

# Montague Conservation Commission

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## MEETING MINUTES Thursday October 14, 2021- 6:30pm

**Commissioners Present:** Mark Fairbrother, Anthony Reiber, Sean Werle, Donna Francis

**Staff:** Walter Ramsey

**Commissioners Absent:** Justin Fermann, Toby Carter

**Guest:** Margaux Reckard

*Meeting was recorded*

**6:45PM:** Meeting opened.

***MOTION** by Donna Francis to approve the minutes of September 9. VOTE D. Francis (AYE), Tony Reiber (AYE), M. Fairbrother (AYE), S. Werle (AYE), MOTION PASSES 6:45PM.*

**6:47 PM:** Consider “Farmland of Local Importance” designation to help protect farmland that would not otherwise qualify for protection with support from USDA of Mass Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program.

Conservation Agent discusses the proposal presented by Al Avril at the September meeting. Signing the “Farmland of Local Importance” does not place burdens or restrictions on these lands. Al put together a list of soil types that has potential for preservation. Examples include one farm site is off East Mineral Road (131 C soil) and another site off Court Square near the Sawmill River (131 B soil). Al uses orthophotos to establish that the sites are used for production and visits each site to confirm. Each soil type is accompanied by a detailed written description.

Commission agreed that notification to affected landowner would be beneficial, even if not required.

Agent reports no harm or downside to the designation of these soils as locally important. It is just a potential tool for preservation that a landowner could choose to use. The USDA State Conservationist would review and approve the document as the next step

***MOTION** by S. Werle to authorize the chair to sign the “Farmland for Local Importance Designation” Seconded by D. Francis. VOTE D. Francis (AYE), S. Werle (AYE), T. Reiber (AYE), M. Fairbrother (AYE). MOTION PASSES 6:54PM.*

**6:50PM:** Consider Recommendation to Selectboard and Town Meeting for the Conservation Commission to acquire custody of 2/3 acres of land in Lake Pleasant of Montague Avenue (Map 36 Lots 138,143,139,142, Map 37 Lots 1 and 3)- adjacent to Conservation Commission Lot 37-129.

*Discussion was tabled for a time when the matter can be discussed with the full Commission.*

**6:55PM:** Conservation Agent reports the Conservation Commission account balances.

- Waidlich Conservation Fund- \$13,047
- Mitigation Fund \$11,000
- Wetlands Protection Expense \$19,043

Commission wishes to replenish the Conservation fund after a recent drawdown for the Old Greenfield Road 35 acre APR. Agent suggested that a \$50,000 balance is a good target for the fund. Commission

directed agent to file a request for \$10,000 as part of the municipal annual budgeting process. The intent is to incrementally rebuild the fund with \$10K in annual installments.

Commission directed agent to investigate future mowing of the North Street Wildlife Management area with support from mitigation funds. It is believed that another RDA and agreement with DFW would be required.

Chestnut Hill Bridge is completed and will come before the commission for a certificate of compliance once the vegetation grows.

***MOTION to Adjourn by S. Werle. Seconded by A. Reiber. VOTE: D. Francis (AYE), S. Werle (AYE), A. Reiber (AYE), M. Fairbrother (AYE). MOTION PASSES 7:01PM.***