

Montague Conservation Commission

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MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 14, 2019

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

Commissioners Present: Mark Fairbrother - Chair, Justin Fermann, Donna Francis, Sean Werle and Addie Rose Holland, Alex Peterkin and Laurie Reid

Commissioners Absent: Deb Henson

Staff: Walter Ramsey – Agent

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

6:30 PM Approval of November 2018 and December 2018 Minutes:

Motion made by Donna Francis to approve the November 8, 2018 minutes. Seconded by Alex Peterkin. **Motion passed.** Addie Rose Holland, Justin Fermann, and Sean Werle all abstained from the vote.

Motion made by Addie Rose Holland to approve the December 13, 2018 minutes. Seconded by Justin Fermann. **Motion passed.** Alex Peterkin abstained from the vote.

Agent Updates:

- **Ratify Emergency Certificate EC #2019-01 filed by Jane Paulin for work to be done at 369 Old Greenfield Road for replacement of a failed septic system.**

Jane Paulin had an order from the Montague Board of Health to replace the old septic system on short order. The existing septic system and house is located within 50 feet of the buffer zone. Jane Paulin has acquired some land from her neighbor to allow her to be able to place the system further away from the BVW but is still technically still in the buffer zone area which would normally require and RDA. The Conservation Agent was made aware of the situation after a Title 5 permit was issued through the Board of Health. It would otherwise be a very straight forward negative determination and due to given the situation and the system being moved further away from the wetlands. The Health Director submitted a letter to the effect of time being of the essence to replace the failed septic.

Motion made by Sean Werle to ratify the Emergency Certificate #2019-01 filed by Jane Paulin and issued on January 17, 2019. Seconded by Addie Rose Holland **Motion passed.**

- **Montague City Road Flooding Protection Design Project – Update**

The Town of Montague received a grant from the Municipal Vulnerabilities Preparedness Program to study and engineer solution to the flooding on Montague City Road. The Town has retained the services of Wright-Pierce Engineers and is in the beginning stages of the project. Currently Wright- Pierce has flagged and delineated the wetlands area. Over the last few months they have been surveying and delineating the area. There is a packet that Walter shared with the Commissioners regarding 3 proposed alternative solutions. Those solutions being: A) Floodplain recapture and restoration which includes dredging the channel with improvements including additional wetlands restoration and floodplain recapture. B) Install drainage structures and drain pipe system to outflow south of the locus area which means when a bank overflows it would run along the side of the roadway into catch basins to channel downstream. and C) Develop and implement a long-term operation & maintenance plan.

The Agents recommendation is that Option A combined with C is optimal: Dredging and floodplain restoration solution would be the best. There is still question as to what the jurisdictional resource areas are for the project. Commission agreed that option B is not ideal. There are a lot of unknown aspects so that would not be as cost effective as stated, and may be detrimental to handling stormwater.

Next steps and actions: The consultant will come to the board for the permit (NOI) with an order of conditions to be filed by the Town. Mark Fairbrother requested to have the consultant come review the plans when there are final deliverables to be addressed. Agent will investigate this and invite the consultant if allowed under the scope of work.

Mark Fairbrother would like a letter and to meet with the Montague Board of Health and or Selectboard before the annual Canal drawdown in October takes place. He has information that there may be a clogged drain in the old canal that may be contributing to flooding on Montague City Road. Agent agreed to facilitate that correspondence.

- **Correspondence from Australis Aquaculture: Standard Waterways License Application**

Great Falls Aquaculture purchased the Australis plant at Industrial Boulevard. The company has notified the Commission that they are updating their Chapter 91 waterways license for a discharge pipe to the Connecticut River. The Commission recalled the initial construction and permitting of the project, but offered no comments at this time.

- **Correspondence from Mass Wildlife RE habitat management on Montague Plains**

Brian Hawthorne from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife sent an email to request a confirmation of Montague’s on-going permission for their habitat management and hazard fuel reduction operations on the 8 acre town owned parcel known as Assessor Map 33 Lot 31 and to secure permission for similar operations on an additional town-owned project Map 33 Lot 29 just north of a house at 97-99 Lake Pleasant Road. According to Hawthorne, the new home is within the wildland-urban interface and thus increases the urgency of reducing hazard fuels in the area. The commission approved the continuation of habitat restoration and hazard fuels reduction work in these areas.

- **2019 Conservation Agent work plan**

Walter Ramsey shared a list of Conservation-oriented projects and ongoing tasks organized by category. Municipal Projects(Millers Falls Access at Newtown Street), Land Managent (Pollinator Corridor Plan – (potential new project and partnership with FRCOG and Parks & Recreation), Land Conservation (Develop written policy for Chapter 61 Right of First refusal review) and Permitting (Review files for expired/expiring Orders of Conditions). Commission had no comments.

Motion made by Addie Rose Holland to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 PM. Seconded Sean Werle. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Exhibits:

- Montague City Road Flooding Protection Design Project
- Correspondence from Australis Aquaculture
- Correspondence from MassWildlife
- 2019 Conservation Agent Workplan