



TOWN OF PALMER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 21, 2018 – 6:30 PM

LOCATION: Town Administrative Building Meeting Room

Donald Blais, Chair
David Cotter, Vice Chair
Peter Izyk
Nicholas Zeo
Brenda Cole

Angela Panaccione, Agent
Jeff Stanhope, Clerk

Members Present: Donald Blais, Jr.
David Cotter
Peter Izyk
Nicholas Zeo
Brenda Cole
Angela Panaccione, Conservation Agent
Jeff Stanhope, Conservation Assistant

Also Present: Noah Lee, Palmer High School Student
Carrie Lee, Student's Mother
Dorothy Lawrence, Interested Commissioner
Paul Les, Breton Realty, LLC

1. **Call to Order:** 6:43 PM – Donald Blais, Jr. (Chair)

2. **Chair, Member & Committee Reports:**

The interested new commissioner, Dorothy Lawrence, is a graduate Student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and was present at tonight's meeting. Dorothy's major is Sustainability & Conservation, Regional Planning, and Environmental Quality all in one degree and a certificate program. Prior to graduate school, she earned an undergraduate degree in Geology. Currently she is also a wetlands intern for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in the central office located in Worcester, Massachusetts. She is a Cape Cod native and moved to Palmer two and a half years ago.

3. **Review Phone/Mail/Email Messages:**

- a. Request for Comments Subdivision: Breckenridge Street (Map 7-10, 7-11, 7-12, 7-13, 5-28, 56-54 & 59-29)
- b. Request for Comments Subdivision: State Street (Map 87-12, 87-13, 87-14, 89-15 & 89-32)

4. **Public Inquiries:** No Public Inquiries Scheduled.

5. **Approval of Minutes:**

- a. August 7, 2018

Motion made by Nicholas Zeo to approve the minutes from August 7, 2018 as amended.

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries

6. Approval of Payables:

- a. Trash Trail Grant – Waste Management: \$188.10

Motion made by David Cotter to approve the payable to Waste Management in the amount of \$188.10, for the First Street Trail Dumpster, from the Trail Grant Account.

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries

- b. Home Depot Trail Grant: \$68.31

Motion made by Peter Izyk to approve the payable to Home Depot in the amount of \$68.31, for the First Street Trail Joist Hangers, from the Trail Grant Account.

Motion seconded by Nicholas Zeo

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries

- c. Site Specifics, LLC: \$5,280.00

Motion made by Peter Izyk to approve the payable to Site Specifics, LLC in the amount of \$5,280.00, for the First Street Trail Site Amenities, from the Trail Grant Account.

Motion seconded by Nicholas Zeo

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries

7. Signing of Documents (DOA, OOC, COC, Ext, Etc.):

- a. Resign OOC DEP #256-0331

The original had been lost, therefore a new original was resigned.

- b. Issue Emergency Permit MA DOT: Breckenridge Culvert & PTS Culvert

Issued emergency permit for Breckenridge Street Culvert around January and for PTS Culvert not long afterwards. The Agent performed a recent site visit at both of the above culvert locations. The Breckenridge Street Culvert & PTS Culvert are both completely filled with sediment again and it has only been approximately 8 months since the most recent issue of emergency permits.

Railroad tie berms have caused a puddling issue off the railroad tracks, rather than its intended purpose to channel the storm water underneath the tracks. The puddle water is dirty and contains dead fish.

The goal is to wait and put a hold on the issue of a 30 day emergency permit until October or November. This is because the best time of the year, in terms of months, to start work to resolve the issues are October or November. In the Dollar General area DOT would clean their section and the Town would clean the other section that hasn't been done as of yet. The Railroad would clean the culvert or gives the Town approval to do the work. The Agent will work with Joe of DPW to apply for and receive Chapter 90 funds. Every catch basin has been filled in completely to the top and it's only been 8 months. The poor drainage of water is becoming a serious issue for the surrounding areas, especially during extreme rain events. There are currently sink holes on General Dollar's property or the Breckenridge Street right of way (the Town's road configuration for Breckenridge) and each of them are several feet deep; on average 3 feet deep. The Agent and Joe of DPW will work on a solution to fix the holes in a manner in which the repairs will hold up and last.

8. Schedule of Public Hearings: No Public Hearings Scheduled.

9. Requests for Certificate of Compliance:

a. DEP #256-0244: Kenneth Golash; GM & M Realty Trust

The commission received a Request for a Certificate of Compliance (COC) from the property owner. The Agent stated that the work under the original Order of Conditions (OOC) never occurred at this property, therefore it is an invalid OOC. It is for the Breckenridge Street parcel that the subdivision is on where there was an OOC for an assisted living facility back in 2005.

Motion made by Peter Izyk to issue a Certificate of Compliance due to an invalid Order of Conditions, stating that the work regulated by the above-referenced Order never commenced and that no future work subject to regulation by the MA Wetlands Protection Act may commence without filing a new Notice of Intent and receiving a new Order of Conditions.

Motion seconded by David Cotter

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries

10. Project Monitoring:

a. DEP 256-0324: Upper Bondsville Dam

The agent did a pre-activity site visit on Monday, August 20th at the Palmer and Belchertown sites. She observed that the erosion controls had been put in, the DEP sign had been put up, and the turbidity curtain was installed. She gave the authorization to start work and Belchertown did as well. The majority of their staging is across from the trail on the Belchertown site side. Per the Agents request, they will keep a spill kit and add extra erosion controls at the Palmer site in necessary areas. They must contact her once everything is set up before they start de-watering, so that she can check the flow rates.

b. DEP 256-0319: JT Brown Gravel Pit

Issued a year and a half ago, Route 32 on the way to Ware, before the driving range. The Agent did a site visit on Wednesday, August, 8th and gave the approval to start work. Erosion control is a silt fence. Per site plan, the silt fence was originally in the woods, instead the Agent had them (there's an old railroad line present on the property) put the erosion controls along the end of that for now instead because the work is further in. Come winter time when all of the vegetation is gone, they can survey out the original location for the silt fence and set it up there because the area won't be so overgrown and clustered, as well as won't impact the area like it would now in the summertime with a lot of plant and shrub growth. There are many large boulders on site, which were offered to the Agent and will be used for the parking lot at the First Street Trail in order to keep the parking lot open, but block vehicles from entering the trail head.

11. Violations & Enforcement

a. DEP #256-0312: Mass DOT Toll Booth Removal:

Agent received their June report, still waiting on July & August. They did end up using gabion baskets, which do a much better job of holding the rocks and slope in place. So far it's held up very well. Agent hasn't looked at it since she looked at it following the large rain storm at the end of July. They finished the slope stabilization, but haven't cleaned the sediment out of the wetlands or restored the channel yet because construction is having issues with getting ahold of the property owner, which is Lizak. They were going to come to tonight's meeting, but got called into another emergency. They will attend the September 18th meeting to update the commission.

b. DEP #256-0309: Lot 2 Boston Road Solar:

Paul Les was present at tonight's meeting. The Agent performed a site visit walk through yesterday afternoon and concluded that it looks much better and noticed there has not been any erosion whatsoever since the recent rainfall. The pipe appears to have significantly helped with controlling the rain water. There was flow along the entire channel yesterday, which is a very good sign. Paul put quite a few boulders where the river turns on the bank where it was previously eroding. The Agent asked about seeding and Paul stated that they did put down a seeding. Once the seeding germinates and begins to produce growth, it will substantially help with securing the sloped banks and prevent erosion, especially where wildflowers were used for the more sensitive areas. Paul had permissible access from the neighbor's property, so were able to not disturb much of the area because they used a track machine and picked up the rocks one at a time to move them, resulting in avoiding disturbances that would otherwise be caused by dragging the rocks around. Vegetation is starting to hold in the spots that the rocks were unable to before and the spots of growth are thickly vegetated. It is progressing nicely and should be able to hold up, in the current state, against the remainder of the heavy rainfall season.

The plan is to hold off on lifting the enforcement order until after the rain season and will wait until December 4th to do one last inspection. Pending that the current state of the channel restoration project is still looking well at that time, then we can then lift the enforcement order. We will reassess during the December 4th meeting after the final walk through site visit and vote to lift the enforcement order off of Lot 2 Boston Road Solar.

c. Camp Ramah Retaining Wall:

The filing was due August 7th, but the Agent still hasn't received anything yet. She tried to call, but Don was on vacation, so she will try to contact him again this week.

d. 96 Rondeau Road:

The Agent will do a site visit next week because the property owner had a question about the restoration planting work. The owner was wondering about whether or not to rip up the area and restore it using non-native seed mix. The concern is that the area has already shown much natural revegetation and it does not seem productive to remove the well-established advanced regeneration. The issue with non-native seed mix is that it has the potential to introduce invasive or competitive species that will fight against the natural species that are trying to become established there.

12. New/Old Business

a. Administration of 2017 MA Trails Grant: SCA Scheduling, etc.

During the site visit with AmeriCorps two issues came up. 1) Trail Ties: AmeriCorps is not sure if they can assemble both the trail ties and the trail frame in the time they are there. Originally Pathfinder was going to pre-assemble the trail ties but due to the time of year and insufficient staff within the carpentry department they could not do it. So, the commission and volunteers will have to assemble the 400 trail ties prior to July 16th. The Trail Tie assembly will happen the weekend of July 14-15 at the Agent's father's workshop. She will bulk order wood this week as well. 2) Observation Deck Construction: AmeriCorps cannot build the deck as someone with a Construction Supervisors License (CSL) must oversee the work. The Agent will bid out the deck to contractors and will also see about either Lowes or Home Depot doing it as well.

Boy Scouts will return for a second work day on August 25th at 7:00 am. Therefore we need to order portable toilets again. We will get coffee and donuts from the Bondsville Dunkin Donuts again first thing in the morning for breakfast. Dominos of Palmer will donate 10 free pizzas for lunch. Dave

Cotter will contact the court to assemble a morning or afternoon work crew from county correctional for additional help.

The benches will be delivered to DPW this week. We are not sure if they require assembly or not. We may have to assemble the benches ourselves. The commission will have to finish the platforms that the benches will sit on, as well as complete the fencing along the trail. August 25th is the scheduled day to complete the builds of the bench platforms, at some point during the second work day. We also need to add more side-board to the inner trail border in order to contain the gravel. Small screws, ~ 1 ½" #2 Phillips, will have to be purchased because they are needed to screw the side boards into the trail frame. A future date needs to be set for the installation of the trail railings by the commission.

We received a generous \$10,000 donation which will be utilized towards the gazebo. The Agent is currently making comparisons of many different gazebos in order to find the gazebo best suited for the site and of the best quality. The trash cans for the trail will be heavy concrete style with an inner liner.

Dave will pick up the generator from DPW Friday morning before his Midura site visit, so that we can charge the power tools on site. He will also pick up all of the 2x12 lumber from Sherwood Lumber prior to the beginning of the work day.

b. LAND Grant: Site Visit w/ EEA 8/24/2018 at 10am

We will be going in from the Midura parking lot, for an approximately 7 mile hike, led by Dave Cotter. The purpose and importance of the site visit with EEA is to show good examples of land stewardship, as well as discussing other relevant land steward practices. Nicholas Zeo recently did a walk through and noticed that both fields had been mowed very well and any dangling loose limbs and branches had been cleaned up, which looks much better than before.

Community Wood Bank

Jeff Stanhope is working on the Massachusetts DCR Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grant. The Intent to Apply Application is due by October 1st. The project idea is a single allotment Community Wood Bank targeting Environmental Justice (EJ) populations within the Town of Palmer. The goal is to strive for the 75-25 matching grant that which environmental justice projects qualify for. Jeff is currently in the research phase of the grant and is looking into other well-established community wood banks throughout New England hoping to learn a lot from those examples. He has also been reading publications regarding existing wood banks, which are serving as a perfect guide to starting and running a community wood bank.

c. Discuss Celebrate Palmer: 8/18/2018 from 12:00pm-8:30pm

Conservation Commission schedule of availability for the tent:

11:00 am – 1:30 pm: Dave, Nick

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm: Donald, Jeff

4:00 pm – 6:30 pm: Angela, Brenda

The plug was pulled on the event, it was rained out at approximately 3:00 pm. Prior to the rain out, there was a good turnout at the Conservation Commission tent. We handed out many rubber duckies to the kids and there was a high interest in the trail maps, which raised awareness about the Town's trails.

d. MVP Grant

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant. The grant money comes out of the climate change office and is used to develop a municipal vulnerability preparedness plan. The plan would address climate change and reveal all of our climate change vulnerability areas and how to address them, as well

as improve our storm water management plans. Communities that have received the MVP Grant get additional points on other future grant applications.

The Agent met with Pioneer Valley Planning Coalition (PVPC) last Monday to go over the contract and everything else necessary to proceed. They are finalizing up their part of it and doing a breakdown of budget and cost. The Agent and PVPC discussed dates and times for the community building workshops and decided to do a 1 day 6 hour workshop, or talked about the potential for two half day workshops. The two day option could offer breakfast both days, but a full day option could have a nice lunch provided halfway through the day, as well as a light breakfast in the morning before the start of the workshop. The community building workshop would be with key stakeholders in order to identify areas impacted by climate change as well as areas of climate change resiliency, and the research and infrastructure behind it is an important element.

The implementations grants will be announced in December. We can apply for one up to 300k to implement our plan that will be developed as part of the MVP plan that will be formulated, which is a great way to put it to the test. Examples of plans would be upgrading our storm water management systems and protecting cold water fisheries.

e. Culvert Grant

The Culvert Grant Award Announcement Ceremony will be Thursday 10:00 am, held by the Department of Ecological Restoration (DER) at First Street in Bondsville. Ceremony will be followed by a visit to the culvert on Route 181.

The Agent received the notice to proceed today with the Route 181 culvert restoration project. Her grant was the #1 best written grant application and the DER wants to use it as an example for future grants.

f. FY18 Annual Report

The Agent will combine land-management sub-committee & conservation commission annual reports.

13. Upcoming Events, Conferences & Trainings: Wednesday August 22, 2018. (MSMCP SWPPP)

14. Office Closed: Normal Office Hours.

15. Set Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, September 18, 2018 @ 6:30 pm. Cancelled September 4th meeting.

16. Meeting Adjourned: 8:19 PM

Motion made by David Cotter to adjourn at 8:19 PM

Motion was seconded by Peter Izyk

No further discussion – 5-0-0 – Motion Carries

Sincerely Submitted,

Jeff Stanhope

Palmer Conservation Assistant