

# Montague Conservation Commission

One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376 (413) 863-3200 Ext 207 Fax: (413) 863-3222 Email: [planner@montague-ma.gov](mailto:planner@montague-ma.gov)

Thursday, November 16, 2017 - 6:30 PM

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

**Present:** Mark Fairbrother, Alex Peterkin, Sean Werle and Donna Francis

**Absent:** Justin Fermann, Deb Henson and Addie Rose Holland

**Staff:** Walter Ramsey, Town Planner and Conservation Agent

**Guest:** Laurie Reid

Meeting was opened at 6:30 PM by Chairman Fairbrother

**Approval of minutes:** *no minutes were approved*

**PUBLIC MEETING Request for Determination RDA #2017-06 filed by Eversource Energy** to determine if the proposed work associated with the Line 312 Transmission Right of Way Reliability Program is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act. The property is a utility right of way crossing Greenfield Road, Turners Falls Road, Lake Pleasant road, Federal Street and Wendell Road.

**Guests:** Melissa Coady – Environmental Scientist – Tighe & Bond and Tom Degman – Clearing Manager/Forester Bears & MacDonald

Melissa Coady and Tom Degman presented the project to the Commission:

The purpose of this project is to improve the resiliency of the existing transmission line by removing vegetation that could potentially result in an electrical outage in the event of a tree falling on the lines, thus improving the reliability of service to Eversource customers in this region. Due to storms in both 2011 and 2012 and a potential for future outages under existing conditions, Eversource plans to expand the cleared width of their transmission ROW in select areas. The work will enhance transmission system reliability and preparedness for future extreme weather events. The work will ensure compliance with federal guidelines, and will result in improved electric reliability in the state and across the region. This project will have limited work done in the uplands areas which are not under the jurisdiction of the Wetlands Protection Act or the 100 foot buffer zone. In addition, there will be no work in wetlands resource areas proper including BVW, IVW (not wetlands act), and land subject to flooding or in the riverfront area. There will be no work in rare species habitat or in protected open space areas as well. The project will keep within the buffer zones at this point. Going forward if Eversource wants to expand the project that is something they will have to partner with Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program to do.

The access to the site is from public roadways as well as private property owners where Eversource has established access agreements, as shown on the presented plans. There will be no building of new access roads. There will be access on foot with the use of skidders and chainsaws where needed.

Wetland areas were delineated in general accordance with MassDEP guidelines, 310 CMR 10.00 and the United States Army Corps of Engineers the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program Atlas, dated August 2017 and GIS on line mapping were consulted during the preparation of this RDA. It was concluded that no portion of the proposed work is within the limits of mapped priority habitat.

In many locations the legally defined transmission line ROW extends beyond the current limits of clearing on both sides of the ROW. The work will include access along the ROW and tree clearing in the 100 foot buffer zone using mechanical and non mechanical methods or tree removal. There will be no grubbing or stump removal for this project. All wood will be removed unless the property owners request that the wood stay.

Eversource will follow the standard for best management practices to limit impacts to the environment and a right of way vegetation management plan will be implemented during construction to minimize the potential impacts during construction.

The project is proposed to take place in fall/winter 2017 upon the approval of the Montague Conservation Commission and other agencies.

**MOTION** by, Sean Werle to issue a negative determination (Box 2) for RDA #2017-06 filed by Eversource Energy. Alex Peterkin seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

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**AGENT UPDATES:**

**Request for Certificate of Compliance for Cabot Taps NOI 2015-05 (DEP file 229-243) New England Power Company.**

**Guest:** Paul Knapik – BSC Group

A request for certificate of compliance was submitted by Paul Knapik from BSC Group requesting a certificate of compliance on behalf of New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid for the completed activities associated with the Cabot Taps Separation Project (NOI #2015-05). The Notice of Intent (NOI) was submitted in July of 2015 and the Order of Conditions (OOC) was issued in August of 2015. The clearing and new right-of way installations along with all the areas being stabilized were completed in compliance with the project plans. There was a site inspection done on November 13, 2017 (Walter Ramsey and Paul Knapik in attendance) which confirmed that the project was completed as required.

For this project Walter reminded folks that there was some offsite mitigation done for this project – the purchase of water supply land in Deerfield. This sale is still in progress due to bureaucratic holdup. Does not affect the outcome of this project. The applicant has honored its obligation to provide habitat maintenance funding for the Sawmill River Recreation Area.

**MOTION** by, Donna Francis to issue a Certificate of Compliance for Cabot Taps NOI #2015-05 RDA #2017-06 and DEP file #229-243. Sean Werle seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

**Fill at Randall Wood Drive** Mark Stinson at DEP notified the Agent of a Craigslist advertisement regarding someone on Randall Wood Drive looking for fill. Walter forwarded this to a commissioner that lives in the neighborhood to keep an eye out for unauthorized filling.

**Trails Update:** Alex Peterkin said that there was a very successful trail day (Dry Hill Summit Trail) work bee. The trail is now ready for all to enjoy and use!

**MOTION** by Sean Werle to adjourn at 7:05 pm. Donna Francis seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously**

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_