

MINUTES
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
HYBRID PARTICIPATION
February 5, 2024

ATTENDANCE

Christopher Pratt, Chairman	Present
Norman Cheever, Vice Chairman	Present
Mehmet Mizanoglu, Commissioner	Absent
Jerry Patria, Commissioner	Present
Kevin Solek, Commissioner	Present
Andrew Reardon, Commissioner	Present
Dennis Clark, Commissioner	Present

Chairman Pratt opened the meeting at 7:00 PM by announcing the date, time and members in attendance.

MINUTES

Commissioner Reardon made a motion to approve the minutes of 1/8/24 with corrections. Vice Chairman Cheever seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt	yes	Norm Cheever	yes
Jerry Patria	yes	Kevin Solek	yes
Dennis Clark	yes	Andrew Reardon	yes

Annual Town Report Commissioner Patria made a motion to approve the Annual Town Report. Chairman Pratt seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt	yes	Norm Cheever	yes
Jerry Patria	yes	Kevin Solek	yes
Dennis Clark	yes	Andrew Reardon	yes

Chairman Pratt introduced Mr. Lucas Caron, a Southwick Regional School Diversified Learning Program participant. Mr. Caron will be participating in the program daily from 8:30 - 10:30 am and attending the Conservation Commission meetings until May. The members welcomed Mr. Caron and appreciated his interest in conservation.

Public Comments Mr. Todd Smith, 6 Noble Steed Crossing, made note of the conditions at the subdivision specifically relating to the sidewalks and roadways. Silt is still within the roadway and entering the wetland. Chairman Pratt made note that the Conservation Commission was working with the owner and corrective action is being taken. However, Mr. Smith can address nonrelated conservation issues with other departments such as the DPW and the Select Board.

Mr. Cliff Clark Mr. Clark, a reporter from the Westfield Evening News requested permission to record the meeting. Commissioner Solek made a motion to allow the recording. Commissioner Reardon seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt	yes	Norm Cheever	yes
Jerry Patria	yes	Kevin Solek	yes
Dennis Clark	yes	Andrew Reardon	yes

MACC Annual Conference Coordinator stated that the conference will be in person this year on March 2nd. Any member interested in attending can submit a request with the workshops they wish to attend so a purchase order can be submitted to accounting.

Next Scheduled Meeting Due to the holiday on February 19th, the next scheduled meeting will be on March 4th.

NOI # 292-0415 81 Point Grove Rd Coordinator Pooler made note that a letter from Mr. Ryan Nelson, R. Levesque & Associates, and dated January 24, 2024 requested that the Notice of Intent be withdrawn without prejudice. Commissioner Clark made note that the beaver lodge had been removed, and Vice Chairman Cheever also noted that no dredging had taken place. Commissioner Clark made a motion to accept the withdrawal. Vice Chairman Cheever seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt	yes	Norm Cheever	yes
Jerry Patria	yes	Kevin Solek	yes
Dennis Clark	yes	Andrew Reardon	yes

Mr. Michael Bowen, R. Levesque & Associates

NOI # 292-0417 3 South Loomis Street Chairman Pratt opened the Public Hearing by reading the legal ad as posted in The Reminder Publication January 11, 2024. Mr. Bowen presented a site plan to upgrade the existing septic system which has the well placement 25 feet from wetlands. The septic system and well are 100 feet apart per Board of Health regulations. There is a proposed restoration area with plantings. Coordinator Pooler made note that the restoration details were absent on the plan.

As there was no further discussion, Commissioner Clark made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Vice Chairman Cheever seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt	yes	Norm Cheever	yes
Jerry Patria	yes	Kevin Solek	yes
Dennis Clark	yes	Andrew Reardon	yes

Commissioner Clark made a motion to allow for a revised plan in accordance with an Order of Conditions and detailing the restoration be submitted and approved by Coordinator Pooler prior to the start of work and a \$10,000.00 bond. Vice Chairman Cheever seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt yes
Jerry Patria yes
Dennis Clark yes

Norm Cheever yes
Kevin Solek yes
Andrew Reardon yes

Mr. Keith Long, Owner

RDA 109 Bungalow Street Chairman Pratt opened the Public Hearing by reading the legal ad as posted in The Reminder Publication on January 26, 2024. Mr. Long presented a plan including grinding stumps four inches below grade and covering the area with topsoil. All the trees were cut in the fall of 2023 are within the 100 foot Buffer Zone. The equipment to be used will not impact the area and will only be done once the area is dry. Silt fencing will not be required. Commissioner Clark made a motion for a negative determination on the project. Vice Chairman seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt yes
Jerry Patria yes
Dennis Clark yes

Norm Cheever yes
Kevin Solek yes
Andrew Reardon yes

Mr. Andrew Reardon, Owner

1 Hudson Drive DEP 292-041 Mr. Reardon recused himself as a member of the Conservation Commission to present a minor alteration of the plan previously approved. The alteration is for a fence to be move to allow better access to the facility. Commissioner Patria made a motion to approve the change in accordance with the submitted plan. Chairman Pratt seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt yes
Jerry Patria yes
Dennis Clark yes

Norm Cheever yes
Kevin Solek yes

Lucas Caron, Intern Mr. Caron presented the possibility of a social media presence to bring conservation issues to a wide audience. Mr. Caron is a proponent of education and participation for the general public to better understand how Committees, Boards and Commissions work. The Conservation Commissioners thought it was a great idea, but Mr. Caron would need to consult with the Select Board on the regulations relating to social media on the Town website.

Sofinowski Property Access Coordinator Pooler was contacted by an individual who requested access to the property after dark for star gazing purposes. The request is for one individual to bring his own telescope on the site as most areas have light pollution and do not allow for a clear view. The Sofinowski Preserve is open to the public from sunup to sundown. The Conservation Commission members agreed that the individual could access the property after sundown, however, no motorized vehicles will be allowed, the Police Department will be notified, and a log will be required on the dates

on the property. A letter will be issued to the individual. The Commissioners would need to contact the Select Board members to ensure that allowance does not violate any regulation or Bylaw.

Congamond Lakes Docks Vice Chairman Cheever presented pictures of docks that have not been completely removed from the lake. In total, there are approximately 25 violations. The 2023-2024 season has not been an "ice in" season, which may have prevented some of the dock from breaking away from the shoreline. A letter, including pictures, will be composed to be issued with the LPP mailing applications/stickers noting that fines could be imposed.

Review and approve updated LPP Forms The Conservation Commission members reviewed the 2024 applications for the Local Permitting Program (LPP)). The only change from the 2023 form was the year. Commissioner Solek made a motion to approve the forms. Commissioner Patria seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt	yes	Norm Cheever	yes
Jerry Patria	yes	Kevin Solek	yes
Dennis Clark	yes	Andrew Reardon	yes

The Conservation Commission members also discussed docks that have not been removed from the lake after Dec 1, 2023 (Ice Out). Vice Chairman Cheever took photos of docks, or portions of dock that remain in the water. As this winter season was not sufficiently cold enough to create a substantial amount of ice to actually move docks away from the shoreline. A letter will be created notifying all participants of the LPP program of the "ice out" regulation.

Sofinowski Land Preserve There is a pile of woodchips that will need to be spread out. Commissioner Solek said that he would do it once the ground was dry - possibly in the spring. There is also a damaged gate that will need to be replace.

Granville Gorge Coordinator Pooler noted that the roof on the kiosk has never been installed. Chairman Pratt will take measurements for the purchase of materials needed for the roof which will be similar to the one at North Pond.

Review and approve FY25 Conservation Budget Coordinator Pooler presented an updated budget for Fiscal Year 2025. The Select Board requested that the budget be level funded, however there are items such as dues that had increased since the past year. The budget also includes a 5 year plan to increase the number of hours of the Conservation Coordinator to 37.5per week from the current 24 hours, and an increase to \$25.00 per hour. Commissioner Patria motioned to approve the budget and include a 2% increase in the secretarial line item. Chairman Pratt seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt yes
Jerry Patria yes
Dennis Clark yes

Norm Cheever yes
Kevin Solek yes
Andrew Reardon yes

Mr. Jeff Smith, Salvini & Associates

Noble Steed DEP 292-0280 Update Mr. Smith presented copies of his latest report on the improvements at the subdivision including silt being washed into the wetlands. Mr. Smith submitted material to request an extension for the Order of Conditions. The Commission members were appreciative of the work being done, and look forward to continued improvements at the location. Mr. Smith will continue to view the property and report his findings.

107 South Loomis Street- Possible Wetland Violation Mr. Utzinger, 146 South Loomis Street, questioned what progress has been made at the location concerning the disturbances in the wetland including vehicles. Commissioner Clark reiterated the history of the property including an Enforcement Order filed with DEP. The vehicles are not under the Conservation jurisdiction. Permission will need to be granted by the owner to enter the property to view any potential conservation violations.

Mr. Jeff Smith, Salvini & Associates

Mort Vining Subdivision - Possible Wetland Violation – DEP 292-0409 Mr. Smith stated that there was some erosion along the road which is not going into a resource area but will be repaired by rip rap. Wooden stakes replacing the markers tied to trees will be placed to delineate the 100 foot buffer zone.

Mr. Smith will continue to update the Commission on a monthly basis. Also, the silt fence damaged at 72A Mort Vining was repaired and stone has been placed at the entrance and exit.

North Pond Conservation Area Recyclables The Commissioners discussed the proposed recycle bin for the property. Coordinator Pooler will send Nicole Nooney's PowerPoint presentation to the Commissioners so they can review the proposal and present their options of the proposals.

13 Berkshire Ave Land Donation There is not further update.

Commissioner Solek made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:31 p.m., and go into Executive Session Pursuant to M.G.L. Chap. c. 30A, Exception#4 and not to reconvene into Open Session. Commissioner Patria seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chris Pratt yes
Jerry Patria yes
Dennis Clark yes

Norm Cheever yes
Kevin Solek yes
Andrew Reardon yes

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Nilsson, Secretary

cc:
Select Board
Town Clerk

Christopher Pratt, Chairman

Norman Cheever, Vice Chairman

Mehmet Mizanoglu, Commissioner

Jerry Patria, Commissioner

Kevin Solek, Commissioner

Andy Reardon, Commissioner

Dennis Clark, Commissioner

Date