



TOWN OF PALMER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Sarah Brodeur, Chair
Donald Blais, Jr, Vice Chair
Peter Izyk
David Cotter

Agent: Angela Panaccione

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MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY MARCH 7, 2017 @ 7:00 PM

Members Present: Sarah Brodeur (Chair)
Donald Blais, Jr (Vice Chair)
Peter Izyk
Dave Cotter
Angela Panaccione (Agent)

Members Absent: All Present

Also Present: No public was present

Meeting Opens: 7:03 PM – Sarah Brodeur (Chair)

7:03 PM Administrative Matters: Minute Approval – February 21, 2017

Motion made by Donald Blais, Jr to approve the minutes from February 21, 2017, as corrected

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk

No further discussion – vote taken: 4-0-0

7:07 PM Administrative Matters: MACC Payable \$115.00

Motion made by Donald Blais, Jr to approve the payable to MACC in the amount of \$115.00, as payment for MACC Spring Conference for Sarah Brodeur, to be held Saturday March 4, 2017, from 8am-6pm @ Holy Cross in Worcester

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk

No further discussion – vote taken: 4-0-0

7:11 PM Chair Reports: Letter to Congress – Protect Funding for AmeriCorps

The Chair has recommended the Conservation Commission send a letter to Congress, regarding the Presidents initial consideration of eliminating Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and its vital programs in the FY 2018 budget proposal. The letter would request our Congressmen protect funding for the CNCS, the federal agency that administers national service programs such as AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. Unlike many federal grant programs, the federal investment in national service generates matching support from private, philanthropic and local sources. Every dollar invested in national service results in returns to society; higher earnings, increased outputs, and other community benefits.

The Agent will draft a letter for the next meeting. The letter should mention AmeriCorps in its entirety, not a specific program (such as Student Conservation Associations (SCA) or Watershed Stewards). Locally, the Commission has worked mostly with SCA. Our entire First Street Trail Project is dependent upon the 10-day work crew provided by AmeriCorps SCA, and the trails, Kiosk and Bog Bridge at Midura were constructed by AmeriCorps SCA in the early 2000s.

Donald Blais, Jr recommended we should send the letter to Congressman Neal and to also get the support of Town Council as well.

7:15 PM Land Management Committee Reports

The subcommittee met today to discuss the Midura Expansion Program and other outreach events planned. The cookout at Midura has been rescheduled until June 10, 2017 in hopes the Town will be notified on whether it has received the culvert grant from DCR. Angela will make post card invitations to the event based on the draft invite the subcommittee reviewed. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 4, 2017 at 4:30pm. Angela will also be reading “Big Night for Salamanders” to kids during April Vacation week, as part of the Commissions targeted outreach to kids. Hopefully this can coincide with a field trip to a vernal pool in April.

7:18 PM Administrative Matters: Other Projects, Monitoring, Enforcement and Violations

1. Support Water Quality Testing Again: The Commission will fund 2 sites again this year for E Coli sampling. C4R has expanded the testing to 7 events, June-September. The cost will be \$200/site, and the Commission will sponsor Swift River off First Street & Ware River off Bennett. The Commission also discussed possibly testing at the second rest stop on MA RT-67 (opposed to Ware River/Bennett Street location). The monitoring is part of an annual program aimed at providing watershed residents and visitors with practical information concerning the health of our local rivers. The data collected is determined to be of reliable quality and consistent with state standards for water quality monitoring and results are posted regularly online.

Motion made by Peter Izyk to support water quality sampling (E.coli) for Ware River (Bennett St) & the Swift River (First St)

Motion seconded by Donald Blais

No further discussion – vote taken: 4-0-0

2. Request for Fee Waiver – Lake Thompson Civic Association: The LTCA requested a fee waiver for the Local Ordinance Fee. Last year the Commission reduced the fee from \$3650, to \$100. This year, under the amended Fee Schedule, the project fee again could be the \$3650 (\$100/acre of project site), but it could also be \$1,631,707 (\$1/SF of land under water restoration).

The main reason the previous OOC was closed is because the LTCA desired to add the additional activity of hydroraking into the project scope. The amount of resource areas impacted, and the type of impacts associated with hydroraking are far greater than species specific chemical treatments.

The Commission also discussed the amount of the additional State NOI fee required by the applicant. Currently, the NOI fee paid to the Commission & MADEP was for one (1) single activity. Under the regulations, the NOI fee is per activity so there should be two fees paid; one for the activity of chemical treatments and another for the activity of hydroraking. The Commission will wait until the public hearing to determine the amount of the additional NOI fee.

Motion made by Donald Blais to adjust the Local Ordinance fee for the LTCA to \$500, to account for the various activities

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk

No further discussion – vote taken: 4-0-0

3. Table at TRACK Event: The Commission will have a table at the 3 Rivers Art, Community Knowledge event scheduled for Saturday May 6, 2017 at PHCC. Dave Cotter will table from 10am-1pm, Donald Blais will table from 1pm-3pm, and Sarah Brodeur will table from 3pm-6pm.
4. Upcoming MACC Trainings: The Agent provided a copy of the education schedule off MACC website and recommended Commissioner take a training or two.
5. Stormwater Monitoring: The Agent attended a very informative workshop at the MACC Conference on The role of Conservation Commissions in the new MS4 permit. If you look on the Town of Palmer's NPDES PII and MS4 General Permit Annual Report the Conservation Agent has been assigned several tasks that must be completed to keep us in compliance with the state regulations. One MS4 requirement is to develop and implement a Stormwater Education Plan, which is assigned to the Commission. Furthermore, the new MS4 requires development of a database of the private sites in town (that include a mix of industrial, commercial, and high-density residential sites) and yearly inspections be completed of the properties to ensure compliance with Town's stormwater maintenance. Additionally, regular monitoring of active construction sites for proper erosion & sediment controls is required. The Agent already performs regular inspections of active construction sites in town, and has a database of stormwater permits issued through conservation. This could easily be combined with planning boards to develop a master database of commercial stormwater permits in town.

The Agent will meet with DPW staff (Gerry & Kenny) on March 21, 2017 to review the new construction & post-construction monitoring requirements. The DPW does not currently handle Commercial or Industrial properties in town.

6. Site Plan Review – Robinson Rd Earth Removal Permit: The Agent provided comments to the Planning Board regarding their Special Permit and Site Plan Review for a proposed earth removal project off Robinson Road. According to the Site Plan (dated 12/12/16) and GIS maps available at the Conservation Office, there appear to be significant Wetland Resource Areas subject to protection under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (310 CMR 10.00) both on and in close proximity to the property. Since a portion of the work lies within buffer zone and potentially wetland resource areas the Applicant will be required to file a Notice of Intent with the Commission for the proposed earth removal activities.

Upon initial review of the site plan, the Agent noted several areas of concern to be addressed prior to the Applicant filing a NOI with the Commission. These include:

- The wetland line on the current site plan is not numbered. Under the Town of Palmer's Wetlands Regulations, all wetlands flagging shall be numbered consecutively on site, and on the corresponding site plan.
- The extent of the wetlands on the current site plan does not reflect the actual wetland limits on the property. Additionally, past aerial photos from 2010 and false color photos from 2005 show a lot of wet areas on the eastern half of the property (Sheet 3 of 8) that are not depicted on the site plan.
- Two (2) mapped jurisdictional streams are not represented on the current site plan.

- There is a potential vernal pool located on site that is not shown on the site plans.
 - Existing condition and Operation Plan shows “Existing Roads” either crossing or in very close proximity to the wetlands. Please note any skid road or logging trail associated with a FCP is for Forestry access only. Upon completion of a cut, any wetlands crossing are to be removed. No “existing road” through a wetland should be shown on the plans.
 - As this is a change of use of the roads, they must be permitted as such. As this is a commercial earth removing project, limited project provisions do not apply. Any roads through wetlands that are designated as “existing” will need to be removed & restored.
 - The limit of work and the operating line do not appear to be accurate, as the access road located off Robinson Road is not included in wither the LOW or operating line.
 - The application appears to be for an initial phase of earth removal activities. Please be advised the Commission require our application to be presented as one single and complete project. This means the Notice of Intent you file with the Commission must be for all activities on the subject parcel
 - The Commission would also like it to be noted there appears to be some unresolved issues with a Forest Cutting Plan (FCP #227-4235-9) issued June 29, 2009. Please contact your DCR Service Forester Doug Hutcheson for a final Inspection on the previous FCP, before proceeding with the current application. The Conservation Agent would also like to be present during DCR’s final walkthrough of the property, in order to develop a clear line of jurisdiction going forward.
 - There is also an open Enforcement Order on the property issued February 1, 2010 which does not appear to have any resolution. I also have other violation notices as recent as 2012, which detail the FCP and WPA violations on site.
7. Violation Update – Palmer Motorsports Park Septic System: Table
 8. Mass Land Conservation Conference: Saturday, March 25, 2017 @ Worcester Technical High School

Office Closed: Wednesday March 8, 2017 & Wednesday March 22, 2017

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday March 21, 2017 at 7:00pm

Meeting Adjourned: 8:35 PM

Motion made by Donald Blais, Jr to adjourn at 8:35 PM

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk

No further discussion – vote taken: 4-0-0 – Motion Carries

Sincerely Submitted,
Angela C Panaccione, Conservation Agent