

Present: Bob Elliott, Chairman; Emily Boeing, Kris Masterson, Rob Rand, Pete Steeves, Pat Swain Rice

Absent: Tim Dinsmore

5/18/2021 - Minutes

1. Public Hearings, Public Meetings & Appointments

- A. 7:05 PM - Public Hearing Re: The Commission Will Consider A Notice Of Intent For An Ecological Restoration Project Filed By The Town Of Pepperell/Ken Kalinowski For The Replacement Of The Culvert In The Town Of Pepperell's Right Of Way On Heald Street Between Sheffield & Maples Streets And Telephone Poles 37 & 40.

Jill Griffiths with Gomez and Sullivan Engineering represented the Town of Pepperell DPW. Gomez and Sullivan Engineering were hired by the town in the fall of 2019 to begin work to replace the failing culvert on Heald Street at Sucker Brook. Griffiths had previously been involved with the Millie Turner Dam removal on the Nissitissit River in 2014. One mile downstream of the Heald Street culvert is the Keyes Parker Conservation Area culvert replacement and dam removal, also on Sucker Brook. Consultation with MA Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) and the engineering firm for the Sucker Brook project at Keyes Parker have been ongoing throughout the project. The Heald Street culvert is a 36" corrugated metal pipe, which is now corroded and the headwalls are failing. A stormwater discharge pipe will be replaced from the closest catch basin to where it will discharge onto rip rap. The project will include dewatering and the use of bypass pipes capable of passing the 25-year storm. The proposed culvert will be a 16' wide open bottom, three-sided precast concrete structure, which has been designed to meet MA Stream Crossing Standards and allows for aquatic organisms to pass. Design constraints included keeping the culvert within the town's right of way and poor subsurface soils (no bedrock), which were identified during geotechnical borings. Utilities at the culvert include water, sewer, gas, and stormwater. Considerations for the design included evaluation of the downstream dam on Blood Street. The use of rip rap within the downstream channel will ensure a breach of the dam will not damage the culvert footings. Rice expressed concern with soils used for the project because of invasives and wants to be sure soil brought onsite is clean. The structure is greater than 10' wide and required MassDOT review. MassDOT suggested a taller culvert with no fill on top of the structure. Benefits include connectivity of 1.5 miles upstream of the culvert, improved transport of sediment and woody debris, improved water quality and an increase in dissolved oxygen, temperature reduction when the upstream impoundment is restored to a stream channel, and a replacement structure with a longer life span and little to no maintenance. Permits have been filed. Chapter 91 will require a permit but not a license for the structure. If all funding is secured, construction would take place late fall of next year. Abutter Frank Summers on Moonlight Way mentioned the two beaver dams downstream and asked about clarification about the proposed dredging. Griffiths explained the dredging will only take place within the immediate area of the culvert within the channel. Rand said it is important to address these failing culverts before they collapse. Griffiths responded that emergency repairs usually result in an in-kind replacement, which is often improperly sized. Masterson asked what caused the current culvert to fail. Griffiths said age of the structure and the undersized span. Steeves said the drainage area reported by StreamStats is 1.66 square miles, larger than he had thought, so he understands why so much thought had gone into this. The topo maps show that Sucker Brook is the outlet for Coon Pond but it looks like it is a tributary? Griffiths said there are a couple of different namings for these different reaches but the one shown tonight is from the National Hydrography that shows Sucker Brook to Coon Tree Pond. They agreed the TOPO map could be incorrect. On a motion from Elliott, seconded by Rand, all

VOTED: to issue an Order of Conditions

- B. Federal Forest Legacy - Request For Town Of Pepperell Conservation Commission To Hold Conservation Restrictions On Several Nashoba Conservation Trust Properties

This discussion will be continued to a future meeting.

2. Review Of Draft Minutes

A. Review Of Draft Minutes Of May 4, 2021

On a motion from Elliott, seconded by Rand, all

VOTED: to approve the draft Minutes of May 4, 2021, as drafted.

3. For Signature: Schedule Of Bills Payable

None

4. Conservation Administrator's Report

A. Volunteer Trash Pickup At Conservation Commission Properties - Thank You To Ella Green And NOLA (Service Learning Group At North Middlesex Regional High School)

Terrasi was contacted by Ella Green who is with the North Middlesex Regional High School Service Learning Group about community service work involving trash pickup on various conservation areas. Terrasi said the Highway Division provided trash bags and they will collect the bags once the work has been completed. Terrasi wanted to recognize and thank the students and Highway Division for their efforts.

B. Annual Town Meeting - June 12, 2021

Annual Town Meeting will be on Saturday, June 12, 2021 at the Nissitissit Middle School.

C. Conservation Land Use And COVID Guidelines - Update

Terrasi stated the COVID guidelines have been relaxed significantly over the past few days.

D. Conservation Trust Fund And \$50K Appropriation For Town Meeting Approval

During the Master Plan process, protecting additional open space and the rural character of the town was identified as a priority. Terrasi requested \$50,000 be placed in a land fund, as a start, to address this priority. The \$50,000 has been included in the upcoming appropriations to be voted at the June 12 Town Meeting.

E. Emergency Certification - 2 Kirin Crossing For Board Of Health Beaver Permit

Terrasi issued an Emergency Certification to address flooding of the common driveway at 2 Kirin Crossing. The Board of Health had issued an Emergency Beaver Permit and the Emergency Certification ensures a slow removal of the beaver dam to avoid downstream flooding and a sudden flush of large quantities of sediment.

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

Rice provided an update on current efforts underway by the Invasive Species Committee and recognized Deb Fountain, who was on the virtual call, for her efforts in applying for and receiving grant funding that will be used to conduct an inventory of invasives within the town. A student or intern will be hired to conduct surveys for invasives. The project will also focus on invasives at the Keyes Parker Conservation Area and a Management Plan will be prepared.

Rand asked how other managers of conservation areas deal with “helpful” users of the properties who provide barrels for trash. Terrasi said our conservation areas are Carry In/Carry Out and the barrels will be removed. Signs will be posted at trailheads.

6. Master Plan Implementation Update

None

There are no public hearings scheduled for June 1, 2021. The next Conservation Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Paula Terrasi/Conservation Administrator