

TOWN OF NEEDHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Under Governor Baker's Act "Extending Certain COVID-10 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency", extending the "Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, §20," issued June 16, 2021, and in effect until April 1, 2022, 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: Stephen Farr, Artie Crocker, Peter Oehlkers, William Murphy, Alison Richardson, Deb Anderson (Director of Conservation), Clay Hutchinson (Conservation Specialist).

Peter 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

SOUTH STREET AND DEDHAM AVE BOAT ACCESS (DEP FILE #234-878) – *continued* NOTICE OF INTENT

Motion to continue the hearing for South Street and Dedham Ave Boat Access (DEP File #234-878) to March 24, 2022, by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 4-0-0.

631 SOUTH STREET (DEP FILE #234-872) – *continued* NOTICE OF INTENT

Alison Richardson joined the meeting.

Brian Nelson, Metrowest Engineering, explained that both properties, 631 and 649 South Street, are owned by the same owner. The proposal is for the removal of seven dying or dead trees. A removal schedule was presented along with a replanting plan that included leaving snags, fallen logs adjacent to the cuts, planting of six new trees, and planting of 45 shrubs. Pursuant to the last Commission meeting, the owner gave her blessing for the proposed planting plan. One previous comment from the Commission was to fill an area with plantings, which has been shown on the revised plan.

P. Oehlkers noted that this should be treated as a natural area that should be allowed to grow as wild as possible. There should be no leaf removal, pruning of shrubs, etc.

There was no public comment at this time.

Motion to close the hearing for 631 South Street (DEP File #234-872), by A. Crocker, seconded by S. Farr, approved 5-0-0.

649 SOUTH STREET (DEP FILE #234-874) – *continued* NOTICE OF INTENT

This item was addressed concurrently with the previous agenda item.

Motion to close the hearing for 649 South Street (DEP File #234-874), by A. Crocker, seconded by S. Farr, approved 5-0-0.

0 WALKER LANE AND 0 CHARLES RIVER STREET - WALKER POND STORMWATER IMPROVEMENT (DEP FILE #234-8XX) – NOTICE OF INTENT

Tom Ryder, Acting Town Engineer, explained that this project is to make improvements to the stormwater at Walker Pond.

Phil Paradis, BETA Group Inc., stated that the proposal is to provide a phosphorous control plan for this area. The watershed for the work in question is a tributary to Walker Pond. An in-depth study of the watershed was completed. It appears Walker Pond is degraded due to the current phosphorus load. These improvements are a first step in the process. Three areas of the site currently do not have any phosphorus load reduction capabilities, and this will be managed. The load will be reduced by approximately 2.5lbs per year. The load into Walker Pond needs to be reduced by 33.74lbs overall. The project involves work on Walker Lane, which is currently 24' wide with a paved intersection. The existing drainage system is two catch basins. The proposal is to reduce the pavement width and curbing on the north side. Curbing along another section will also be relocated. This should lead to the reduction of 5,000 s.f. of pavement in this area. A stone diaphragm will be installed and an 8' section will be graded to install a filter strip. An infiltration trench will pick up drainage from an existing pipe, which will be retrofitted with a leaching manhole and a sump. An 8" perforated pipe set in stone will be installed to maximize infiltration of phosphorus. Soils in this area are rated as A soils, which makes this infiltration economical.

P. Paradis stated that the second project involves clearing a portion of adjacent conservation land and providing an infiltration basin, using two catch basins. An overflow will be directed toward the wetland. An outlet sediment trap will allow for treatment prior to discharge in this area.

P. Paradis stated that there was previous concern regarding the number of trees proposed to be removed. All trees have been surveyed. The trees in this area are fairly dense. The proposal is to remove 9-10 trees, two of which are dead or dying. The width of the swale was reduced to avoid impacts to some trees. One abutter expressed concern regarding placement of replacement trees, and this will be considered. 12 replacement trees are currently proposed.

P. Oehlkers suggested considering the species of trees proposed to be removed and that five of them are Norway maples, which are an invasive species. There may be room to negotiate the number of trees to be replaced.

P. Paradis explained that the conservation land in this area is primarily wet.

A. Richardson asked if the phosphorus load is highest in the summer. The holes in the proposed system will likely freeze over in the winter.

David Newman, 34 Russell Road, asked if Walker Lane will be reformed and narrowed. P. Paradis agreed that this is the proposal. D. Newman noted that he has some landscaping placed in this area. P. Paradis stated that the area would be loamed and seeded with pollinator seed mix. D. Newman asked about further discussions regarding the plans. T. Ryder stated that abutters will be met with in order to answer questions and review concerns with the plans.

Peter Hauschka, 105 Walker Lane, stated that his frontage is right near the proposed saw cut along Walker Lane. He expressed concern regarding the area up to the meadow in this area being mowed. He asked if the proposed mowing is integral to maintaining the infiltration trench. Mowing attracts geese and could increase the phosphorus problem. P. Paradis stated that mowing would only occur once or twice a year to keep larger tree growth down.

D. Anderson noted that she has not yet reviewed the wetland delineation on the site. She will try to visit the site next week.

Motion to continue the hearing for 0 Walker Lane and 0 Charles River Street – Walker Pond Stormwater Improvement (DEP File #234-8XX), to March 24, 2022, by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 5-0-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

RIDGE HILL DEMOLITION PLAN – DISCUSSION

Hank Haff, Director of Design and Construction, stated that the Town is planning to raze the house and garage at the Ridge Hill property this summer. This project will go out to bid shortly. The scope of work has been reduced to limit the impacts to the site. Erosion control systems will be installed.

Dave Mentzer, Dore & Whittier, explained that there will be a water line replaced by the DPW on the site and one abandoned septic structure will be filled. All areas will be filled and seeded with a meadow mix.

The Commission discussed the plan and noted no major concerns.

The Commission reviewed the draft Orders of Conditions for 631 South Street (DEP File #234-872) and 649 South Street (DEP File #234-874). The Commission discussed the need for boundary markers on the sites but decided that an as-built plan would not be required.

Motion to waive the work within the 25' buffer zone for 649 South Street (DEP File #234-874), by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 5-0-0.

Motion to waive the fee for work within the 25' buffer zone for 649 South Street (DEP File #234-874), by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 5-0-0.

Motion issue an Order of Conditions for 649 South Street (DEP File #234-874), by A. Crocker, seconded by S. Farr, approved 5-0-0.

Motion to waive the work within the 25' buffer zone for 631 South Street (DEP File #234-872), by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 5-0-0.

Motion to waive the fee for work within the 25' buffer zone for 631 South Street (DEP File #234-872), by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 5-0-0.

Motion to issue an Order of Conditions for 631 South Street (DEP File #234-872), by S. Farr, seconded A. Crocker by, approved 5-0-0.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn the meeting, by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 5-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING:

March 24, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. location to be determined.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*