

Montague Conservation Commission

One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376

(413) 863-3200 Ext. 207

Fax: (413) 863-3222

Email: planner@montague-ma.gov

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 12, 2019

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

Commissioners Present: Mark Fairbrother - Chair, Donna Francis, Justin Fermann and Laurie Reid

Commissioners Absent: Addie Rose Holland – Alternate, Alex Peterkin, Deb Henson and Sean Werle

Staff: Walter Ramsey – Agent

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

Approval of Minutes: August 8, 2019 minutes were tabled as not enough commissioners were in attendance to vote on them.

Public Hearing: Notice of Intent #2019-04 filed by the Town of Montague for the construction of a footpath and recreation area in the riverfront area associated with the Millers River. The work will occur off Newton Street at a municipal property identified as Assessors Map 31 Lot 04.

WR: The Town of Montague has received a Recreational Trails Grant for the construction of the Millers Falls Paddlers Access and Accessible Trail off Newtown Street. The Town acquired the land in 2018 through non-payment of taxes and has decided to make it available for public use to benefit the village of Millers Falls. The purpose of the trail is to allow residents of all abilities to enjoy the natural beauty of the Millers River.

Site

The 0.9 acre parcel is located between Newton Street and the bank of the Millers River. The parcel is thus entirely within Riverfront area. It is located on the inside bend of the river. There are no mapped or observed BVW on the parcel. There is no feasible economic alternative area to put a public river access point to the Millers River elsewhere in Millers Falls and this site makes use of the existing access ramp to the river (a previously disturbed area). The entire parcel is located primarily within 100 feet of the river bank.

Work Plan

Portions of the work will be done by Montague DPW. Some parts will be done by a trail building contractor with volunteer support. The work will regrade an existing 170' gravel access ramp, install new 380' accessible gravel trail that is 5 to 6 feet wide and 120' of non-accessible trail. Associated signs and site fixtures will be part of the project. There will be no new paved areas. Vegetation removal will be limited what is essential for the trail. There will be no excavation associated with this project. Most work in the riverfront will be done by hand. No work is proposed in the flood zone. The stone materials will be stockpiled in the roadway. BMPs and erosion control will be employed to minimize ground disturbance and protect the resource area. No fences are proposed.

There might be some trees might be removed for access and a stump will be left and Walter suggests that if trees larger than 6 inches require remove- a request must be made and authorized by the Agent.

There was a proposal to clear an area for cars to pull in with boats to have access to the river. DEP in their file comments suggest that this is a parking area which is different from a footpath and would have to meet the

performance standards. Walter feels it is not critical to the project and that there is enough parking on Newton Street, so this has been eliminated this from the scope of work.

Regulations

The project should be considered a limited project under 310 CMR 10.53 (6) *“Issuing Authority may issue an Order of Conditions permitting as a limited project the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of footpaths, bike paths, and other pedestrian or non motorized vehicle access to or along riverfront areas but outside other resource areas, provided that adverse impacts from the work are minimized and that the design specifications are commensurate with the projected use and are compatible with the character of the riverfront area. Generally, the width of the access shall not exceed ten feet of pavement, except within an area that is already altered (e.g., railroad beds within rights of way). Access shall not be located in vernal pools or fenced in a manner which would impede the movement of wildlife.”*

The project will affect less than 10% of the lot, which was created prior to 1997 and is thus assumed to have no significant adverse impact.

Motion made by Donna Francis to issue a standard order of conditions for Notice of Intent #2019-04 filed by the Town of Montague. Seconded by Justin Fermann. **Motion passes.**

Request:

- 420 Turners Falls Road – Mark Fairbrother asked Walter to contact the DEP office regarding the status and if fine have been issued and collected.

Motion made by Donna Francis to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 PM. Seconded by Laurie Reid. **Motion passes.**

Approved by: _____ Date: _____