

TOWN OF NEEDHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 25, 2021

Under Governor Baker's emergency "Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, S20," issued March 12, 2020 and in effect until termination of the emergency, meeting of public bodies may be conducted virtually provided that adequate access is provided to the public.

LOCATION: Zoom Virtual Platform – the meeting was held virtually per Governor Baker's Emergency Order.

ATTENDING: Artie Crocker, Sue Barber, William Murphy, Stephen Farr, Peter Oehlkers, Alison Richardson, Deb Anderson (Director of Conservation), Clay Hutchinson (Conservation Specialist).

P. Oehlkers opened the public meeting at 7:00 p.m.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS –

1. Minutes

None at this time.

2. Enforcement & Violation Updates

None at this time.

HEARINGS/APPOINTMENTS

94 BROOKSIDE ROAD (DEP FILE #234-861) – NOTICE OF INTENT

Susan McArthur, McArthur Environmental Consulting, LLC, explained that there is a new property owner for this parcel.

Mark Harding, property owner, gave a background of the property. He stated that he would like the backyard lawn area to remain as such. He would also like to keep the fence and repair it as need be.

A. Crocker expressed concern regarding the use of chemicals on the lawn, as it runs directly into the wetland. P. Oehlkers stated that it is the Commission's job to make sure a certain buffer is maintained to keep the integrity of the wetland. However, the homeowner is also able to keep a lawn area that has been in place since 1988, which appears this one was.

A. Richardson noted that the Commission usually asks for new fences to be raised a bit, to allow for wildlife passage underneath. D. Anderson agreed that the Commission would generally require there to be a gap under the fence along the area it runs through the wetland. The Commission would also generally consider getting back some of the 25' buffer.

A. Crocker asked if the area is wet enough to eliminate the need for irrigation. S. McArthur stated that there is no plan to irrigate the area at this time.

S. Barber asked about installing shrubs against the fence to allow for an additional buffer area. M. Harding stated that he is happy to place a row of shrubs along the fence.

P. Oehlkers agreed that the Commission would either like to see a separation between the lawn and wetland, such as shrubs as a tier barrier. Existing lawns are allowed to be maintained but not necessarily replaced. The Commission would like to see a revised planting plan that includes these items.

There was no public comment at this time.

Motion to continue the hearing for 94 Brookside Road (DEP File #234-861) to April 8, 2021, at request of the applicant, by A. Crocker, seconded by S. Farr, approved 6-0-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

HIGHLAND AVENUE BRIDGE (DEP FILE #234-817) – REQUEST FOR MINOR MODIFICATION

Marie Sullivan, Stantec, explained that a temporary overhead wire system needs to be put in at the bridge for the project. The overhead wire needs 10' of clearance on each side, in case of a storm event, leading to removal of some trees. A final utility line will be placed at the back of the bridge. Temporary support under the arch of the bridge is needed, leading to removal of some of the existing stones that line the bottom. These will be replaced with temporary concrete leveling pads/footings. It will take approximately two weeks for this to be installed. The project will take approximately 12-15 weeks, and another two-week period will be needed to remove the items from the site. A path will need to be cleared from the road to the temporary utility pole area for access. The proposal is to install this and allow for flows to continue through the arch during that time. Recreational travel will be halted through the area during the time of construction during the day. A turbidity barrier and dewatering discharge basin will be installed during work in the southern span of the bridge. Additional tree clearing from what was original in the NOI is proposed, including three trees over 8" and a handful of trees less than 6".

The Commission discussed potential tree mitigation on the site.

There was no public comment at this time.

Motion to approve a minor modification for Highland Avenue Bridge (DEP File #234-817), by B. Murphy, seconded by S. Barber, approved 5-0-1 [S. Farr abstaining.]

POTENTIAL CONSERVATION LAND PURCHASE DISCUSSION

The Commission discussed a potential land acquisition on the Charles River, near the Farley Pond area. The land is for sale for approximately \$3.5M. It is not directly contiguous to any other

conservation land, but it leads directly to the River. The Commission discussed an eventual conservation restriction when the land changes owners.

D. Anderson noted that the annual MCAA conference will be held April 6-17.

There was discussion regarding the Commission becoming involved with a trail project for Earth Day.

D. Anderson read a letter from Janice Hunt regarding maintenance and upkeep of Ridge Hill.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn the meeting, by A. Crocker, seconded by S. Farr, approved 6-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING:

April 8, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. location to be determined.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*