



TOWN OF PALMER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 5th, 2023 – 6:30 PM
LOCATION: Town Hall Meeting Room
4417 Main St Palmer MA

Donald Blais, Chair
Dorothy Lawrence, Vice Chair
David Cotter
Peter Izyk
Nicholas Zeo
Brenda Cole
Lucas McDiarmid

Heidi Mannarino, Agent

Members Present: Donald Blais, Jr.
Peter Izyk
Dorothy Lawrence
Nick Zeo

Members Absent: Dave Cotter
Brenda Cole
Lucas McDiarmid

Also Present: Adrian Richmond, Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Andrew St. George, Palmer Recreation Director,
Christina Pike,
Erin Ruggiano

1. **Call to Order:** 6:30 PM – Donald Blais, Jr. (Chair)
2. **Review Correspondence:**
 - a. Forest Cutting Plan: Old Warren Road

The Agent gave a brief overview of the Forest Cutting Plan, noting that the plan was already before the Commission at the last meeting, and this is the final, approved version.

3. **Minutes:** 8/15/23

Dorothy Lawrence made a motion to table the minutes of 8/15/23.

Motion seconded by Peter Izyk.

Motion carries 4-0-0.

No further discussion.

4. **Approval of Payables:**
 - a. CRC E-Coli Bacteria Sampling- \$600.00

Dorothy Lawrence made a motion to approve the payable to the Connecticut River Conservancy in the amount of \$600.00.

Motion seconded by Nick Zeo

Motion carries 4-0-0.

No further discussion.

5. New/Old Business:

a. Midura Property Update

Recreation Director Andrew St. George gave a brief presentation about the Midura Conservation Area. Mr. St George discussed the current condition of the property and potential future improvements to the site. He mentioned improvements including limiting ATV access, rerouting trails off private land, creating new maps and brochures, and potential observation decks along Kings Brook. Vice-Chair Dorothy Lawrence asked if removal of the make-shift bridge across the brook would encourage ATV riders to drive through the brook itself. Mr. St George replied that the water appears to be deep enough to be impassable by ATV.

Andrew St. George finished his presentation by discussing the possibility of increased interpretive signage and a “nature center” at this site, which could potentially include a pollinator garden and more access to parking.

Commissioner Peter Izyk mentioned that parking could potentially be located along the bottom of the hill to prevent any disturbance to the meadow and would be safer for drivers. Mr. St George responded that he would be worried about how muddy that area would be and the potential of cars getting stuck.

Commissioner Izyk suggested using shapes as well as colors to mark the trail more clearly.

Brief discussion ensued.

6. Hearings:

- a. 7:00pm: Request for Determination of Applicability—Route 20 (Wilbraham St) Right-of-Way
- Proposed stabilization of a roadway shoulder within 100’ buffer to Bank.

Adrian Richmond from Massachusetts Department of Transportation approached the microphone. He gave a brief overview of the proposed project. The Agent asked what erosion controls or best management practices will be implemented for the project. Mr. Richmond replied that either the filter tube socks or silt fence depending on what the contractor deems appropriate for the location.

Vice-Chair Dorothy Lawrence asked if the map provided was all that was submitted. The Agent responded that it was, however, since the work seems to be exempt from the Wetlands Protection Act, she found it to be sufficient for this repair. Commissioner Nick Zeo asked if there was any filling within the culvert itself that the Commission could be concerned about. Mr. Richmond replied that there was nothing concerning that he noted, and it seemed to be functioning at full capacity.

Brief discussion ensued.

Nick Zeo made a motion to close the public hearing for the RDA submitted for the Route 20 ROW at 7:10 PM.

Motion seconded by Dorothy Lawrence.

Motion carries 4-0-0.

No further discussion.

Dorothy Lawrence made a motion to make a negative determination, that the work described therein meets the requirements for exemption as specified in 310 CMR 10.02(2)(b)(2)p, and no Notice of Intent is required at 7:11 PM.

Motion seconded by Nick Zeo.

Motion carries 4-0-0.

No further discussion

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7. New and Old Business (cont.):

- b. Reorganization of the Commission

Chairman Donald Blais stated that since there is not full attendance of the Commission at the meeting, they will be putting this item on the next agenda to be discussed then.

8. Hearings (cont.)

- b. 7:15pm: Notice of Intent—DEP #256-0370 Old Warren Road (Map 27 Parcel 4)
• Proposed construction of a single-family home within 200' Riverfront Area.

Chair Donald Blais stated that the applicant has requested a continuance. The Agent added that the application is available if any of the Commissioners wanted to review it.

Dorothy Lawrence made a motion to continue the public hearing for DEP #256-0370, Old Warren Road at 7:16 PM.

5. New and Old Business (cont.):

- c. Sherwood Lumber

The Agent stated that a representative from Sherwood Lumber acknowledged that there were plans to donate an observation deck to the Swift River Greenbelt Conservation area to accommodate their water pumping station on Town-owned property. The Agent added that he is open to working with the Commission going forward to make this happen.

No further discussion.

9. Violations and Enforcement:

- a. DEP #256-0358 Fuller Road

The Agent stated that since the issuance of the enforcement order, Hampden Homebuyers, the current owners, have been compliant with restorative actions for the failing erosion controls. Commissioner Peter Izyk asked if the property had changed hands since the issuance of the Order of Conditions, and the Agent confirmed that it had.

10. Chair, Member, Committee & Agent Reports

- a. Meeting schedule 2024

Chairman Donald Blais mentioned that there would be no December meeting in 2023 unless pressing business comes up. He continued to say that the schedule in 2024 will include more limited meetings during the summer. The Agent added that there will be tentative dates in case business does come up.

Commissioner Nick Zeo mentioned that there could be some other discussions about outreach or other business that could be done proactively during quieter times of the year.

Brief discussion ensued.

11. Set Next Meeting Date: 9/19/2023

12. Adjourn:

Motion made by Dorothy Lawrence to adjourn at 7:33 PM.

Motion seconded by Nick Zeo.

Motion carries 4-0-0.

No further discussion.

Sincerely Submitted,
Heidi Mannarino