

Weston Conservation Commission (WCC) - Public Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2023
Approved: March 14, 2023

Members Participating: Joe Berman (Chair), Rees Tullos, Josh Feinblum, Alison Barlow

Members Absent: Glenn Butcher, Ellen Freeman Roth

Conservation Staff: Jordan McCarron, Joshua Baker

Notes: Pursuant to *An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations*, signed by Governor Baker on July 16th, 2022, which extends the expiration of the remote meeting provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2023, this extension allows public bodies to continue holding meetings remotely without a quorum of the public body physically present at a meeting location, and to provide "adequate, alternative" access to remote meetings. No in-person attendance of members of the public was available.

Joe Berman, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:30 PM with an opportunity for public comment.

Hearing none, the following hearings and meetings were taken up in order:

Cont. Request for Determination of Applicability: 30 Colpitts Road-RDA 2023-002; C. Palmer

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator, reminded the Commission that the project was continued from February 14th, 2023 to allow Richard Sweeney, Assistant Town Engineer, time to review the project for compliance with the Town's Stormwater and Erosion Control Bylaw.

Mr. McCarron reported that Mr. Sweeney was satisfied with the septic plan for the project and would be issuing a Minor Project Stormwater Permit on 3/1/23.

A motion was made to issue a Negative 2 Determination for 30 Colpitts Road, DOA 2023-002, by Josh Feinblum; seconded by Rees Tulloss. Roll call vote 4-0.

Land Sake Annual Report

Land's Sake Farm Manager Brendan Murtha and Executive Director Pam Hess provided the Conservation Commission with a review of forest management, maple sugaring, and community farming activities performed in 2022 under contract with the Conservation Commission. An overview of work planned for 2023 was provided as well.

The 2022 Maple season was productive and had an early start, from the second week of February to March 17th; shorter than the typical 4 to 6-week season. Overall production was good at 60 gallons of syrup with an estimate of 450 taps. The biggest change from prior seasons was the addition of Wellington Farm as a tapping site. Land Sake no longer uses galvanized buckets due to lead concerns and instead uses blue plastic buckets.

Mr. Murtha reported that the 2023 Maple season was shaping up to be a poor season due to sporadic weather and had the earliest start in recent memory, starting the last week of January due to the warmer than average weather. The season ended with 32 gallons which is less than half of the previous season. In better news, about 80 to 100 volunteers showed up for the tree tapping at the start of the season. There are no new sugaring sites projected for the 2024 season.

2023 saw the full return of education events that had been suspended due to the pandemic. Since the pandemic began, interest in the education programs provided by Land Sake has increased dramatically, with education capacities being maximized and waiting lists growing.

The 2022 logging season was one of the most productive forestry seasons in recent memory with 35 cords of wood produced. In 2023, Land Sake substantially improved logging efficiency via education programs being provided to their staff by professional loggers. Due to the training and increased confidence, every member of the forestry operation can now perform all tasks associated with the operation.

The 2022 farming season was one of the driest on record, but despite this, it was one of the most productive growing seasons with 160,000 pounds of produce, surpassing previous records by 30,000 pounds. 15 acres were cropped for the season. The new 3 acres at Wellington farm will be used to rotate crops to allow legacy fields to fallow. For 2023, no major changes to operation are proposed, though Wellington farm will be utilized and 223 different varieties of crops across all sites have been planted.

Notice of Intent: 1 Warren Place, DEP 337-1463; P.Caro

Mark Beaudry, Civilworks New England, provided an overview of the project, including the construction of a stormwater collection, pumping, and discharging system as well as the reconstruction of the current driveway in its present location. A portion of the proposed work falls within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to a Bordering Vegetated Wetland, Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (BLSF), and a 200-foot Riverfront Area associated with a perennial stream. No permanent alteration is proposed in the resource area.

During the reconstruction of the current driveway, if the subgrade under the existing driveway is found to be degraded or ill suited, the applicant is proposing to replace it with a standard suitable subgrade. Additionally, the current site plan is to be updated to include erosion control barriers around the entirety of the driveway.

A motion was made to close the hearing and issue an Order of Conditions for 1 Warren Place, DEP 337-1463, by Ellen Freeman Roth; seconded by Josh Feinblum. Roll call vote 4-0.

Request for Determination of Applicability: 15 Pollywog Lane, RDA 2023-003; G. Joshi

Henry Bobek, Signature Designs Architecture, provided an overview of the project, which involves the demolition and reconstruction of a single-story wood-framed residential addition. A portion of the proposed work falls within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to a Bordering Vegetated Wetland.

The proposed addition would sit on existing turf lawn and would be 88-feet from the edge of wetland at its closest point. The Commission inquired if a foundation drain was needed for the new addition. Mr Bobek informed the Commission that due to the high elevation of the property, there was little evidence that the existing basement required drainage. Mr. Bobek agreed to keep the Commission informed should a foundation drain for the new addition be needed.

A motion to issue a Negative 3 Determination for 15 Pollywog lane, DOA 2023-003, was made by Josh Feinblum; seconded by Ellen Freeman Roth. Roll call vote 4-0.

Request for Determination of Applicability: 333 Winter Street, RDA 2023-004; Rivers School

David Nardone and Danielle Spicer, Green International Affiliates, provided an overview of the project, which involves improvements to the site's interior quad and surrounding sidewalks as well as the addition of an ADA access ramp. A portion of the proposed work falls within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to a Bordering Vegetated Wetland and the 200-foot Riverfront Area associated with Bogle Brook.

The majority of the work will be out of the wetland resource areas and associated buffers, except for the most eastern limits of work. The work is in previously disturbed Riverfront Area and there will be a minor decrease of approximately 150 sq. feet of impervious area.

A motion to issue a Negative 2 Determination for 333 Winter St, Rivers School, DOA 2023-004, was made by Josh Feinblum; seconded by Ellen Freeman Roth. Roll call vote 4-0.

Notice of Intent: 4 Briar Lane, DEP 337-1462; H. Lu

A motion to continue the Notice of Intent hearing for 4 Briar Lane, DEP 337-1462, to May 9th, 2023 at 7:45 p.m. was made by Josh Feinblum; seconded by Ellen Freeman Roth. Roll call vote 4-0.

Cont. Notice of Intent: 2 Sudbury Road; DEP 337-1461; J. Grimm

A motion to continue the Notice of Intent hearing for 2 Sudbury Road, DEP 337-1461, to March 14th, 2023 at 8:15 p.m. was made by Josh Feinblum; seconded by Ellen Freeman Roth. Roll call vote 4-0.

The following Administration Matters were discussed throughout the meeting.

Approval of 2/14/2023 Conservation Commission meeting minutes:

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the 2/14/2023 Conservation Commission meeting by Rees Tulloss; seconded by Josh Feinblum. Roll call vote 3-1.

Request for Certificate of Compliance: 140 Montvale Rd, DEP 337-1146:

A motion was made to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 140 Montvale Road, DEP 337-1146, by Josh Feinblum; seconded by Rees Tulloss. Roll call vote 4-0.

Request for 3-Year Extension: 154 Winter St, DEP 337-1389:

A motion was made to issue a 3-year extension for 154 Winter Street, DEP 337-1389, by Rees Tulloss; seconded by Josh Feinblum. Roll call vote 4-0.

Approval of Trail Improvements at Chestnut Street Conservation Area, DEP 337-1016:

A motion was made to approve the construction of one new footbridge at the Chestnut Street Conservation Area in compliance with the Trail Maintenance and Invasive Species Management OOC, Section II(2), DEO 337-1016, by Josh Feinblum; seconded by Ellen Freeman Roth. Roll call vote 4-0.

Approval: 2022 Deer Management Program Summary:

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator, provided a summary of the 2022 Deer Management Program to the Commission. 45 hunters participated in the program in 2022, harvesting 43 deer and contributing 71 hours of volunteer service to the Conservation Department. Mr. McCarron will present the same summary to the Select Board at its March 14th, 2023 meeting.

Land Management Updates:

Jordan McCarron, Conservation Administrator updated the Commission on the following Land Management issues:

- The March Stewardship Saturday program will take place on 3/18/23 and will include bog bridge maintenance and small bridge construction on trails at Chestnut Street Conservation Land/Woodland School.

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.