

Montague Conservation Commission

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MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 13, 2014 – 6:30 pm

Upstairs Meeting Room, Town Hall, One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA

Commissioners Present: Mark Fairbrother - Chair, Alex Peterkin Justin Fermann, Addie Rose Holland Sean Werle, and Donna Francis (6:40)

Commissioners Absent: Deb Picking

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey - Agent

Mark Fairbrother called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

Approval of October 9, 2014 Minutes:

Motion made by Sean Werle to accept the October 9, 2014 meeting minutes. Seconded by Alex Peterkin

Motion passed. Justin Fermann and Addie Rose Holland Abstained

Public Meeting: Request for Determination of Applicability RDA #2014-04 filed by Christian S.

Couture to conduct work within the buffer zone of bordering vegetated wetlands at 77 11th Street (Assessors Map 6 Lot 1). Proposed work involves clearing for future development and installation of minor improvements including fencing.

Guest: Christian Couture (applicant), Mark Abramson – Cohen & Company Realtors, Christa Bingnet (Owner of 77 11th St)

Mark Fairbrother disclosed that his father has worked for Christian S. Couture or the company for 40 years.

Christian Couture has come before the Commission to determine if the land that he is considering buying would be impacted in the future by the wetlands adjacent to the site. If the property is considered a jurisdictional wetlands a (100 feet) buffer would be needed; thus cutting the developable potential of the property in half and impacting Mr. Couture’s plan for buying it.

Christian Couture owns the property to the south of this property and has a view in the future to develop this property in the future, although he does not have current plans. Mr. Couture’s immediate plans are to clear the brush and possibly put up a fence as this is a viable place for real estate in the future.

The board feels that at this time the brush clearing and fence is within a buffer zone but would not impact the wetlands area. The wetlands area as it stands now is a depression near the former railroad bed and has already been disturbed so there is no “wetland value” in that. Depending on the scale of the project there would have to be a stormwater management plan. Fermann reiterated that stormwater management will be the primary concern on future development of that site.

In the future Mr. Couture would have to come back with a concrete project and at that time stormwater issues would have to be addressed.

Motion made by Sean Werle to approve the RDA #2014-04 with a negative determination box 3. Seconded by Donna Francis. **Motion passed.**

Updates:

- Review Forest Cutting Plan 2014-03 by MA Division of Wildlife and Fisheries located (Off) Old Northfield Road & Plains Road, and Bartlett Road in Montague.
 - This is a fire maintenance plan. NHESP has issued comments. No wetlands or stream crossings. No specific comments were given by the Conservation Commissioners
- Review Forest Cutting Plan 2014-04 by Lucius Cutting Estate Located on Dry Hill Road in Montague.
 - Nine stream crossing at this location. Existing skid roads will be used during the project. Timothy B Hill is the contracted forester. He is from NH and new to the Commissioners. No specific comments were given by the Conservation Commissioners
- Sawmill River Recreation Area mowing updates
 - Ralph Taylor at Division of Wildlife & Fisheries (DW&F) and Walter have been in conversation regarding maintaining the Sawmill River Area. The DW&F will allow the Commission to be a licensed holder to be able to mow the area. Josh Goldman has an arrangement with Walker Korby to do the cutting during certain pre determined times. Addie feels it would be good visibility and stewardship for the Commission to be a participant in the upkeep of the area. Overall the commission expressed support in pursuing a license arrangement with DFW. Walter and Ralph will coordinate.

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours posting requirements:

- Piggery at 119 Old Sunderland Road (Brooks Bend Farm)
The neighbor has contacted both the Planning & Conservation and Board of Health Departments to check into the situation there as there are wetlands on the property. Walter did a site visit and issued a letter in response to his findings. It is being used for normal agricultural use and is exempt under the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) and they are located in an agricultural district as well as Montague being a right to farm community. There were no violations of the WPA found at the site.
- Walter announced December 3 public session at Town Hall to review the revisions to the Wetland Protection Act. WPA. Mark Stinson will present and answer any questions.

Motion made by Donna Francis to adjourn the meeting Seconded by Justin Fermann. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:12 PM.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____