

Present: Bob Elliott, Chairman; Emily Boeing, Tim Dinsmore, Rob Rand, Pat Swain Rice

Absent: Kris Masterson, Pete Steeves

3/15/2022 - Minutes

1. Public Hearings, Public Meetings & Appointments

- A. 7:05 PM - The Commission Will Consider A Request For Determination Of Applicability Filed By Pepperell Conservation Commission To Remove Invasive Plants Along A Fence Line And Restore Disturbed Areas With Native Plants In BVW At 31 Oak Hill St.

Terrasi said the proposed project involves restoration work at the former dog pound at the Keyes Parker Conservation Area. The Invasive and Native Plant Advisory Committee (INPAC) received grant funding from the Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council to map the invasive plants. Many plants are intertwined within the fence that encompasses the former dog pound. The fence would also be removed. There is a small intermittent stream running along the fence line between the former dog pound and the parking area by the metal access gate. Erosion control would consist of straw wattles, staked and installed along the shrub line to the left of the trail that leads to the former dam site. Most of the work would be done by hand with weed wrenches and chain saws. The area would be restored with native plants. Rice noted that straw wattles typically identify the Limit of Work but in this case, the invasive plants are next to the stream. Rice said the soil should be tampered down and covered with mulch, which is free of seeds. This work will take place closer than usually allowed but it is important to remove the invasive plants. For the larger trees, Rice suggested girdling. One way of "fooling" the woody plants is  $\frac{3}{4}$  girdling. We will have to return multiple times in future years to continue this work. Dinsmore suggested using weed matting. He said you can plant right in it. Rice suggested Dinsmore provide contact information to Terrasi about this product. Dinsmore said it's organic and it comes in different forms. Elliott requested the names of Commission members who were present for an earlier site visit on January 6 be included in the Minutes. Those in attendance included Deb Fountain, Elliott, Rice, Rand, Dinsmore, and Terrasi. Terrasi asked for advice on a tool that would make cutting the fence easier. There is a grant that will pay for tools. Fountain thanked the Commission for their support and said there was a second site visit on Monday, March 14 with Fountain, Annette Cate (INPAC), Rand, Rice, and Marc Basti (INPAC) to evaluate the site. Boeing said she had spoken with Basti and the culvert pipe that carries the intermittent stream at the gate is partially blocked. Terrasi said a bale of hay can be installed at the outlet and a Highway Department truck with a hose can "jet" the culvert to unclog the pipe. On a motion by Elliott, seconded by Dinsmore, all

**VOTED:** to issue a negative Determination #3, while this project is within the buffer zone, it will not have an adverse impact on the wetlands and #6, the project is allowed under the bylaw.

- B. 7:10 PM - Continuation Of Public Hearing Re; The Commission Will Consider A Notice Of Intent Filed By Joshua Eberiel To Remove A Retaining Wall, Steps And Canopy Shed, To Construct An Addition, Deck, Bulkhead, (3) Sheds And Associated Utilities Within The 100 Ft. Buffer Zone And 200 Ft. Riverfront Area Of Sucker Brook At 27 Jewett Street

Maureen Heald from Norse Environmental represented the property owner. The property is over eight acres. The 100-year flood is at 292'. The site is located within an ACEC and an ORW. Heald addressed RFA and compliance with MassDEP's comments. Heald is amending the NOI for an after-the-fact filing to remove five additional trees behind the house and two trees along the

property line (near addition). Mitigation plantings have now been added. Elliott received Heald's letter in the mail and thought her responses were reasonable and credible. An earlier tree removal was questioned by MassDEP. MassDEP also asked about other work, which was determined to have occurred before Riverfront regulations, which explains why the house and pool are so close to the brook. Most of the work is exempt. Conversion of lawn to a use accessory to residential structures are minor projects but must be greater than 50' from resource areas. The large shed and addition are not exempt. Heald wanted to introduce the project to the Commission and receive input from the Commission. Elliott said the building addition will become part of the building so it is not a separate accessory structure. The 12X20 shed is now part of a canopy shed. Can it be rotated so it is greater than 18.5' to the resource areas? Rand asked about the sheds and commented that one shed is very close to the resource areas and the other one is just outside of the 50' buffer. Heald is unaware of the uses planned for the sheds but the family is expanding and this is additional space. Heald will ask about rotating the shed. Rand asked if this was grassland. Will there be a big bare spot if the shed is moved? Heald said the bare areas would be reseeded. The pine trees that were removed were 80' to 100' tall because there was concern with the close proximity to the house. Rice commented on grass and seeding of bare areas. Rice would like seeds to be native species. Heald said she would be using seeds from New England Wetland Plant, who has a list of seeds for all sites. Any type of disturbance will be repaired with seed for grasses. Terrasi asked whether MassDEP had received the new materials with the additional proposed tree removals. One of the comments from MassDEP is to confirm all materials have been received by MassDEP and ConsCom before issuing an Order of Conditions. Heald requested a continuation to April 5.

C. 7:15 PM - Discussion With Sherrill Rosoff, Co-Chair Agricultural Commission - Regarding Partnership Opportunities With Conservation Commission And Updates

Sherrill Rosoff shared a Power Point. Rosoff said she has been involved in many town boards for 15 years and collaboration is critically important to our wellbeing. It is important for our Agricultural Commission and Conservation Commission to work together on mutually advantageous projects. At Spring Town Meeting, the Agricultural Advisory Board became an Agricultural Commission when they adopted Chapter 40, Section 8L. Pepperell was the first town in Middlesex County to sign a letter with NRCS to recognize a fourth soil's classification, Farmlands of Local Importance. Al Averill, USDA Soils Scientist, allowed Rosoff to use some of his slides from his MACC presentation last week and she has also been in touch with Paul Catazaro who, with a graduate student, conducted several Cost of Community Services studies in 2019. Pepperell has never done a study but Catanzaro and his graduate student created an Excel template and program for communities to do this study on their own, which is available on the Mass Woods website. Rosoff said there is a great push in town for residential buildout. The Planning Board does not ask for an analysis of the impacts to community services when developments are approved. The average age of a farmer in MA is 60 and Pepperell is fortunate that recent transitions in farm ownership have brought in new, young families to two APR farms (Kimball's and Twin Valley/Overshiner Farms). The Agricultural Commission does not have the experience in land preservation that the Commission has but this is something they are required to address. Two points, the APR program does not recognize Farmland of Local Importance. Local farmers would like additional options to the APR Program. The Agricultural Conservation Easement Plan (ACEP) recognizes Farmland of Local Importance and Rosoff wants to review this program with the Agricultural Commission in the coming months. The Town of Harvard, drafted a report in 2019 with the Agricultural Commission, Town Planner, Conservation Agent, and Land Stewardship Committee, and used MVP funds to draft this report. After the Farmland of Local Importance had been identified, then property owners were contacted to inform them of this potential new opportunity. Rosoff wants local land trusts included in future discussions. Rosoff shared maps showing several properties that produce crops but do not have prime soils or are too small for APR. Should the APR Program define the properties we pursue or should we use other programs that will allow for additional protection? Rosoff would like a map showing all agricultural land and open spaces. Rand found the presentation impressive and found it helpful in identifying opportunities and partnerships. He has witnessed successful partnerships like

ConsCom and NCT working together. Terrasi said farmers located closer to the city are looking for farms to lease. Rosoff said we should explore the ALE program. Rosoff would like to collaborate on a COCS study.

2. Review Of Draft Minutes

A. Review Of Draft Minutes Of February 15, 2022

On a motion from Elliott, seconded by Rand, all

**VOTED:** to approve the draft Minutes of February 15, 2022, as amended.

3. For Signature: Schedule Of Bills Payable

None

4. Conservation Administrator's Report

5. Other Business

None

6. Matters That May Be Raised That The Chairman Didn't Reasonably Anticipate

None

7. Master Plan Implementation Update

Department Heads have been requested to provide an update to the Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) summarizing activities related to Master Plan recommendations they have been assigned. This information will be shared at the Annual Town Meeting. Terrasi provided an update of recent Eagle Scout projects including benches and kiosks as well as an update about new trail additions to the Trail Guide.

The next Conservation Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Paula Terrasi/Conservation Administrator