



MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

ONE AVENUE A · TURNERS FALLS, MA 01376 ·
PHONE: 413-863-3200 EXT 207 - FAX: 413-863-3222

Meeting Minutes

Thursday February 9, 2012

6:30 PM

Town Hall Upstairs Conference Room

Commissioners Present: Mark Fairbrother–Chair, Deb Picking, Sean Werle and Justin Fermann, Donna Francis and Addie Holland

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey

Public Present: John Reynolds, Mark Fraser, Mark Zaccheo, John Marchefka

Meeting called to order by Mark Fairbrother at 6:31 PM

Approval of November 17, 2011 and January 12, 2012 meeting minutes

***Motion** made by Deb Picking to approve the November 17, 2011 and January 12, 2012 minutes with minor grammatical corrections. Seconded by Sean Werle. All approved.*

1. Request for Determination of Applicability #2012-01 by Mark Fraser 60 Taylor Hill Road Turners Falls, MA. To determine if the applicant's plans to convert woodland to pasture on the property identified as Assessors Map 48 Lot 22 is subject to an Order of Conditions.

Guests: Mark Fraser

Mark Fraser recently purchased property at 60 Taylor Hill Road and would like to clear some of his land for a pasture for cows and sheep – a 'gentleman's farm'. The woodlands consist of cottonwood, birch and other varieties that are not indicative of healthy woodland. The trees would be removed and chipped near the barn-outside of the resource area. Mark Fraser was proposing a 50 foot no-cut buffer from the two wetlands areas.

There was a site visit by some of the commissioners on February 20, 2012 at 10am (Sean, Addie, Donna). The site visit confirmed that the second wetlands area was jurisdictional. Walter indicated that the project is exempt for MESA and no forest cutting plan will be required

Addie Holland was concerned that the forester may cut across the wetlands behind the barn to the cutting area. Mark Fraser assured the commission that access will only be permitted through the north approach as drawn in the plan on file. Thus, no vehicles would have to cross or interfere with the wetlands.

Deb Picking feels that there needs to be more flagging to measure off the 50 feet which would help to define borders. Deb would like to see flagging before the cutting- as this will guide the cutter. Mark agreed to flag the 50 foot buffer. Another site visit was scheduled for Monday, February 20, 2012 to make sure all the conditions are met before the project begins.

Motion was made by Justin Fermann to issue a negative determination (WPA form 2 Box 3) with the following conditions: 1) Forester shall approach and exit the cutting area as marked on the plan and 2) The wetland buffer be flagged and confirmed by the Commission prior to cutting. Seconded by, Deb Picking. Motion passed 6-0.

2. **Discussion** – First Light Power Resources/GDF Suez camp owner’s vista pruning policy in the Riverfront resource area of the Connecticut River. Assessors’ Map 17 Lot 34

Walter read a request from Beth Bazler of FirstLight Power regarding a proposed vista pruning policy for the Connecticut River Camps to ensure compliance with the Wetlands and Riverfront Protection Act. The proposal is to have the Commission sign off on any proposed vista pruning done by the camp lessees.

While the activity is exempt, the commission indicated that the proper procedure to follow is to file an RDA. While the activity is exempt, the commission holds that they need to make that determination under the Wetlands/Riverfront Protection Act. According to Mark Fairbrother the vista pruning within the riverfront area could be handled under one RDA submitted by FirstLight or by individual RDAs submitted by the camps. It would not be a burden for the commission to handle up to 5 RDAs for camp vista pruning. Walter will send a correspondence to Firstlight to this effect.

3. **Discussion** –Olive Street Development LLC -reuse concept for Montague Center School (Map 43 Lot 111). This property includes a bordering vegetated wetland that is jurisdictional under the Wetlands Protection Act.

Guests: Mark Zaccheo, John Marchefka

Mark and John presented their concept for “green” apartments at the Montague Center School Site. Mark is negotiating a developer’s agreement with the Town. He has delineated the wetlands on site and produced a topo of the site. A NOI will need to be filed in the future. Mark Z highlighted two primary areas of concern 1) excavating without disturbing the soils too much 2) parking to accommodate the residents and visitors. There is a need for 38 +/- spaces including ADA spaces for the proposed 25 residential units. The current plan leaves a 50 foot no-disturb area from the wetlands on site. It was noted that the Commission reviewed and endorsed a similar concept prepared by Greenberg and Associates when the Town was planning for site reuse. The entire buffer has been historically disturbed right up to the wetlands. The commission would be amenable to negotiating the buffer impacts through a NOI. Mark Z. will prepare a stormwater management plan and will be exploring permeable pavement options.

The pond is part of the property and a concern as it has had drainage and blockage issues in the past and it feeds directly into the town system. Mark Z indicated that he would be interested in offering the pond back to the Town as a community resource.

Other business:

- Justin and Walter will be attending upcoming MACC Conference
- Email correspondence from WMECO regarding the beaver pond area indicating they will be working throughout the winter on this project
- Mark requested an update on the Conservation Fund. It started out as \$100,000 it is now just under \$20,000. Mark would like to see a request on the warrant for the town meeting

for \$10,000 to be transferred to the account. Walter will report how the funds have been used and mark will put a placeholder motion on the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

Motion made by Addie Holland to adjourn at 7:42 PM. Seconded by Mark Fairbrother

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:42 PM

Approved by: _____ Date: _____