

**Stow Conservation Commission
Minutes
June 26, 2018**

A meeting of the Stow Conservation Commission was held at the Stow Town Building, 380 Great Road, Stow, Massachusetts, on June 26, 2018 at 7:30 in the evening.

There were present: Andy Snow, Chair
 Jeff Saunders
 Nicki McGachey
 Cortni Frecha

Absent: Serena Furman, Vice-Chair
 Ingeborg Hegemann Clark
 Sandra Grund

 comprising a quorum of the Commission

Also present: Kathy Sferra, Conservation Coordinator
 Jacquie Goring, Conservation Assistant

The Conservation Commission meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

Minutes: *Nicki McGachey made a motion to approve the minutes of June 5, 2018 as written. Cortni Frecha seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Approve Pine Bluff Knotweed Plan – Jonathan Bransfield/Stow Recreation – The Commission reviewed the knotweed removal plan submitted by Jonathan Bransfield for Pine Bluff. Sferra noted that a copy of the applicator's license was included as required by the permit. Sferra added that the plan includes cutting the knotweed and leaving the cut stems in place. The Commission discussed the plan and leaving the cut stems and noted that the plant would likely not spread by doing so. *Cortni Frecha made a motion to approve the Pine Bluff knotweed plan submitted by Jonathan Bransfield. Nicki McGachey seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Sign Baseline Documentation Report – Carver Hill – The Commission signed the Carver Hill Baseline Documentation Report as required by the state reimbursement grant. The Commission discussed an encroachment on Town Forest from Carver Hill and invasive species issue on the property documented by Sferra during the baseline work. Sferra will work with Chuck and Matt Lord to address the encroachment.

LAND Grant Reimbursement – Andy Snow signed the grant reimbursement paperwork on behalf of the Commission as authorized by the Commission during the June 5, 2018 meeting.

Duplicate Certificate of Compliance for 299-151 and Partial Certificate of Compliance for 299-124 – Red Acre Estates – Sferra informed the Commission that she was contacted by the seller's attorney for 39 Farm Road requesting that a duplicate Certificate of Compliance be issued for Order 299-151 which was issued in 1993 and never recorded. While reviewing the file Sferra identified that a partial Certificate was never issued for 39 Farm Road, Lot 5A, for the construction of a drainage swale on Lot 14B. Sferra recommended the partial Certificate be issued for Lot 5A which is located a far distance from Lot 14B. *Cortni Frecha made a motion to issue a duplicate Certificate of Compliance for 299-151 and a partial Certificate of Compliance for 299-124. Jeff Saunders seconded and it was passed unanimously.*

Approve Invoice – Mirick O'Connell – *Cortni Frecha made a motion to approve the invoices from Mirick O'Connell for \$1,527.09 for legal fees associate with the Maple Street enforcement case. Nicki McGachey seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Request for Determination of Applicability – Bill Chiarchiaro – Walcott Street – Property owner Bill Chiarchiaro was present and informed the Commission that he and his wife live at 79 Edgehill Road and purchased the property on Walcott Street from Susan and Bill Maxfield. Chiarchiaro stated that he would like to make improvements to the property including clearing trees to create lawn and installation of chain link fencing. Chiarchiaro noted that the property was previously open pasture and that he is very active with dog sports and would like to create a training field for agility. Chiarchiaro would also like to widen the opening in the stone wall along Walcott Street to fourteen and a half feet, large enough to access the area with a vehicle. Chiarchiaro clarified that he will not be constructing a driveway and will only use the opening to occasionally drive his SUV in to drop off stuff for the dogs. Sferra visited the property after receiving a report of work occurring within the Commission's jurisdiction without a permit. Chiarchiaro stated that they had begun working on the opening in the stone wall and planned to use a mini excavator to create a berm and put down crushed stone to protect the property from runoff coming from Jillian's Lane. The crushed stone will also be used to stabilize the area for larger contractor vehicles to enter the property to complete the tree removal and fencing. Sferra noted that she requested silt fence be installed during her site visit.

Snow conducted a site visit and noted that the property is level and observed the property during the recent heavy rains and water was not crossing the street to the wetland. Six maples are proposed for removal within the Commission's jurisdiction, some of which are covered in bittersweet. None of the trees are located within the 35' no disturb buffer. Chiarchiaro added that the trees are not street trees and are inside the stone wall which is the edge of the road right of way. Snow noted that the opening in the stonewall is preexisting and was unsure how the Town would need to be involved if the opening is made into a formal entrance. Chiarchiaro stated that Bill Maxfield used the opening to access the property with a tractor for decades. Sferra added that new driveways may require review by the Highway Department but the proposed work does not include creating a driveway from Walcott Street. Chiarchiaro added that in the mid 1960s the property was completely open except for the three oldest trees on the property which are now dead or damaged and proposed for removal. The Commission noted that there is no work proposed within the 35' no disturb buffer and erosion from the property is unlikely. Chiarchiaro clarified that he may work within the ten day appeal period at his own risk. *Cortni Frecha made a motion to close the public hearing for Walcott Street. Jeff Saunders seconded and it was passed unanimously.*

Determination of Applicability – Walcott Street – The Commission discussed erosion controls and requested that the existing silt fence stay in place until the proposed crushed stone to prevent tracking into Walcott Street. *Cortni Frecha made a motion to issue a Negative 3 Determination for Walcott Street. Nicki McGachey seconded and it was passed unanimously.*

Captain Sargent Green Trail – Sferra reviewed the trail closure on the green trail at Captain Sargent which was a result of a large tree that fell in the trail during the March storms. Sferra noted that the trail was left closed to review the options of rerouting the trail to make it less steep and keep visitors away from the area during coyote denning season. The Commission discussed various and recommended that the trail be rerouted so it is less steep/wet and have seasonal closures during coyote pup season as needed in the future. Staff will follow up and develop a plan.

Conservation Land Map Updates/New Acquisitions – Sferra informed the Commission that she is in the process of updating the Captain Sargent and Town Forest Maps with the new acquisitions of Kunelius and Carver Hill. She provided the Commission with a copy of the Captain Sargent update. The Town Forest map was discussed and Sferra informed the Commission of the work day scheduled for July 16th to prep the trail from Carver Hill to the red trail in Town Forest. Sferra described the proposed red trail loop through Carver Hill and noted that the portion of the trail through the orchard is to be pedestrian only at the request of the Lords. Signage will be required specifying allowable uses and providing for temporary closures when the orchard is being sprayed. Currently there is a mesh deer fence which takes time and care to open and close properly. Matt Lord will be installing a formal gate in the fencing for trail users. The Commission discussed this portion of the red trail loop and had concerns about trail users leaving the gate open and the necessary signage and discussed posting a stop sign and using a sprung gate or turnstile. The Commission also suggested that another trail could be evaluated to make the red loop inside Town Forest or allowing the orchard portion of the trail to be opened for special events only. It was agreed to revisit this after further discussion with the property owners, but not to open the trail at this time. Staff will continue to investigate options.

The Commission discussed the unmarked “grey” trails at Town Forest and recommended that they not be shown on the next edition of the Town Forest map as they are not maintained by the Town. This is in part based on a recommendation from the Fire Department. Public safety officials will be given maps that show all trails for search and rescue purposes.

Property Steward Description – The Commission reviewed and approved the draft Property Steward description for volunteers who will be stewards for each of the Commission’s properties. Sferra noted that she would like to be the lead property steward for Captain Sargent, Jacquie Goring would like to be lead property steward for Town Forest, and Bruce Trefry would be the property steward for Flagg Hill which is part of his formal duties. Volunteers would be solicited by the Conservation Coordinator to fill the remaining property steward positions. These individuals would form a working group which would assist staff with conservation land management. The Commission discussed the draft description and agreed that the positions should be renewed on a yearly basis and they felt there should be clear guidelines on what the stewards can and cannot do.

Coordinator’s Report

- **Land Projects:** Sferra informed the Commission that she delivered all of the documents and checks for the closing for Carver Hill, small farm and Ministers Pond on June 28th. A title issue at Carver Hill was resolved.
- **Enforcement Updates:** Sferra met with the owners of 212 Taylor Road regarding the tree removal within the Commission’s jurisdiction and they will be filing. Most of the trees removed were not located within the 100’ buffer. The property owner of 165 Kirkland has not yet responded to the letter requesting they contact the Commission by June 29th. Serena Furman offered to meet with the property owner. Sferra noted they have also constructed a shed without a building permit.
- **New Projects:** Sferra noted there are six potential filings for the July 17th meeting which have not been received yet. Sferra will email the Commission to assign the projects once they are filed. A filing for the rebuild of the stormwater basin at Jillian’s Lane has been submitted and Snow will take the lead.
- **Gleasondale Kane Land Trail Site Visit:** Sferra and Ingeborg Hegemann Clark visited the property and confirmed there are no wetland soils on the property. A filing will still be required to complete the trail within the flood plain.
- **Town Center Park Erosion Control Special Permit:** The hearing for the erosion control special permit for Town Center Park is on July 10th.
- **Draft Work Plan:** The Commission reviewed the draft work plan for FY 2019. They agreed with staff that they would not initiate any major projects this summer to allow time to catch up from all the land project and storm clean up work this spring.

Reorganization – Snow informed the Commission she would like to step down as Chair but would like to remain on the Commission. The vote was postponed to the next meeting.

Adjournment – *Jeff Saunders made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 PM. Cortni Frecha seconded and the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Jacquie Goring
Conservation Assistant

Materials Used during June 26, 2018 Conservation Commission Meeting:

Walcott Street site plans
6/26/18 Agenda
6/26/18 Meeting and Coordinator’s Report
Draft 6/5/18 minutes