

Minutes
Northampton Conservation Commission
2nd Floor Hearing Room, City Hall, Northampton, Mass.
April 11, 2019

| Members | Present | Time |
|---------------------|---------|------|
| Kevin Lake, Chair | x | |
| Mason Maronn | x | |
| Randy Krotowski | x | |
| Jack Finn | x | |
| Jason Perry | x | |
| Jessica Pica | x | |
| Elizabeth Wroblicka | | |
| Staff | Present | Time |
| Sarah LaValley | x | |

Meeting Opened At:

By:

5:30 p.m.

Kevin

Minutes Approved:

Motion By:

Second By:

Unanimous:

August 23, 2018

Jack

Jessica

Yes

September 27, 2018

Mason

Jack

Yes

Public Comment

None

5:30 PM Request for Determination of Applicability to determine if septic system installation is subject to the MA Wetlands Protection Act or Northampton Wetlands Ordinance. Harold Jordan & Renee Rossi. 16 Bayberry Ln, Map ID 35-229.

The applicant was not present, but Sarah provided an overview of the application and a summary of her site visit. The area where the leach field is proposed is a flat lawn. Past the limit of work, a slope covered with pachysandra slopes to a bordering vegetated wetland. No vegetation will be removed. Options for placement were limited due to water and electric utilities.

Jason moved to issue a negative determination by checking box 3, to indicate that work is within buffer but will not constitute an alteration. Include standard conditions, require erosion control as shown on the plan, and reseeding as necessary. Seconded by Jessica, the motion carried unanimously.

5:45 PM Request for Determination of Applicability to Determine if removal and management of non-native invasive plants is subject to the Northampton Wetlands Ordinance and Wetlands Protection Act. Lathrop Communities, Florence Rd, Map ID 44-05

Barbara Walvoord, Lathrop Land Conservation Committee, and Joan Deely, Land Stewardship Inc, provided an overview of the project. Work began in 2014 and continues with help of volunteers. Stiltgrass is present on adjacent sites and poses an additional threat. This is an especially challenging species to attempt to eradicate. Seed load reduction is targeted to reduce future reoccurrence. Joan stated that shields are used during foliar

spraying to prevent any spray affecting other plants. Joan noted that there is a strong correlation between high density barberry and high tick populations.

Randy moved to issue a negative determination by checking box 2 to indicate that the work is within an area subject to protection, but will not remove dredge fill or alter said area. Require notification 48 hours prior to work being done, and again when complete each year, and require copies of all monitoring reports. Seconded by Jessica, the motion carried unanimously.

5:55 PM Request for Determination of Applicability to determine if geothermal well drilling is subject to the MA Wetlands Protection Act or Northampton Wetlands Ordinance. Smith College Facilities Mgmt. Field House, 137 West Street, Map ID 31C-015

Gary Hartwell stated that this is a pilot project to test for geothermal connectivity. A 1500 +/- foot deep well will be drilled, this will inform a larger project for the College to be carbon neutral by 2030. If successful, the well will be used to heat the field house. The athletic fields are an ideal location for a preliminary test well due to lack of other obstructions. The work will take place entirely in existing disturbed area.

Randy moved to issue a negative determination by checking box 2, and adding a requirement that the Commission be notified 48 hours prior to work and again when work is complete.

6:05 PM Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation. Dewey Court Properties, 34 Dewey Court, Map ID 44-05

Jeff Squire provided an overview of the site. It contains one isolated vegetated wetland, and one possible BVW. Staff verified that the boundaries as shown are correct.

Randy moved to issue an Order of Resource Area delineation confirming the flags. Seconded by Jason, the motion carried unanimously.

6:15 PM Request for Determination of Applicability to Determine if multi-use path construction with buffer zone to bordering vegetated wetland is subject to the Northampton Wetlands Ordinance and Wetlands Protection Act. City of Northampton, Burts Pit Road/Rocky Hill Greenway, Map ID 29-484

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability, stated that the right to build a trail was reserved in the conservation area acquisition; this will connect neighborhoods and create a safe route to Ryan Road school. Two small isolated wetlands are within the project work area but work will only occur within buffer zone. The trail is being designed to accommodate turtles; although the area is no longer classified as NHESP habitat for endangered turtles there are turtles present, and identified habitat areas are being avoided. The path will have a narrower eight foot width, no curbs, and limited shoulders. The existing dirt trail through the property will be discontinued and blocked off. Jason moved to issue a negative determination by checking box 3 to indicate that the work is within the buffer but will not alter. Also checking box 2a to indicate that boundaries are confirmed as accurate and box 6 to indicate that the work is not subject to the WPA. Include standard conditions and a condition to scarify and plant the current path. Seconded by Randy, the motion carried unanimously.

6:25 PM Notice of Intent for multi-use path construction. City of Northampton, Rocky Hill Road/Rocky Hill Greenway, Map ID 37-049

Wayne Feiden stated that the right to construct a trail was also a part of this acquisition. MassDOT will be advertising for the 2021 construction season. It will need to meet ADA standards, and will be built partially on an existing access road to the natural gas facility. Fencing will be minimized to accommodate wildlife passage. Pervious pavement is unfortunately not an option due to the slope. It is too early in the season to verify wetland and field conditions.

Randy moved to continue the hearing until May 9 at 5:30 PM. Seconded by Jack, the motion carried unanimously.

Review and approve open space acquisitions

Wayne and Sarah provided overview and updates of open space acquisitions. These included: acquisition from Omasta in the Mineral Hills, purchasing the western portion of the Waggin' Trails property to represent the difference between the Conservation Restriction required by the planning board approval and fee ownership, purchase of the western section of St. Mary's Cemetery abutting the Mill River and bike path, and acquisition of the former Open and Shut parcel on Easthampton Road. Three tax title parcels in the Saw Mill Hills are also moving forward. The Jail Farm state surplus property on Venturers Field Road is nearly ready to close, with a CR to be held by Meadow City Conservation Coalition, and a CR will be held by Kestrel Land Trust on the Fields property in the Mineral hills that was just acquired using Landscape Partnership funds. Jason moved to approve the acquisitions and grant of restrictions. Seconded by Jack, the motion carried unanimously.

Other Business

Sarah stated that an emergency certification for Smith College will be necessary to allow removal of trees along the bank of the Mill River due to a sudden and severe erosion issue just north of the track due to bank undercutting. The tree rootballs are no longer within stable soil.

Randy moved to approve a right of entry within the Connecticut River Greenway for MassDOT work related to the Damon Road project, and authorized staff to sign the right of entry on behalf of the Commission. Seconded by Jack, the motion carried unanimously.

Wayne Feiden provided an update on the Northampton ONE trail; a long-term loop trail vision around the City that will utilize existing trails and recreation areas. It will also help to inform acquisitions moving forward. Staff has applied for a MassTrails grant to harden existing trails first and then add new connecting trails. The Commission discussed potential conflicts among different types of users and agreed this should be planned for in the future. The Commission supported the idea and would like to be kept informed moving forward.

As there was no further business the meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM