

TOWN OF NEEDHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 13, 2025

Under Governor Healey'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 March 2023, 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: Dave Herer (Chair), Reade Everett, Sue Barber, Bill Hebard, Fred Moder, Polina Safran, Deb Anderson (Director of Conservation), Clay Hutchinson (Conservation Specialist)

D. Herer opened the public meeting at 7:00 p.m.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS –

1. Minutes

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 23, 2025, as amended, by F. Moder, seconded by B. Hebard, approved 6-0-0.

2. Enforcement Orders

D. Anderson stated that there has been quite a bit of tree removal at 692 Central Avenue that may be in the Commission's jurisdiction. She will stop by the address once more before sending a certified letter to the owner.

HEARINGS/APPOINTMENT

KEOLIS/MBTA VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN – REQUEST FOR DETERMINATION OF APPLICABILITY

It was noted that this hearing would be continued to March 27, 2025.

35 MEADOWBROOK ROAD (DEP FILE #234-942) – *continued* NOTICE OF INTENT

Susan McArthur, McArthur Environmental Consulting, explained that the Commission requested additional mitigation and 1,400 s.f. was added to the plan, totaling 3,450 s.f. This will be a naturalized no-mow area and will be marked with placards.

D. Anderson noted that the plan no longer includes a fence. In order to keep the mitigation area as a meadow, it will need to be mowed once a year.

There was no public comment at this time.

Motion to close the hearing for 35 Meadowbrook Road (DEP File #234-942), by S. Barber, seconded by F. Moder, approved 6-0-0.

0 CHENEY STREET/0 RAILROAD STREET (DEP FILE #234-943) – continued NOTICE OF INTENT

There was no additional comment at this time.

Motion to close the hearing for 0 Cheney Street/0 Railroad Street (DEP File #234-943), by P. Safran, seconded by R. Everett, approved 6-0-0.

914 CHARLES RIVER STREET (DEP FILE #234-944) – NOTICE OF INTENT

Hailey Page, Weston & Sampson, explained that this project is a well investigation project located at the Needham Water Treatment Plant Facility. This application was filed on behalf of the Needham Department of Public Works Water & Sewer Division. The actual project site is located at 914 Charles River Street. Associated wetland resources that were delineated include adjacent bordering vegetated wetlands and an intermittent stream that runs through the site. This is a proposed well exploration program. The test boring locations have been selected to identify a redundant well supply to meet the future needs of the system. If the existing wells were ever to be placed offline, this would be a backup source. Currently the primary source of Needham's drinking water is the Charles River well field, which contains three groundwater wells that directly tie into the water treatment plant. The Town's secondary source comes from the MWRA, which is primarily used in the summer. Needham also has emergency interconnections to provide and receive water from the neighboring towns of Wellesley and Dedham. In 2018, Needham averaged 3.6 million gallons of water per day; 73% was produced from its primary source and 27% from the secondary source. There are existing fire roads throughout the water treatment plant facility which are beneficial for site exploration and eventually will be beneficial for the construction of the redundant well.

Frank Getchell, Weston & Sampson, explained that the purpose of this project is to provide a redundant groundwater supply for Needham in the same vicinity as the other wells that currently provide water. The aquifer is fairly prolific in this area but there are constraints in terms of where the redundant well can be located, one of them being the Mass DEP requirement for a Zone 1 radius of 400' and the other one being that it is important to provide the highest yield possible while minimizing any kind of overlap with the other wells. Most of the wells in this area have iron and manganese issues and so periodically need to be taken offline to be rehabilitated. This is one of the main intents for the redundant well. Three potential exploration sites were mapped out. There will be a bit of disruption around the actual well site for the purpose of drilling. There will be sampling done during the drilling to characterize the materials and to look for coarser grained materials, likely down to 100-120'. The intention is to minimize any disruption to the well site itself. What will be left behind is a 1.5'-2' steel casing sticking up with a cap on it. Once the test well is proven and a location has been identified, a different type of drill rig will be used to create a larger diameter test well, but this initial proposal is only for the exploratory drilling.

H. Page explained that the well test location is located within the 100 Year Flood Zone, which borders land subject to flooding and there could be up to 600 s.f of impact. Appropriate erosion and sediment controls will surround the area. There may be some vegetation clearing required for the rig to be able to access the site. There will also be some impacts within the local buffer zones, including the 25' buffer zone, the 50' buffer zone, and 100' buffer zone. No alterations are proposed to the existing fire access roads. The investigation activity impacts will be temporary in nature, with the affected areas returned to pre-investigation conditions upon the completion of work.

There were no Commissioner or Staff comments at this time. There was no public comment at this time. There was agreement to review an Order of Conditions at the next meeting.

Motion to continue the hearing for 914 Charles River Street (DEP File #234-944), to February 27, 2025, by F. Moder, seconded by R. Everett, approved 6-0-0.

40 HIGHLAND AVENUE/14-16 RIVERSIDE DRIVE (DEP FILE #234-945) – NOTICE OF INTENT

Matt Varrell, Lucas Environmental, explained that this application is for two properties at 40 Highland Ave. and 14-16 Riverside St. Currently, the property consists of two lots, which includes the existing Chestnut Motors Auto Repair and an existing multifamily dwelling. The proposal is to subdivide the two lots into three lots, splitting off the Chestnut Motors building onto its own lot, with the rest of the property subdivided into two residential lots. There is no bylaw jurisdiction on this property. The sites consist of an outer 200' riverfront area, leading down to the Charles River. There are also bordering vegetated wetlands located off the site towards the river. An abbreviated notice of resource area delineation was filed in 2020, and an Order of Resource Area Delineation (ORAD) was issued in September 2020 and subsequently extended in July 2023. The ORAD is currently valid through September 2025. During the ORAD process, in addition to defining the well and resource boundaries on and off the site, it was discovered that the site was a historic dumping ground. A finding was made that the site is previously degraded through the presence of this dumping ground and therefore the redevelopment performance standards under the Wetlands Protection Act would apply. The proposed development has gone through the Planning Board and received approval. The driveway has been approved by the Fire Department. The total riverfront area proposed to be disturbed is approximately 15,850 s.f. which includes a portion of the driveway, a small portion of one building, and a portion of another building. The proposed planting plan includes a conservation mix and fairly substantial plantings throughout the water's edge towards the river. A redevelopment project has to show a net benefit to the riverfront area on the site. This will be done by removing the materials that were dumped on the site and bringing in proper stable fill. The area will then be planted. When the project is complete, there will be approximately 10,878 s.f. of lawn and landscape area, and 4,972 s.f. of impervious surfaces consisting of the roadway and portions of the buildings.

F. Moder asked if there will be trees and vegetation removed as part of the project. D. Anderson stated that the bylaw does not include riverfront area as a resource area, so the Commission's

jurisdiction ends at the 100' buffer zone to the bank of the stream. Tree removal outside of this area will not have to be considered as part of the jurisdiction. M. Varrell stated that the area is mostly forested, and trees are proposed to be removed as part of the project.

In response to a question from S. Barber, M. Varrell explained that the outer 100' riverfront area was mostly within the dumping ground. Construction will be contained within the area of the previous dumping ground.

There was discussion regarding the proposed plantings.

D. Herer stated that he reviewed the stormwater plan and believes it to be adequate.

Paul, abutter to this property, explained that the fill goes down only 3'-4'. Under that is the original farmland of the site. Most of the existing trees on the site are diseased or insect ridden.

There was no additional public comment at this time. The Commission agreed to continue this hearing in order to review a draft Order of Conditions at the next meeting.

It was noted that P. Safran had stepped away from the meeting at this time.

Motion to continue the hearing for 40 Highland Avenue/14-16 Riverside Drive (DEP File #234-945), to February 27, 2025, by F. Moder, seconded by S. Barber, approved 5-0-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

1616 GREAT PLAIN AVENUE (DEP FILE #234-900) – REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

Diane Simonelli, Field Resources, explained that the original Order was open for a homeowner who decided not to move to Needham and ended up selling the project to another homeowner. The proposal is to close the Order for the new homeowner and the request is for a complete Certificate of Compliance. The original house was substantially larger than the one that was built but the patio was slightly smaller. An infiltration system with two separate chambers was proposed, but these chambers were combined. The driveway was substantially, 243 s.f., larger. Plantings were proposed to be on the wetlands side of the proposed fence but were planted on the side of the fence closest to the home. The plantings have not yet completed their growing season.

D. Anderson asked why the driveway is substantially larger. D. Simonelli explained that this was due to a turnabout being added. This was added furthest from the wetlands.

There were no Commissioner comments at this time.

Motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 1616 Great Plain Avenue (DEP File #234-900), by S. Barber, seconded by B. Hebard, approved 5-0-0.

103 WAYNE ROAD (DEP FILE #234-910) – REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

Tom Schutz, Goddard Consulting, explained that this was a Notice of Intent for the raze and rebuild of a single family house on the property. This was entirely in the buffer zone to an intermittent stream and BVW. The raze and rebuild was slightly different than the footprint of the existing house, with some encroachment further into the buffer zone but entirely within lawn. For mitigation, plantings were proposed in the rear of the property. The request is for a partial Certificate of Compliance as the second year of monitoring is not yet completed, but the applicant would like to close out the building portion of the project at this time.

D. Herer stated that the engineer signed off that no deviations were noticed and a monitoring report for the first year has been submitted.

There were no Commissioner comments at this time.

Motion to issue a partial Certificate of Compliance for 103 Wayne Road (DEP File #234-910), by R. Everett, seconded by B. Hebard, approved 5-0-0.

P. Safran rejoined the meeting.

The Board reviewed the draft Order of Conditions for 35 Meadowbrook Road (DEP File #234-942).

Motion to waive the requirement for no work in the 25' buffer zone for 35 Meadowbrook Road (DEP File #234-942), by S. Barber, seconded by P. Safran, approved 6-0-0.

Motion to waive the fee for work in the 25' No Disturb Zone for 35 Meadowbrook Road (DEP File #234-942), by P. Safran, seconded by R. Everett, approved 6-0-0.

Motion to issue an Order of Conditions for 35 Meadowbrook Road (DEP File #234-942), by F. Moder, seconded by R. Everett, approved 6-0-0.

The Board reviewed the draft Order of Conditions for 0 Cheney Street/0 Railroad Street (DEP File #234-943).

Motion to issue a waiver for work on the bank of an intermittent stream, limited work in the bordering vegetated wetland, and work within the 25' No Disturb Zone for 0 Cheney Street/0 Railroad Street (DEP File #234-943), by R. Everett, seconded by B. Hebard, approved 6-0-0.

Motion to issue an Order of Conditions for 0 Cheney Street/0 Railroad Street (DEP File #234-943), by F. Moder, seconded by R. Everett, approved 6-0-0.

P. Safran exited the meeting.

TOWN OF NEEDHAM WETLANDS PROTECTION REGULATIONS – REVISED REGULATIONS APPROVAL

D. Herer explained that comments were received on the draft revised regulations. The Commission agreed to review the revised regulations with the intention of receiving public comment and voting on them at the next meeting. D. Herer stated that the Commission could consider asking the Town to revise the Wetlands Bylaw to include the riverfront area.

S. Barber asked the Commission to consider revoting on holding meetings in-person again.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn the meeting, by S. Barber, seconded by F. Moder, approved 5-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

NEXT PUBLIC MEETING:

February 27, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. location to be determined.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*