended. *Holly Clack made a motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 114 Barton Road. Serena Furman seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*

Stow Acres Update – Sferra said they're near the end of the public engagement phase of the Master Planning process for the North Course. There was an Open House last Monday which went well. Between now and May the working group team and consultants will be working together to figure out what the potential uses are for the property and then draft a few options for the plan. It will be presented publicly in May, comments will be taken, and it will be refined and finalized for June. A class from Nashoba Regional High School has been involved in the project creating charts and graphs of what wildlife uses the property. The final Natural Resources Inventory and Invasives Species Management Plans have been received. All that information along with the public opinion survey will inform the choices about what uses and activities will be recommended for the site.

In terms of the survey result, there was a strong call for a more conservation focused plan rather than a recreation focus. Activities that are more consistent with passive recreation were preferred as opposed to more active recreation such as court sports or field sports. There is a middle group that's still getting a lot of interest and would like to see a dog park with some against it, the same with pickle ball. We will ask the consultants to pull together two or three plans with a different intensity of uses and will test those with the public to see what they think.

Hegemann Clark noted that what has been presented so far includes some very interesting features that could broaden the use beyond Stow hikers and birdwatchers and provide conservation and recreation opportunities for environmental justice populations. Goring noted that the project was funded for its climate adaptability, and while conservation areas are providing carbon sequestration, there are additional opportunities for climate adaptation. Such as places to cool off, whether it be shade trees, swimming holes, and splash pads designed as environmentally friendly as possible. Sferra said most of these facilities won't be built for 9 years when the golf lease ends and a lot of people coming to the forums and participating don't realize how long out that is. We would like youth to be involved in thinking about this because it is a project for the future.

Sferra also said they had a good session with the consulting team beginning to talk about the wetland restoration which will be the next phase of this project as the driving range moves from the North Course to the South Course. Stow Acres is still before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and will hopefully close at the next hearing. Stow Acres has four more years left on the lease agreement for the driving range, but they could move out sooner. Groundwater monitoring wells may be installed for the coming season to monitor the hydrology of the site. The Master Plan is supposed to include at least a conceptual restoration plan and lay out the sequence of events that needs to happen. That part of the project will be the one that consumes most of our time once the Master Plan is done. The Mass Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals will have their annual meeting at Stow Acres this spring and do some field work.

There will be a hike on Friday, March 22nd at 1PM at Stow Acres. On April 8th the Commission has a joint session with the ZBA on the North Course development project. Sferra will ask Mark O'Hagan, if he hasn't filed his Notice of Intent by then, to come to one of our March meetings to present the plan so the Commission can have a discussion before going to the ZBA. The Commission noted the 9-year timespan for the Town to take over the North Course and the fact that interests could change

significantly between when the Master Plan is finalized and when it's actually constructed. Sferra said we will have an opportunity to do some things on the land next year because of how the Town structured the license agreements, but we don't want to start doing anything unless we know it's consistent with the bigger plan down the road. Sferra feels the Master Plan is the blueprint for how the land will be used that will guide the future development.

Staff and Commission Member Updates:

- There are no new projects for the March 6th meeting.
- The Open Space & Recreation Plan was completed and sent to the state for final approval.
- The 5-day pump test for the wells at Cottages at Wandering Pond is scheduled for March 10th through March 15th.

At 8:45 PM, Ingeborg Hegemann Clark made a motion to adjourn. Holly Clack seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Melanie Rich, Minutes Clerk

Materials Used at Meeting
Meeting Packet