

West Newbury

Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:30 pm, July 1, 2019 Conservation Commission Office, 1910 Building

Members Present: Chairman Dawne Fusco; Wendy Reed, Margaret Hawkins, Tom Atwood, Conservation Agent Bert Comins. Mr. Atwood participated by phone.

Discussion: Essex County Trails Association—Coffin Street Trail Bridge & Water Tower Trail

Essex County Trail Association (ECTA) Board Member Deborah Hamilton appeared to discuss 1) ECTA's plan to upgrade the Riverbend Trail at Coffin Street with a bridge and 2) ideas concerning the badly eroded Red Trail running downhill from the water tank near Page School.

Regarding the proposed Coffin Street bridge, ECTA is concerned about the cost of such a long (roughly 50') bridge as proposed. Ms. Hamilton stated that this appears to be unnecessarily large. Perhaps a 30' bridge would sufficiently cover the wet area.

The Commission advised that another site walk and further consideration would be required to evaluate the proposed smaller size bridge.

Ms. Hamilton noted that ECTA had heard that the Open Space Committee was considering relocating the Red Trail at the Page School water tower (which does not involve Commission-jurisdictional wetlands) and was wondering who would do that work. Ms. Reed, who serves on the Open Space Committee as well at the Conservation Commission, explained that the Open Space Committee is considering an alternate foot trail through a field for those who wish to bypass the Red Trail until it is in better shape. Ms. Hamilton said that ECTA may be able to provide some funds and do brush clearing on the Red Trail.

Discussion: Pentucket School—Filing Procedures

Ms. Reed reported that the Pentucket High/Middle School architects from Dore & Whittier held a meeting with Conservation Commission representatives, among others, of West Newbury and Groveland. The architects' goal was to have one joint filing before both municipalities' Conservation Commission. Ms. Reed checked with the Department of Environmental Protection and was informed that the filings and the public hearings need to be done separately for each town. She also noted that the wetlands situation was different for each town at the school campus—there was little overlap.

Additionally, the architects wanted to know if the Commission would 1) have a joint site walk with Groveland; 2) waive fees for this project, and/or 3) require a 3rd party review. Chairman Fusco observed that it was not feasible to make these decisions without first seeing a plan for the project. Additionally, the applicants plan to undertake a new wetlands delineation, which should be completed in the next few months.

The plan should be submitted to the Commission before its next meeting on July 15. A timeline should also be available then. *The Commission determined to defer consideration of these question until its next meeting.*

Mr. Atwood said that it is his understanding that the architects' intent for the new school is to use more modern methods of storm water management with a retention system to be located under the parking lot. He also noted that it may be beneficial to have a 3rd party review because of the large size of this project and the complexities of managing runoff while construction (with many moving pieces and stages) is underway.

Discussion: Meet The New Conservation Agent

The Commission discussed with Mr. Comins items needed to help him settle in as the new Conservation Agent. *Ms. Reed will check with Town Manager Angus Jennings about budget resources for training courses for Mr. Comins.* Chairman Fusco confirmed that the Selectmen approved the Agent's salary.

Ms. Reed noted that the Agent will need to hold announced office hours for 2 hours each workday. Mr. Comins said that he planned to be in the office from 7:30 to 9:30 each morning. *The Commission will check on this with Mr. Jennings, who apparently preferred an 8 a.m. start time.*

Discussion: Minutes

The Commission voted 4-0-0 to approve the regular meeting and Executive Session minutes of June 17, 2019, as amended.

The Commission voted 4-0-0 to establish a procedure in which the members will 1) review the minutes electronically (with no hard copy print out at the meetings) and 2) timely communicate any revision(s) to the minute taker so that a final draft of minutes can be provided to the Commission prior to the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled Con Com meeting is Monday, July 15, 2019

Adjournment

The Commission adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Meeting Documents

Presentations and records associated with each matter identified, as included in Mr. Comins' files.

Respectfully submitted