



CITY OF WATERTOWN
Conservation Commission
Administration Building
149 Main Street
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Maria P. Rose, Vice Chair
Charles C. Bering, Member
Patrick W. Fairbairn, Member
Jamie O'Connell, Member

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MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, February 9, 2022, 7:00 PM, Remote Meeting on Zoom

Conservation Commission Members Present: Leo G. Martin, Maria Rose, Jamie O'Connell, Patrick Fairbairn, Charles C. Bering, Maria Rose

Absent: N/A

Also Present: Art Allen, Scott Clarke, Nichole Dunphy, Sara Robertson, Donna Calleja

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

Martin chaired the meeting.

- 1. Public meeting- (continuance was requested to Feb. meeting)- Request for Determination of Applicability- Gore Place** -to make improvements to the existing farmstead in the southwest portion of the site, including a new pole barn and threshing barn with associated fenced barnyards, access walking paths, gravel driveway, utility service upgrades and new stormwater management system. Gore Place Society, Applicant; Highpoint Engineering, representative.

Nichole Dunphy of Highpoint Engineering appeared to present the updated proposal to the members of the Conservation Commission. She described the proposal as a project on a parcel used for agricultural activity as defined under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, citing the proposed changes meet the requirements of normal maintenance under the act. She explained that since the December meeting, they had gone back to the drawing board to lessen the impacts of the changes.

She reported that members of the CC went on a site walk on 1/17/22, and Martin said he was very happy with what he saw. Martin questioned whether the stream on the site was

intermittent or perennial. Art Allen from Ecotech explained that the stream is not on the GIS map, and is less than ½ square mile, but a stream stats analysis had been done. He explained there was no decision made on whether it was intermittent or perennial although there was a presumption it was an intermittent stream.

O’Connell said that she was happy with the proposal given the agricultural nature of the project. She suggested that in the Findings document they make it clear that the Commission did not make any determination on whether the stream is perennial or intermittent since the distinction has no relevance to this RDA. Others agreed. Bering had no comments.

Public Comments

Donna Calleja inquired if they were planning to move the animals near Main St. over closer to Edwards Rd. Dunphy explained that the area east of the stream is not part of the proposal so the animal grazing areas would remain as they are today.

Overall members were satisfied with the modified proposal.

At the prompting of Martin, Rose made a motion.

Motion: Rose made a motion for a negative determination under #5 on WPA form 2, describing the project as exempt. Fairbairn seconded the motion.

Roll Call: A roll called was taken and all agreed with the motion made by Rose.

2. **Public Hearing (continuance has been requested to Feb. meeting)- Notice of Intent- 0 Arlington St (Williams Pond Parcel)** - to construct a 2-story commercial building and parking lot on property known as the Williams Pond parcel; Max Hatziliades, Applicant and Owner.

Schwab reported that the owner of 0 Arlington St. had sought a continuance to the March meeting. Rose asked if there was any correspondence from the owner to report what was happening. Schwab reported she had been speaking to Marcus but he has not given any meaningful updates as to their progress or decisions.

3. Agent Report

- a. CPA- O’Connell reported that all the applications have been reviewed and the presentations will begin soon to move the applications into phase 2. Members of the CPA will review the City Hall mural restoration project at the February meeting and in March they will review the Irving Park/Nichols Ave. housing proposal.

- b. Climate and Energy Plan- Schwab reported that the Draft Climate Plan will be released next week, and she will forward the plan to members of the CC. The public will have a 3-week window of opportunity to comment by Google Form or by email.
- c. Pollinators- Schwab reported she will be speaking with Bob Dirico to get an update on pollinators soon.
- d. Ongoing Orders of Conditions- 57 Coolidge Ave.- Schwab reported there have been some minor modifications to the stormwater system because of leachable lead that was discovered in the soils in the eastern part of the site. The result was a switch an infiltration system to a detention system, which Martin said was considered a minor revision and is being reviewed by the DPW. Martin inquired about the Pleasant St. project for extending a path behind the skating rink property, and Schwab said that would be coming in soon as an NOI. She said that would likely be around April.
- e. Arsenal Park Update- Schwab and Martin reported it would be going to City Council for approval of adding a new spray park back to the Phase B scope, and then CDM Smith would have some wiggle room to design it. Martin wrote a memo to City Council President Mark Sideris and Schwab will share a copy of it with members of the CC. Schwab reported that there have been considerable delays with Phase A due to heavy winter weather.
- f. Comprehensive Plan Update- Schwab reported there would be a Planning Advisory Committee assembled and there would be a need for a member from the Conservation Commission to step in for a term that would last until March of 2023. The meetings would take place on Zoom or hybrid and meet likely one time per month. Rose said she might be interested. Bering said he was particularly concerned about open space. Fairbairn said he thought they were making progress with open space, but they could branch out by focusing on parking lots and getting more shade trees on the streets. Rose said she would likely volunteer, and she agreed with Fairbairn but said CC members had several victories such as converting the incinerator and Edenfield Ave. Rose said she was particularly optimistic because of all the pots of money that were now becoming available to work with. All agreed to have Rose serve as their representative.

- g. Whitney Hill- Fairbairn sent a new summary draft plan he had modified, and he said he plans to continue his stewardship at Whitney Hill. He cited the difficulties of the last couple of years due to the pandemic. Fairbairn has put calls out to volunteers to participate in some work over the summer. He planned to wrap up tree sampling by late March or early April. He said he plans to attend the Conservation Commission meeting next month, possibly as a bystander. Fairbairn will continue his educational activities at Whitney Hill, but he plans to leave the practical maintenance and management initiatives to others. Schwab will be the main contact/point person to coordinate CC activities.

4. Minutes-review and approve minutes from January 5, 2022, meeting

Martin said he sent in last minute comments for the minutes from the January 5th meeting that had not been added yet. All agreed to review them next time.

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

Roll Call: A roll call was taken, and all agreed to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM.