

# Montague Conservation Commission

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## MEETING MINUTES

**Thursday June 9, 2022- 6:30pm**

Meeting Held In-Person AND via ZOOM

**Commissioners Present:** Mark Fairbrother, Sean Werle, Margaux Reckard, Donna Francis, Al Averill

**Absent:** Toby Carter, Anthony Reiber, Justin Fermann

**Staff:** Walter Ramsey

Meeting was Recorded

**6:30PM:** *MOTION by D. Francis to accept the minutes of April 14, 2022. Seconded by M. Reckard. VOTE: Mark Fairbrother (AYE), Sean Werle (AYE), Margaux Reckard (AYE), Donna Francis (AYE), Al Averill (AYE), MOTION PASSES.*

**6:30PM PUBLIC HEARING Notice of Intent #2022-03 filed by Montague Department of Public Works to replace a 24" culvert under South Ferry Road with an 8' X 5' box culvert.** The work will impact resource areas associated with an unnamed tributary to the Sawmill River. Work will take place in proximity to 29 South Ferry Road. Filing is available for review at [www.montague-ma.gov/calendar](http://www.montague-ma.gov/calendar).

Tony Wonseski of SVE Engineering presents on behalf of the Montague DPW. A surveyor from SVE visited the site in November of 2021 to locate the resource areas. Massachusetts Stream Crossing guidelines indicate the culvert size should be 1.25 x the width of the bank, which in this case requires an 8 x 5' culvert. The culvert will be precast and buried two feet. The increased size of the new culvert will protect against a road wash out in a 100-year storm. Wonseski reviews the construction of the culvert, berm, and aprons. The road will be lifted about 1 foot and a TRM mat will stabilize the ground and preserve the wetland. Planned construction restrictions include a dry weather restraint (July 1-Sept30) and soil stabilization. Numbers for the bank alteration and square footage of vegetation will be updated for the Order of Conditions. The design is based on modeling data for a 100-year storm.

Andrew Hicks, abutter at 29 South Ferry Road, speaks in favor of the project and expressed gratitude to the Town for taking action.

Al Averill asks if work was done up stream has resulted in greater stream flow at South Ferry Road. Tony Wonseski responds that culvert work done on Old Greenfield Road might be contributing, but he's not certain. Al Avrill asks the abutter if he has noticed an increase in stream flow due to the culvert work up stream. Mr. Hicks responds that he thinks there is more stream flow; the problem has been exasperated by beavers.

Al Avrill asks if the larger culverts will decrease the wetlands and degrade upstream habitat. Tony Wonseski responds that he anticipated the meadows would continue to be wet, however we can not be sure. Obviously, the Commonwealth has prioritized larger culverts vis a vis the Stream Crossing Standards.

The rough cost of the project could be as much as \$500,000 because it solves more issues including habitat, wildlife, and global warming considerations.

Margaux Reckard voices concerns about sand from farmlands blowing into the tributary. Drought conditions could make these conditions worse in the future. It is unclear if this condition will affect the stream as it is actively managed farmland.

The Conservation Agent reviewed the DEP comments, specifically how the performance standards are met. SVE responded to the DEP with a memorandum which can be found in the project file. The project is located in Priority Habitat and a NHESP has provided a determination of “no-take”. That statement is in the file.

*MOTION by S. Werle to issue the Order of Conditions for #2022-03 filed by Montague Department of Public Works to replace a 24” culvert under South Ferry Road with an 8’ X 5’ box culvert. Seconded by D. Francis. VOTE: Mark Fairbrother (AYE), Sean Werle (AYE), Margaux Reckard (AYE), Donna Francis (AYE), Al Averill (AYE), MOTION PASSES. 7:12pm.*

**7:15 PM:** Agent Report

**NOI 2018-05-Sandy Lane Solar project filed by Town of Montague: amended Burn Dump Closure Design to satisfy DEP closeout requirements.**

The Conservation Agent and DEP had a walk-through of the Burn Dump. DEP is requiring some closeout action prior to issuance of the closure documents for the former landfill. GZA has been contracted by the town for engineering services to address the issues which primarily involve erosion on the north end and installation of a secondary retention pond and overflow outlet at the southern end. Trenches and a permeable surface under the solar canopy will improve drainage at the north end of the site. A permanent berm will be installed to collect the water from the lower basin. The DEP requests input from the Conservation Commission about a new outlet structure to improve the resource area in the lower basin. The Commission has no objections.

Topic not anticipated:

A “turtle crossing” sign was requested by a resident for Montague City Road via an email to the Conservation Agent. It was noted that the town does not have a protocol or precedent for “turtle crossing” signs and the DPW is responsible for road signs. The Commission was not inclined to advocate for signs from the town at this time. Agent will communicate with the resident.

*MOTION to Adjourn by D. Francis. Seconded by M. Reckard. VOTE: Mark Fairbrother (AYE), Sean Werle (AYE), Margaux Reckard (AYE), Donna Francis (AYE), Al Averill (AYE), MOTION PASSES. 7:26pm.*