

Montague Conservation Commission

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MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 13, 2015 – 6:30 pm

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

Commissioners Present: Mark Fairbrother - Chair, Sean Werle, Donna Francis and Addie Rose Holland

Commissioners Absent: Alex Peterkin, Deb Picking and Justin Fermann

Staff: Walter Ramsey - Agent

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

Minutes for July 9, 2015: Tabled to next meeting

PUBLIC HEARING Continuation of Notice of Intent #2015-04 filed by David Svobada for the Walnut Street Condominium Association for property identified as 28 Walnut Street (Assessors Map 13, Lot 9). Applicant plans to stabilize and restore 140 linear feet of eroding bank to protect residential units.

Guests: Ed Stone (contractor) and David Svobada (Applicant)

Ed Stone presented a new plan. Ed explored using gabion baskets, however the applicant deemed that financially infeasible. The current plan is to use rip rap and place the rock at the toe of the slope along with hay bales and erosion control along the bank and stream. The toe of slope is tight to the stream but not in it.

Sean Werle comments:

- The natural stream bed is at a higher elevation than the toe trench of the rip rap. This could cause major stability issues.
- Recommend considering using obstacles (such as stream barbs) in the bank to divert the water and channel into the center of the stream
- Does not necessarily require professional engineer. There are past examples built here in town that can be used as models.

The Commission had a brief discussion as to whether this could be an emergency certificate situation. They decided it would not meet those criteria.

Mark Fairbrother comments:

- There is a problem with a trench as the water is going to go into the trench and move through the rip rap. Do not excavate, build the area up and do some placement on what is now the edge of the stream. Hopefully this will push back the stream.
- Suggested the technique the state used on the Sawmill River which was to rip rap the bank and put stream barbs into the water to force the direction of the water.
- Someone needs to meet with Walter with specs and a lot more detail for erosion control, the slope and where the buildings are located and where and how the machinery will be used

Walter Ramsey (Agent) comments:

- Commission has received a file number and addressed some of the issues brought up by DEP. The wildlife habitat evaluation is done and there are no known negative impacts for habitat. There is no plan for sedimentation/ erosion control. The project may need to account for 860 square feet of river front area in addition to the bank. Planting mitigation plan is not clearly identified. Plans need to meet performance standards for bank. Suggested using root wads to those installed in the Sawmill River project

Addie Rose Holland comments:

- Believes that the streambed is not going to return to where it originated from. Stabilization of the bank is needed.
- Use of root wads to help in the diversion of water.
- There is more information needed on the plans
- The commission needs to know how erosion/sedimentation is controlled during the work.

Ed Stone comments:

- The rock will be placed at the toe of the slope and build up from that point. The erosion is taking more and more of the bank away.
- Going to hire an engineer to draw up the project professionally for the next meeting

On behalf of the applicant, Ed Stone requested a continuance of NOI #2015-04 to August 27, 2015 at 6:30pm

Mark Fairbrother declared the hearing continued to August 27, 2015 at 6:30pm

PUBLIC HEARING Continuation of Public Hearing: Notice of Intent #2014-03 filed by Franklin County Conservation District for the Sawmill River Rehabilitation Project at South Street. The South Street project includes the re-establishment of the banks at the South Street Bridge.

Army Corps of Engineers has still not issued their comments. Walter Ramsey requested a continuance to October 8, 2015.

Mark Fairbrother declared the hearing continued to October 8, 2015 at 6:30pm

PUBLIC HEARING Notice of Intent #2015-05 filed by New England Power Company (d/b/a National Grid) for the “Cabot Taps Separation Project”. The proposed work will result in permanent and temporary impacts to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands (BVW) associated with the separation and relocation of transmission lines adjacent to a portion of the Canal side Rail Trail affecting Assessors Map 5 Lot 151; Map 12 Lots 2 and 30; and Map 8 Lots 1 and 2. Permanent impacts to BVW will be approximately 178 square feet for four (4) new structures. Additionally, approximately four (4) acres of forested wetland will be cleared and converted to emergent shrub/ wetland within a new .75 mile right-of-way.

Guests: Paul Knapik, Dawn Travalini from BSC Group.

Mr. Knapik: Exploratory analysis (completed under another OOC) has been completed over the past year and the project is now ready for permitting. The project is 2.7 miles to Cabot Junction in Greenfield, MA. There is a junction called “Cabot Junction” by Adams Road in Greenfield where the two transmission

corridors come together. The Cabot Taps are the existing double circuit that runs from the Cabot Junction into Montague through the patch to the substation near the hydro electric station. The Montague section of the line consists of 1.5 miles and a 1/3rd of that will be in the right of way (ROW). The proposal is to relocate a section of the ROW to the South and replace the lines within a new parallel corridor. The new ROW will be adjacent to the current ROW with slight overlap. It will have the effect of expanding the cleared edge to accommodate the project. The primary reason for shifting away from the canal berm is because of a FERC mandate for public safety. There are several mitigation proposals and the total mitigation area is small at 606 square feet. The mitigation for the project is proposed to replicate 900 square feet of wetlands in Greenfield. The appropriate state and local agencies have done site visits and reviewed the proposed project and have given the approval to move forward with the proposal. Temporary impacts at the site will be mitigated by use of swamp mats. The protocol will be to review the area before work and after the project – to ensure no loss of wetlands or the function of wetlands. The other impact is from tree clearing within wetlands area. It is anticipated that the result will be a conversion from forest to shrub immersion wetland. The Army Corps of Engineers and DEP and views the functional impact as an impact so the applicant has outreached to organizations to do a restoration project. The Sawmill River South Street & North Street projects will be proposed to be used as a mitigation project for this forested area. The ROW corridors will be maintained the way same as other ROW's. Dept of Ag. Resources regulate all the herbicides and their usages; this is never done in the wetlands. NHESP due diligence has been done. There are listed habitats. The listed species includes: sturgeon, dragonfly, bald eagle, and certain plants within the corridor. There are 3 rare plants but they are in Greenfield, MA. There are no species habitat impacts in Montague because the area of concern is on the banks and in the river. MEPA and DPU certificates have been completed. DEP provided the file number and requested to keep the hearing open till the MA DEP has issued a 401 water quality certification. The project is slated to begin in 2016 once all the requirements are met.

Mark Fairbrother closed the hearing at 7:58 PM

Motion made by, Sean Werle to issue an order of conditions along with the supplemental conditions that Walter Ramsey drafted for NOI #2015-05 filed by New England Power Company (d/b/a National Grid) for the “Cabot Taps Separation Project”. Seconded by Addie Rose Holland. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Notice of Intent #2015-06 filed by Montague Department of Public Works for planned roadway improvements and storm water management to Montague City Road. The proposed work will result in permanent and temporary impacts to bank, land under water bodies, previously developed Riverfront area associated with the “Old Canal” in Montague City. The area affected is Assessors Map 12 Lot 51 and the Montague City Road right of way between Masonic and Solar Avenue

Guest: Simon Hildt – Stantec Consulting

Mr. Hildt: This is a municipal project in partnership with DOT and DEP; this project was previously permitted under an RDA. The project takes place mainly between Masonic Street and Solar Avenue while reworking the traffic flow on Montague City Road. The main objective of the project is to improve safety and functionality along Montague City Road while providing better drainage and stormwater management of the area. The roadway will be narrowed in some areas, additions of some safety islands to improve the crosswalks in the area and bring them up to be ADA compliant.

Impacts to the wetland resource areas are: 9 linear feet of bank and 11 square feet of land under water will be impacted due to the placement of stone for stabilization. The project will not disturb the physical stability of the bank or the carrying capacity of the stream. The stream does not seem to provide species

habitat or food along with the urbanized nature of the area. Impacts to the impervious areas within the 200 foot riverfront area will include a decrease of 268 square feet of impervious surface. This is not much of a change but can be considered an improvement to the area. DEP had no comments and issued a file number for the project.

Walter prepared some supplemental conditions which are the standard conditions that were passed out the Commissioners. It is a limited project which meets the performance standard, redevelopment under the stormwater and uses best management practices to the extent possible.

Mark Fairbrother closed the meeting at 8:07 PM

Motion made by Addie Rose Holland to issue an order of conditions with the special conditions and findings as presented for NOI #2015-06 filed by Montague Department of Public Works. Seconded by Sean Werle. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Motion made by, Addie Rose Holland to adjourn the meeting Seconded by Donna Francis. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:09 PM.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____