



TOWN OF WATERTOWN
Conservation Commission
Administration Building
149 Main Street
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Leo Martin, Chairperson
Marylouise Pallotta McDermott, Member
Charles C. Bering, Member
Patrick W. Fairbairn, Member
Maria P. Rose Member
Jamie O'Connell, Member

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MINUTES

Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 7, 2019, 7:00 PM in the Philip Pane Lower Hearing Room

Conservation Commission Members Present: Leo Martin, Patrick Fairbairn, Maria P. Rose, Jamie O'Connell

Absent: Marylouise Pallotta McDermott, Charles Bering

Also Present: *John Rockwood, Geotech, Erik Immanen, Annino Inc., Colleen Egan, Bill Dillon, Landmark New England, Joe Porter, VTP Associates*

Staff Present: Gideon Schreiber, *Acting Agent*, Susan C. Jenness, Assistant-

Martin Chaired.

- 1. Public Hearing Continued – Parcel 1236-2-0 and 1510-1-0** for an Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) request submitted for the approval of resource area boundary delineation associated with the resource areas located at Parcel 1236-2-0 and 1510-1-0 at 71 Arlington Street. Owner applicant: Maximos Hatziliades. Representative: Michael (Mickey) Marcus, Joseph Rogers, SWCA Environmental, LLC

Martin reported that the hearing on Parcel 1236-2-0 and 1510-1-0 was to be continued to the June 5th meeting, to allow the parties to confer about the outstanding issue regarding the riverine aspect of the research.

Motion: Rose made a motion to continue the public hearing to the June 5, 2019 meeting. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached to continue the public hearing to the June 5, 2019 Conservation Commission meeting.

2. Public Hearing – 330-350 Pleasant St. Request for Review to Modify Plans – Order of Condition (DEP# 321-0163. WWO 16-02) for allowing the relocation of one transformer pad to within the 200 ft. Riverfront Area and 100/150 ft. Buffer Zone. Owner applicant: World Realty & Development, LTD. John P. Rockwood, EcoTec, Inc.

Dr. John Rockwood appeared as the Chief Scientist along with Erik Immonen from Annino Inc.

Rock said that this project was considered a minor modification involving the relocation of the transformer from the position on the 1st set of plans, within the 100-foot buffer zone behind the building.

He explained that World Realty had explored placing the transformer either underground or inside the building to avoid the current proposal, but neither alternative was feasible.

Martin said he was very disappointed they did not anticipate these circumstances when they first appeared before the CC in 2016. Martin clarified that they were dealing with a set of rules that had been in place since at least 2002.

O'Connell asked if they were seeking to put the transformer in the middle of a concrete base, and also asked how hazardous transformers are considered to be in this day and age. Martin said transformers were not considered as hazardous as they had been in the past.

Rose pointed out that the transformers were located around 18-20 feet from the flood plain and also inside the buffer zone, a close proximity to the river. She said that considering transformers and their association with oil, she would like to see them placed inside a vault like sunken tub. She referred to the issue on Main St. last summer when oil had escaped from underground utilities, and oozed up to the surface. Rose also pointed out that the floodplains will be revised again in the upcoming future, and reasoned that it would be especially important for Eco-Tech to work with the Planning Department staff on a secondary containment system.

O'Connell said she wondered if they could connect the containment area to the sewer.

Schreiber said that staff could review the process and report back to the board.

Another idea Rose wanted to add was to elevate the pad at least 12 inches to increase the comfort level around the relocation of the transformer.

Fairbairn stated his agreement with Martin, and his disappointment that the transmitter relocation was not known at the time the project was reviewed before the Conservation Commission back in 2016. He expressed concern that the relocation should not result in any net loss of any living green space. Immonen agreed to put a landscape barrier around the transformer that extended out at least 4 feet on each side of the site and stated that the area previously designated for the transformer would become part of the landscaping plan.

Rose asked if there would be a lock out tag system. Martin explained that because N-Star is involved they would have a system to keep their workers and the public safe.

After the discussion Martin outlined the following criteria for Rockwood and Immonen.

- A Secondary Containment System was necessary

- Verification of the height of the transformer pad of at least 12 inches above ground
- Additional shrubs for screening around the transformer

Martin directed Rockwood to submit a detailed plan about the pad and the containment of the transformer and closed the public hearing.

Motion: O'Connell made a motion to allow the modification to the Order of Condition based on the additional conditions listed by Martin directing secondary containment, transformer pad height located at least 12 inches above the ground, with additional shrubs planted around the transformer. Rose seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached by the Commission to allow the modification to relocate the transformer based on the conditions listed by Martin.

3. **Minutes-** April 3, 2019

After a brief discussion a motion was made to adopt the minutes of the April meeting as modified.

Motion: Rose made a motion to adopt the minutes as modified. Fairbairn seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached adopting the minutes as modified.

4. **Agent report**

- a. Commission Member Application Update- Martin reported that there are several applications in the Office of the Town Manager who he intends to hold interviews and choose replacement members, most likely after the budget season has closed and his schedule lets up from that.
- b. Agent Application Update – Martin said there are candidates who are interested in the position and more will be known soon.
- c. Maria Rose- Newton Conservators are honoring Rose with the Directors Award at the 58th Annual Dinner Meeting on *May 8, 2019*. Martin announced Rose's award and her fellow colleagues and Town Staff offered congratulations.
- d. Arbor Day 2019- Fairbairn reported that he only recently learned that Arbor Day is not traditionally celebrated as part of for Earth Day. He said that last year, in the absence of the Tree Warden to organize Arbor Day, Trees for Watertown member Michelle Cockonougher

organized Arbor Day 2018. In doing so, she sought participation from many organizations some of which, like the Conservation Commission had never been part of the observance before. Having represented the Conservation Commission on that occasion, Fairbairn through this highlighted an opportunity for the Commission to discuss expanded Arbor Day observance to include more general Earth day concerns. He said that the current week day was favorable for expanded school participation but not for other citizens and most members of the Commission. For obvious reasons only he and Martin, as retirees were active Commission participants in Arbor Day 2018. While they found the experience personally gratifying their contact with the public was limited to a few dozen people who happened to be in Arsenal Park that day.

Rose pointed out that Arbor Day is historically an event for the Tree Warden to do community service, and to introduce school age children to education about trees. Schreiber added that there is a considerable amount of volunteerism that takes place connected to Arbor Day, and that local arborists offer their services free of charge for the Town, in conjunction with Arbor Day. Rose mentioned that Butler and Sons volunteers each year and Martin mentioned that Tree Tech also does.

Fairbairn said he saw an opportunity for the Conservation Commission to consider planning an event to celebrate Earth Day that would center on a larger population, offering a wider range of activities for a variety of ages to increase awareness of nature and conservation in the Town. The challenge for the Commission was to decide whether this would be worth the effort to discuss.

e. 2019 Massachusetts Open Space Conference

Fairbairn reported that the fourth Massachusetts Open Space Conference was held in Gardner, Massachusetts and was well attended. He said the focus of the conference was on saving pristine natural open space rather than restoration which highly developed communities like Watertown include among priorities. He said that while each Town's needs vary from community to community, there are many opportunities that all communities would benefit from by garnering grants to restore and save open space.

The group discussed the Town's Open Space Plan. Martin explained that when the Town was working on the Comprehensive Plan, a small team was

assembled to work on just the plan and once the plan was complete the group is disbanded.

Schreiber explained that Town Staff works on the Comprehensive Plan by going out and meeting with the various groups to address the different aspects of the Comprehensive Plan. He said that the Open Space and Recreation Plans were updated for the Comprehensive Report last time.

The group discussed that there is a potential to apply for grants through the Executive Office for Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Fairbairn explained that through his experience at the Open Space Conference, he is now interested in publicity, education and political acceptance of what the Conservation Commission would like to do. He said he would like to get a message out to Mr. Driscoll that the Conservation Commission is on his team and they would like to support him and the Town in Conservation efforts by taking advantage of the wide array of opportunities that are out there.

Martin said he is meeting with Mr. Driscoll in June after Budget Season is over.

Rose said they might benefit from having a brainstorming session at the next Conservation Commission meeting about all these different potentials.

O'Connell asked whether the MVP application made it in on time. Martin said that he sent a letter in to Laura Weiner the Senior Planner who was charged with the application process and that they did get in on time.

Motion: Fairbairn made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Vote: It was unanimously agreed upon to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM.