



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

Leo Martin, Chairperson
Maria P. Rose, Vice Chair
Charles C. Bering, Member
Patrick W. Fairbairn, Member
Jamie O'Connell, Member
Colleen Egan, Member

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MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, June 3, 2020, 7:00 PM, Remote Meeting by Zoom and Dial In

Conservation Commission Members Present: Leo Martin, Maria Rose, Jamie O'Connell, Patrick Fairbairn, Charles C. Bering, Colleen Egan. **Absent:** N/A

Also Present: Gideon Schreiber, Debra Bastios, Jacob Mirsky, Christopher Chan, Elodia Thomas

Staff Present: Laurel Schwab, Conservation Agent, Susan C. Jenness, Assistant

Martin chaired the meeting and read the following.

The Town of Watertown (Conservation Commission) will hold a meeting on June 3, 2020 with the meeting starting time of 7:00 pm. In accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, section 20, relating to the 2020 Covid-19 emergency and to avoid group congregation, this meeting had remote opportunities for participation with public access provided by emailing the agent at lschwab@watertown-ma.gov.

Martin addressed the group by acknowledging the complex times society is in during these times. He said that he felt by taking care of the green and open space in the community, the collective would have more resources to refresh and rejuvenate themselves bringing the world into healthy balance.

1. Vote to allow electronic signatures

Martin explained that due to COVID- 19 and the remote meeting format that all commission member signatures would need to be documented electronically and applied by Agent Schwab.

Motion: Rose made a motion that all commission members signatures would need to be documented electronically and applied by Agent Schwab. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached accepting the motion made by Rose regarding electronic signatures.

2. Arsenal Park Phase B Informational update and schedule

Gideon Schreiber attended the meeting to review a Preliminary Schedule that had been prepared by CDM Smith, the designers of the Arsenal Park project, to keep the project on track with essential scheduling deadlines for a March 2021 construction date. The schedule was distributed to members of the commission and was shown on screen for meeting attendees.

Schreiber recapped that Phase A of the construction had been permitted by the Conservation Commission last summer. The preliminary schedule was created to keep Phase B of the project on schedule, which will need to come back to the Conservation Commission for a review at 90% and for permitting by November of 2020, in order to be ready for construction by March of 2021.

Schreiber updated the CC that he and Martin visited the site and that Martin was instrumental in helping to streamline and expedite the construction process.

Martin suggested that selected members of the CC attend future meetings between Planning and CDM Smith to focus directly on specific areas of the park design. It was determined that the following members would be included in the following concentrated discussions of the park design between the planning staff and CDM Smith.

Egan- Community Gardens and Skate Park
Martin- Play Lot
O'Connell- Community Gardens

Rose suggested that when the Commission is off in the month of August, the group could use an electronic polling method to offer feedback on the 90% designs, rather than call members in for a meeting.

Schreiber said he appreciated Martin's participation in the site visits and discussions regarding construction of the project. He also commented that O'Connell's experience with Community Gardens at Fresh Pond Reservation would be helpful. Schreiber also suggested that the planning staff should be involved during discussions about the Community Gardens to ensure ADA compliance.

Members of the commission thanked Schreiber for his attendance and assistance. Schreiber urged all members to reach out to him at any times with questions, comments or concerns.

3. 57 Coolidge Ave requests for re-issue of original Certificate of Compliance

Schwab updated members that Debra De Bastos was present, who represented the owners of the property who were doing some in-house record keeping. They realized that in 1985 upon completion of a project, they had received a Certificate of Compliance and neglected to file it in the Registry of Deeds as is required.

Schwab contacted the Mass. DEP Circuit Rider for direction and was told that she could ask members of the CC to agree to re-issue the COC which could then be filed by the owner. Schwab had shared the copy of the COC what was on file with Martin and they confirmed the signatures of members who were on the commission at that time such as Diana Proctor and Marylouise Pallotta McDermott.

After a brief discussion, members decided to make a motion.

Motion: Rose made a motion that the Watertown Conservation Commission agreed to re-issue a new Certificate of Compliance for the project that was completed in 1985 at 57 Coolidge Ave. Egan seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous voted was reached that agreed with the motion made by Rose.

4. **23 Elm St** request for Certificate of Compliance

Schwab updated members of the commission of the following situation. The property at 23 Elm St. was now under new ownership who was trying to update all the property records.

It had been determined in 2002 an emergency arose when a septic tank ruptured on the property and an expedited process was necessary to address the emergency repair.

Upon completion of the project, a formal Notice of Intent was filed and reviewed and allowed by members of the Conservation Commission, but no Certificate of Compliance was ever issued.

Schwab asked the members of the Conservation Commission to allow a Certificate of Compliance on the project that was completed in 2002.

Schwab reviewed an as built plan with members of the Commission, who inquired whether the proper procedures had been followed. It was determined that the existing tank had been pumped and abandoned. Rose said she felt comfortable with the procedures followed by the Health Department through the material that was reviewed with Schwab during the hearing.

Motion: O'Connell made a motion to allow the issuance of a Certificate of Compliance for the project that had taken place on an expedited basis at 23 Elm St. Bering seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached in agreement with the motion made by O'Connell.

5. **Discussion-** MVP and town purchase of open space

Martin asked Schwab to update the CC as to recent Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP) activities.

Schwab reported that she is in the process of preparing an application for an MVP grant application for funding for a climate energy plan. She was seeking letters of support to the Executive Office for the application. She offered to expedite the process by writing the letter that commission members could co-sign, since the deadline was approaching.

O'Connell and Egan asked for further definition of the scope of the grant. Schwab explained this action grant was for taking a comprehensive look at how to help Watertown become more resilient to climate change, establish priorities, and create metrics for tracking progress.

After a brief conversation, Rose suggested Martin could take charge of editing the letter to expedite the process.

Motion: Rose made a motion that Martin could oversee disseminating a template for a draft letter of support for the MVP Program to the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. Egan seconded the motion.

Vote: A unanimous vote was reached accepting the motion made by Rose.

Martin briefed members of the commission on open space opportunities. He said there will be an opportunity coming up in the near future for the Town to purchase open space through the Community Preservation Act (CPA), and he has been interested in the site known as Walker Pond. Martin said he had written letters requesting funding to support the process to Raytheon and the Solomon Foundation.

Rose mentioned that it could take at least a year to work through the issues of creating a land trust and the conservation restrictions on that site. Martin said that he has been pursuing lines of conversation with Town staff about how staff could be utilized to execute the various processes involved in making a purchase such as Walker Pond.

Bering said he would be interested in having a conversation with Martin later.

Motion: Rose made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM. Egan seconded the motion. A unanimous vote was reached to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM.