

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 10, 2020- 6:30pm

Meeting held remotely via ZOOM due to COVID-19

Meeting was recorded

Commissioners Present: M. Fairbrother (Chair), S. Werle, D. Henson, D. Francis, L. Reid, J. Fermann, A. Peterkin
Staff: Walter Ramsey (Conservation Agent)

6:30pm: Approval of Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2020. Typo acknowledged.

MOTION by S. Werle to accept the minutes. ***Seconded*** by D. Henson. ***VOTE MF (Y), DF (Y), DH (Y), SW(Y), JF (Abstain).*** ***MOTION PASSES.***

6:31pm: PUBLIC MEETING: Notice of Intent #2020-02 Montague-Fairmont Structure Replacement Project filed by GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. for Eversource Energy. The project traverses the town from Montague City to Lake Pleasant to Montague Center and work will occur in the right-of way of transmission line 1044/1632. Multiple jurisdictional resource areas will be affected.

Present: Mary Brittain and Dan Nitzche from GZA

Agent provided a status update: DEP assigned a file number (229-0259) and comments. The Commission is awaiting NHESP determination and can not close the hearing until those are received. A site visit was conducted on 9/3/2020 with Walter R, Donna F. Mary B., and Dan N. in attendance. Sites off Randall Road and Dry Hill Road and Ripley Road were inspected- all impacting riverfront resource areas.

M. Brittain (GZA) discussed comments from Mass DEP and the environmental impacts of access roads and pads pertaining to the Montague project. Eversource plans to remove the existing structures and footings; the footprint of the new structure will be smaller with no net loss of wetland. Gravel work pads and access roads will be built along existing paths used for maintenance. The total amount of gravel used amounts to 1.5 acre for work pads, and .8 acres for access roads. Cranes and other large vehicles within the right-of way necessitate the construction of gravel roads. If site/ safety conditions allow, the construction crew will install smaller work pads and access roads.

Discussion ensued about Structure 10051. Applicants clarified that this specific part of the project. The work in the RA near STR 10051 cannot meet the performance standards of 310 CMR 10.58(4) and 310 CMR 10.58(5) as work is necessary within the inner 100 feet of the RA because of physical constraints that make it unsafe to use mats in the RA because of the steepness of the slope. Placement of gravel is the only means by which the Applicant can safely conduct the proposed work. Therefore, the y request that the work proposed at STR 10051 should be reviewed under the Limited Project (310 CMR 10.53(3)d). This physical constraint of the site precludes other options from being practicable for this specific STR work activity. They have provided an updated Form 3.

Agent asked about mitigation. At the site visit, an undersized culvert serving the intermittent southern branch of Randall Brook was proposed to be replaced. At the meeting GZA claimed that offer is no longer proposed because there is no money for replacement. Mary B claimed that the utility access road will no longer be used and alternative access has been identified.

Mary Brittain comments that Eversource plans avoids stream crossings if at all possible.

WR encourages the Commission to visit the sites on their own time.

Mark Fairbrother declared Notice of Intent #2020-02 Montague-Fairmont Structure Replacement Project filed by GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. for Eversource Energy to be continued to the next regularly scheduled meeting on October 8, 2020. 6:30pm.

7:05pm: Ratification of Emergency Certificate EC#2020-02 filed by the Montague Department of Public Works and issued May 18, 2020 for a second emergency response to a stormwater conveyance failure off Millers Falls Road affecting Assessors Map 15 Lot 20 (between 89 and 103 Millers Falls Road) The Conservation Agent reports that the Montague DPW installed a temporary pipe over the summer, which has now failed. A photo of the road and washout was presented revealing between 15'-30' of erosion. On August 27 the DPW filed for emergency permission to remove some trees, extending the existing pipe and burying it in rip-rap. The Town is working with an engineering firm to examine the integrity of the emergency project.

MOTION by Donna F to ratify EC #2020-02 by Seconded by Justin F.. VOTE: Fairbrother (Y), Henson (Y) Francis(Y), Fermann (Y), Peterkin(Y), Werle (Y). MOTION PASSES.

7:11 pm- Conservation Agent Updates

Sandy Lane Solar II Construction Updates -NOI 2018-05/ DEP File#229-252.

The Town has hired engineers to come up with an alternative design to cap the extra acre. Nothing to review at this time.

RDA#2020-04 46 Dry Hill Road. While undergoing the permitted demolition, a cellar hole was found and will need to be filled. Renaissance Excavation will fill the cellar hole with clean local fill. Then they will cap and seed with a native mix. No objections by the Conservation Commission. Walter will inspect the site for erosion control before it is filled.

Topic Not Anticipated- Peterkin Resignation

A. Peterkin announced that will be resigning his commission for personal reasons. With regret, the Commission thanked Alex Peterkin for serving on the Commission for over 5 years.

MOTION by Alex P. TO ADJOURN by Seconded by Donna H. VOTE: Fairbrother (Y), Henson (Y) Francis(Y), Fermann (Y), Peterkin(Y), Werle (Y). MOTION PASSES. MEEING IS ADJOURNED 7:16 PM

Approved by: _____

Date: _____