

**Stow Conservation Commission
Minutes
April 2, 2019**

A meeting of the Stow Conservation Commission was held at the Stow Town Building, 380 Great Road, Stow, Massachusetts, on April 2, 2019 at 7:30 in the evening.

There were present: Jeff Saunders, Chair
 Cortni Frecha, Vice-Chair
 Ingeborg Hegemann Clark
 Serena Furman
 Nicki McGachey
 Andy Snow
 Sandra Grund

comprising a quorum of the Commission

Also present: Kathy Sferra, Conservation Coordinator
 Nick Tepper, Associate Member

Commission and Coordinator's Report

- **Publication for Landowners:** We will be getting a case of publications for large landowners from New England Forestry Foundation. Kathy Sferra showed the publication to the Commission and said that it would be sent with a cover note to owners of large properties enrolled in Chapter 61 and other important landowners.
- **20 Eliot:** Sferra did an erosion control inspection. Furman noted that she had been out looking at the adjacent pond area on town land and confirmed the presence of wood frogs. She will return to document any eggs. Nick Tepper noted that he had documented four-toed salamander and eastern newt recently in Stow.
- **Town Center Park:** Sferra noted that the tree clearing is complete and shared photos with the Commission. Also the EPA Notice of Intent has been approved. She will be doing SWPPP inspections.
- **Eversource:** Sferra informed the Commission that she had discussed with Ethics Commission her husband's new volunteer position on the MassBike Board of Directors and has filed a disclosure per their advice.
- **Commission Membership:** Nicki McGachey noted that she had a new job and would be leaving the Commission but would like to stay on as an Associate to help with videotaping and outreach.

Ingeborg Hegemann Clark arrived

Notice of Intent – 1-3 Rockbottom Road – Scott Hayes was present for the continued hearing. He noted that he has been to the Board of Health and they have approved the plan and the variances required. The 12" hardwood tree is located behind the erosion control barrier and he feels that it can stay during construction. They will hand dig and prune the roots as needed. With no further questions, Snow moved to close, McGachey seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

The Commission reviewed a draft Order of Conditions prepared by staff and made some edits. *Cortni Frecha moved to approve the Order, Serena Furman seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*

Cortni Frecha recused herself

Regency at Stow Wetland Restoration Plan

The Commission reviewed a proposed restoration plan prepared by Ducharme and Dillis for four areas where silt breached the erosion control barrier and entered the wetlands adjacent to the site. The Commission stressed the value of education for the crew on how to do remediation work in wetlands, noting that this was done particularly well

last year. Sferra will relay that information to Sean Griffin at Regency. *Sandra Grund moved to approve the plan as submitted, Serena Furman seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*

Notice of Intent – Off Barton Road – Collings – Steve O’Connell, Andrews Survey and Engineering; Bob Collings; and Rob Collings were present. Steve presented a revised plan based on the discussions to date. O’Connell provided a revised plan and reviewed the plan in relation to the Places Associates letter dated November 30, 2018. O’Connell noted that the revised plan includes a berm as requested by the Commission on the northerly end of the gravel pit rather than the area being left open as previously proposed. O’Connell added that the berm will meet the 206’ contour and the bottom of the pit is at an elevation of 205’. O’Connell stated that the area will resemble a stormwater basin and will have a berm effect without being dangerous or collecting water. O’Connell noted that the proposed three inches of top soil was deemed inadequate and revised the plan to use six inches of the engineered top soil product recommended by Places. O’Connell described the engineered top soil as six parts soil or sand, five parts paper pulp, to one part biomass sludge which will be mixed onsite with a loader under oversight from the supply company. A mixture of the loam stockpiled onsite and sand from onsite excavation will be used as part of the mix which will reduce the amount of material brought in to the site. O’Connell noted that abutters had concerns about the number of trucks entering the site and by using the materials onsite the number of trucks entering the site will be reduce from 90 trucks to 20. O’Connell also noted that DEP has approved the engineered top soil for use up to nine inches and they will use a minimum of six inches as recommended by Places. The engineered top soil supply company recommends that the material be allowed to sit prior to planting which O’Connell stated would work with their schedule to do the earth work in late spring or early summer and plant in the fall.

The Commission confirmed that six inches of the engineered soil will be used without an additional four inches of loam discussed at the previous hearing and the existing stockpile of loam on site will be used as part of the engineered soil mix. O’Connell also confirmed that glacial till is not proposed to be used as recommended by Places. O’Connell stated that the paper pulp in the engineered soil mix will hold moisture and the company has great success with the product in gravel pits. O’Connell also confirmed that the soil will be tested for pH and no additional fertilizers will be applied. The biomass sludge included in the soil mix contains slow release nitrogen which O’Connell stated ensures deep root zone and growth. O’Connell reviewed the proposed plantings and noted that he confirmed with Places that they recommend clusters of plantings 30 to 40 feet apart. The proposed planting plan includes six clusters of plantings, a total of 54 shrubs, including sweetfern, bearberry, sumac, and bayberry. O’Connell added that the bearberry and bayberry will spread quickly. O’Connell noted that they opted against the recommendation of staghorn sumac which grows up to a height of 30 to 35 feet which O’Connell stated would be counterintuitive to the ongoing vegetation maintenance plan. O’Connell confirmed that the plant sizes were not included on the plan but could be included as a condition in the Order.

O’Connell noted that Places recommended that access points to the gravel pit be closed off. O’Connell stated that Collings would like to keep the paths open for property management and maintenance. O’Connell reviewed the area on the plan for the proposed glossy buckthorn removal which will be removed by hand pulling or cut by hand with no use of motorized equipment. The proposed work schedule includes installing erosion controls, grading, bringing in the engineered top soil and allowing it to sit until fall when the area will be hydroseeded with a New England wetland plant and conservation wildlife mix and shrub planting. O’Connell also reviewed the wetland flag changes made in the field and incorporated on the revised plan. The Commission expressed concerns about cutting buckthorn and note planting until the fall potentially allowing invasives to spread on the new top soil. O’Connell confirmed that the invasive species removal would be done in accordance with best management practices including cut stump herbicide application to ensure invasives do not repopulate the area after cutting and pulling. Sferra recommended that the entire pit area be surveyed for invasives, not just the area shown on the revised plan.

The Commission discussed the proposed plantings and locations. O’Connell stated that they followed the recommendations for spacing by Places. The Commission recommended that the planting clusters be planted in a zig zag fashion to promote the plantings to spread further out into the pit. Bob Collings noted that Places recommended plantings at the toe of slope and noted that they are before the Commission and Planning Board and the Planning Board is looking for the Commission’s decision. The Commission discussed requiring a final plan in the Order including the change to the spacing of the plan and requiring three additional clusters of plantings. The Commission

also noted that the decision will include clarification that they will not accept the Riverfront Area as shown on the plan. The Commission will take up the decision at the next meeting. *Cortni Frecha moved to close the hearing, Serena Furman seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.*

Hallocks Point – Order of Conditions

The hearing was closed at the last meeting. Present were Jeff Brem, Paul Alphen, Sarah Bailin. The Commission reviewed a draft decision which had also been reviewed by the applicant who had made some suggestions for minor revisions. The Commission walked through the red-lined draft and made some changes with regard to docks. All docks will need to be “pre-identified” at the time the first dock is permitted. Lawns will be limited to the cleared areas shown on the plan. Following the discussion, *Cortni Frecha moved to approve the Order as amended. Serena Furman seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.*

Special Event Policy

Sferra presented a draft outline of a Special Event Policy for discussion, an item which is on the Commission’s workplan for this year. The need for a policy for larger scale events arose out of a request for fundraising event on conservation land last year. The Commission had a brief discussion about this and had comments including the need to check with the town’s insurance company with regard to insurance requirements, especially for private events like weddings; the need for multiple port-a-potties for large events; making sure we understand the amenities that will be required including any fires or firepits and that there be a safety plan. Members requested that a “leave no trace” ethic be woven into the policy to a greater extent and that there be more emphasis on the fact that the permit would be for use of conservation land. It was suggested that security deposits be considered. Also we will want to understand any retail sales that will occur (e.g. t-shirts). It was suggested that we consider how the policy might apply to retail tree sales at Captain Sargent to make sure there is no conflict with plans there. The Commission agreed to come back to this next meeting.

Adjournment: At approximately 9:40 pm, Cortni Frecha moved to adjourn the meeting, Serena Furman seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Sferra/Jacquie Goring
Conservation Coordinator/Conservation Assistant

Materials Used during April 2, 2019 Conservation Commission Meeting:

1-3 Rockbottom Road – site visit photos and application/supporting materials and draft decision
Regency Wetland Restoration plan
Collings Museum – site visit photos and application/supporting materials and draft decision
Hallocks Point – site visit photos and application/supporting materials and draft decision
Outline of Special Events Policy
NEFF Landowner Publication