

Montague Conservation Commission

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MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 9, 2019

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

Commissioners Present: Mark Fairbrother - Chair, Sean Werle, Justin Fermann, and Alex Peterkin (6:38 pm), Donna Francis (6:38 pm), Addie Rose Holland and Laurie Reid- alternate.

Commissioners Absent: Deb Henson

Staff: Walter Ramsey – Agent

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

Approval of Minutes:

March 14, 2019 Minutes were tabled until the June meeting.

Motion made by Sean Werle to approve the April 11, 2019 Minutes. Seconded by Justin Fermann. **Motion passes.** Addie Rose Holland abstaining.

Continuation of Public Hearing Notice of Intent #2019-01 filed by the Town of Montague to conduct asbestos abatement and demolition of five connected buildings and associated areas within the Strathmore Mill Complex located at 8 and 20 Canal Road. Work will occur within Bordering Land Subject to Flooding and the 100 foot inland bank of the Connecticut River. The properties are identified as Montague Assessors Map 2 Lots 1 and 6.

WR: Provided an update since hearing was continued from 4/11/19. DEP has assigned a file number (229-0253). NHESP has issued a requisite determination letter. NHESP is requiring conditions in order to avoid a “take” of the protected species. These include a prohibition of work between April 1- June 30 and botanical field surveys for Tufted Hair grass. The particular area of concern involves the loading dock area, which is on pylons and has native vegetation growing below on the river bank.

JF: When do the botanical field surveys need to take place and is there a time line?

WR: At the moment the town does not have funding for the demo project so there is no certain timeframe, however NHESP will approve the botanist and their proposed survey plan which involves a survey schedule.

WR: recommended two findings: 1. The abatement and controlled demolition of the Strathmore Mill will be a net environmental benefit because the structure in its current state is a threat to jurisdictional resource areas.

2. The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program has determined that the project must be conditioned in order to avoid adverse effects to the Resource Area Habitats of state-listed wildlife species (310 CMR 10.58(4)(b) and 10.59) and must be conditioned in order to avoid a prohibited Take of state-listed species (321 CMR 10.18(2)(a)). See NHESP file no. 18-38083. He recommended adopting NHESP’s conditions and requires a pre-construction conference.

Motion made by Sean Werle to close the hearing and issue an order of conditions along with the findings and special conditions as stated above for NOI #2019-01. Seconded by Justin Fermann. **Motion passes.** Alex Peterkin and Donna Francis abstaining

Public Hearing Notice of Intent #2019-02 filed by Town of Montague Department of Public Works for ongoing maintenance, routine activities, repair, and improvements to various town-related projects in resource areas throughout town including restoration and maintenance of a drainage swale along Montague City Road. Representing the applicant: Larry Rusiecki – Wright Pierce Engineers, Mickey Marcus- SWCA (sub consultant)

Sean Werle recused himself from the hearing as employee of SWCA

MR: Announced that Wright Pierce is the working for the Town to address stormwater issues particularly at the Montague City Road location where there has been a continuous flooding issue. They are also working with the DPW to do a town-wide Operation and Maintenance Plan. DEP wants to have them separate the NOI into two separate filings. The ongoing maintenance and routine activities will be separated out from the Montague City Road drainage swale and restoration. There will have to be revisions done to the submittal to confirm with what DEP is looking for from Wright Pierce on these projects

MR: There will be a new narrative and form submitted by Wright Pierce for the Montague City Road project and then a separate NOI will be filed by the DPW for the ongoing maintenance and routine activities and repair work throughout the town.

MR: There would be no topping of the roadway and with a 100 year rain event with 6.5 inches of water in a 24 hour period it could be handled. To clarify the majority of the dredging and floodplain restoration will be done where the road turns and the canal follows the railroad bed and then into the woods.

Rick Reed (222 Montague City Road): Has a headwall near the end of his driveway and has lived at this location for over 40 years. “When the town took over maintenance from the state the drain that is there was cleaned out drain every year and now I can’t tell you when it was last dealt with”. The sidewalk located above the headwall is at a steep angle has or is crushing the pipe which is adding to the issues below. Mr. Reed on a few occasions has seen it back up and not allow any water through the basin along with the strong run off from the power canal which has then increased the water table to be high at all times which in turn attracts a beaver population as well. There is continuing issues in his cellar due to the excess water run off along with issues when the road is closed and cars go through the puddles at 50 mph and displace all that water onto his home and yard.

WR: Responded that this project was identified in the Municipal Vulnerabilities Plan as a high priority due to high traffic on Millers Falls Road. Given the results from the study funding has been sought out to fund the project and get these issues resolved.

MF: There was a lot of work done recently does that go into the closed drain or directly into the resource area?

MR: The Firstlight Dike drainage goes into its own separate drainage pipe.

ARH: So how far does the channeling go along Turnpike Road?

MR: 840 feet to Turnpike Road and there is 1200 linear feet of dredging in that location.

MF: Has contact happened with Pan AM Railways regarding this project?

MR: Yes the town received a letter from them and they have been very cooperative to this point. In the letter they requested that the sediment removed to be deposited back onto their properties.

MR: There will be a structural component to the project where on the west side of the road where some culverts are linked together and then cross the road to the east there will be 2 catch basins placed (near 222 Montague City Road). There will be a Cape Cod berm as a way to redirect an overflow away from the roadway right

away to the edge of the pavement and then into the catch basin (a relief point to get the water out of the roadway). This will also raise the westerly side of the channel way by 4 inches which would then keep more of the stormwater in the existing channel way and away from the roadway.

WR: More information regarding the resource areas and the impacts will be needed for the next meeting and updates to be sent a week before the meeting.

MR: requested a continuation of the public hearing for the Notice of Intent #2019-02 filed by Town of Montague Department of Public Works to June 13, 2019 at 6:30 PM.

Mark Fairbrother declared the hearing continued to June 13, 2019 at 6:30 PM.

Sean Werle rejoined the Meeting.

Agent updates:

- Enforcement Status Update- 420 Turners Falls Road
 - Walter met with owner Mr. Smith and Dave Cameron from DEP earlier this week. Mr. Smith contacted DEP and had a meeting on his site. DEP will assist to develop a restoration plan. The plan is to have some blueberry bushes and red maples planted where the removal of his picnic table and horse shoe pit are currently located. There will be follow up from DEP after the project has been completed and a letter of compliance to be issued to Mr. Smith if he accepts and implements the restoration plan.

- Overview of upcoming municipal projects:
 - Millers Falls Road Embankment project has held up through heavy rain season. Agent observed scouring of gravel at base outflow. DPW notified and advised to come up with an action plan.
 - There is a culvert on Ferry Road (at 29 South Ferry Road) that is undersized thus causing issues for a resident who brought these issues to the attention of the Planning and Conservation Department. The culvert supports a tributary to the Sawmill River. Walter looked at the site with DPW and both agreed to prioritize replacement of this culvert.
 - Complete Streets there has been a grant awarded to do some sidewalk improvements. The aspect that involves the Conservation Commission jurisdiction is a proposed paved bike path connector from the intersection of 1st and L to the Bike Path over Firstlight/Unity park property. There are some flooding issues in and around this location so some more thought has to be given to avoid making the issue worse while providing a purposeful connection to the bike path. There will be some permitting needed as it is in riverfront area and an RDA will be coming in the future to the Conservation Commission.
 - Chestnut Hill Loop Bridge is a 10 foot long bridge that is located at the four corners of Chestnut Hill Loop and the Town has received a grant to replace it. OOC will ne needed.

Motion made by Addie Rose Holland to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 PM. *Seconded by Alex Peterkin.* **Motion passes.**

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Exhibits:

NOI files 2019-01 and 2019-02