

**Stow Conservation Commission
Minutes
February 18, 2020**

A meeting of the Stow Conservation Commission was held at the Stow Town Building, 380 Great Road, Stow, Massachusetts, on February 18, 2020 at 7:30 in the evening.

There were present: Jeff Saunders, Chair
 Serena Furman, Vice-Chair
 Andy Bass
 Andy Snow
 Matt Styckiewicz

Absent: Ingeborg Hegemann Clark

 comprising a quorum of the Commission

Also present: Kathy Sferra, Conservation Coordinator

Minutes: *Serena Furman made a motion to approve the minutes of February 4, 2020 as amended. Andy Snow seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Request for Certificate of Compliance – 20 Eliot Drive – The property owners have requested a Certificate of Compliance (COC). Ingeborg Hegemann Clark visited the site and reviewed photos. Hegemann Clark noted two concerns from the site visit including needing clarification on the purpose of a pipe that comes out near the bottom of the retaining wall and confirmation that the privacy fence is at least 25' from the stream on the property as approved in the Order of Conditions. The owners have clarified that the pipe is a groundwater drain pipe. Hegemann Clark measured the fence and confirmed it is at least 25 feet from the stream. *Serena Furman moved to approve the Certificate of Compliance. Andy Snow seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Request for Certificate of Compliance – 42 Boxboro Road – Sferra visited the site and confirmed that straw has been placed on the slope to stabilize it as recommended by Hegemann Clark. The Commission reviewed a photo from the site visit. *Andy Snow moved to approve the Certificate of Compliance. Serena Furman seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Enforcement Order – 76 Treaty Elm Lane – Sferra issued the Enforcement Order (EO) as requested by the Commission at their meeting on February 4, 2020. Sferra requested that the Commission ratify the EO. *Serena Furman moved to ratify the Enforcement Order for 76 Treaty Elm Lane. Matt Styckiewicz seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Public Lands Protection Act – Letter to Senator Eldridge – Sferra prepared a letter requesting that Senator Eldridge request that the chair of Senate Ways and Means and the Senate President move the Public Lands Protection Act legislation forward. Sferra explained the history of the Commission's support of this legislation and what is intended to accomplish. *Serena Furman moved to send the letter as written. Andy Snow seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Notice of Intent Public Hearing – 107 Boxboro Road – Ken Straney – Property owner Ken Straney was present to explain the project. Straney noted that he is proposing to permit three pedestrian bridges over Heath Hen Meadow Brook. One of these was recently reconstructed, one is existing, and one is proposed. The bridges are in series and allow a pedestrian path to cross the streams to access the back of his property and Heath Hen Meadow Brook Conservation Area. He noted that he recently reconstructed one of the bridges after a pine tree fell on it. Andy Bass and Matt Styckiewicz did a site visit and reviewed several photographs of the bridges. Straney placed the recently reconstructed bridge on field stones. Straney stated that he has lived on the property for 35 years and

has never seen the Brook flood over the banks. Straney estimated that the existing bridge was 25 year old and that he would like to permit the reconstruction of this bridge as part of this application. Straney stated that there is no motorized vehicle use on the bridges. The Commission discussed erosion controls and did not feel they would be necessary. Sferra said that DEP had not yet issued a file number so the hearing would need to be continued. If no issues are identified by DEP, Straney would not need to attend the next meeting. Straney agreed to a continuation to March 4, 2020. *Andy Snow moved to continue the public hearing to March 4, 2020 on or after 7:30 PM. Serena Furman seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Captain Sargent License Renewal Annual Meeting – Taproot Farm – Jesse Steadman was present representing Taproot Farm. Steadman noted that this was both the annual check in meeting and a chance to begin a discussion of how the first year of retail sales at the farm will be managed. Steadman discussed the various needs at the farm in the coming year including installation of a gate at the Tuttle Lane entrance and signage identifying the farm operation and making clear that trees cannot be cut outside of business hours. Steadman showed a map depicting the location of parking for tree sales and a small attractive shed building that would house equipment and supplies, and possibly some wreaths and greens for sale. The Commission discussed the content of signage and asked to see final proposed wording. The Commission added that it should be clear that this is conservation land and the public is welcome to walk the trails. Steadman said that in year 2 he would like to consider putting up a kiosk on the way to the shed that explains the history of the land and the farming operation. Steadman and the Commission discussed various options for managing access and parking, including the need for parking attendants, signage in areas where parking should not be allowed and the possibility of stacking waiting cars on the garden road, weather permitting. He said that there would not be any sales after dark, but they may want some lighting near the shed for the end of the day which would not stay on at night. Steadman stated that sales will occur the weekend after Thanksgiving and would likely be done in a day or two. Steadman added that they will want to have a portapotty and trashcans and will make sure that everything is cleaned up at the end of the day. Steadman noted that he will have about 400 trees for sale in the first year and the first two years can be an opportunity to prepare for a larger operation in subsequent years. The Commission discussed likely requests from commercial photographers for portrait sessions and agreed that they did not want to allow this. Steadman said that he would likely want to have a pre-sales meeting later in the calendar year to discuss issues further and would write up his thoughts for the Commission's review. *Serena Furman moved to renew the annual license agreement with Taproot Farm. Matt Styckiewicz seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Coordinator's Report

- **Lundy Subdivision** – The applicants would like to begin construction in the next month. They will be submitting a letter to Conservation Commission requesting that the Commission accept the open space.
- **Collings Site Visit** – Sferra noted that the joint site visit with the Planning Board will be this Thursday at 8 am.
- **Town Forest Trails** – Sferra noted that the trail on the west side of Gardner Hill has been closed and staff and volunteers have begun creating the new Red Trail Connection
- **Highrock Chapel** – Sferra said the Library has decided not to pursue this acquisition. There will be continued discussions among town officials to see if there remains interest in this property on Friday.
- **Conservation Commission Dinner** – Sferra will organize by email.
- **New Project** – Serena Furman agreed to take the application for 174 Barton Road.
- **Athens Lane** – Sferra updated the Commission on discussions Habitech is having with the Planning Board on potential development off Athens Lane.
- **Stow Acres** – Sferra stated that Stow Acres owner Peter Brown had recently met with staff and indicated that they are about to sign an agreement with Toll Brothers for the north course of Stow Acres. Toll would like to build over-55 housing which would require a zoning change.

Review/Approve Town Meeting Warrant Articles

The Commission reviewed draft wording for the warrant articles and agreed to submit them. Sferra noted that the Article 97 legislation should include replacement land and the Commission discussed two options for this. It was noted that the land off Hudson Road offers more similar riparian habitat so this seemed preferred so long as there were no serious encroachment issues.

Commission Members' Report – Andy Snow asked about the Eversource Site Visit. Sferra noted that the Commission had previously agreed to do this after the first public hearing if issues were brought up that necessitated it. The Commission requested that the application materials be distributed in advance for their review.

Adjournment – *Serena Furman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:30PM. Andy Snow seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Sferra
Conservation Coordinator

Materials Used during February 18, 2020 Conservation Commission Meeting:

Draft Minutes
Site Plans, photos, and supporting materials for 107 Boxboro Road
Site visit photos of 42 Boxboro Road and 20 Eliot Drive
Draft warrant articles
Site map and draft license agreement for Tuttle Lane Fields
Draft letter to Jamie Eldridge