



TOWN OF WATERTOWN
Conservation Commission
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MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, November 3, 2021, 7:00 PM, Remote Meeting on Zoom

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

Absent: N/A

Also Present: Peggy McDonald, Susan Robertson, Donna Callega, Linda Relson, Matthew Mui from Highpoint, Ron Whyte, Doreen Daley, Cedrick Azor, Dave McDonald

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

Martin chaired the meeting.

- 1. Public 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.

Cedrick Azor was present to review the Request for Determination that was filed for an agricultural project. He explained that the installation of a gravel drive with a curb cut had already been allowed by the Town. Waste will flow into a basin before it goes into the bordering vegetated wetland.

He explained that the improvements are all being made for livestock, and for gardening for active land in agricultural use, which is exempt under the Wetlands Protection Act. There is no work being proposed in the wetlands but work does overlap with jurisdictional areas.

O'Connell said that her review of the project did not clarify why the project was exempt. She suggested it may be a project better filed as a limited project under the Wetlands Protection Act.

Schwab said she researched the WPA for rules on Agricultural projects, but the rules were spread out all through the CMR. She explained that certain agricultural activities such as "normal maintenance and improvements" are considered exempt, but she is not positive that what is being proposed falls completely within that category. Rose said that they would need to make sure, and this project might fall under normal improvements. She did not feel confident and suggested a continuance might be the best course of action to take, so that they would have the time to research the correct manner for handling this project.

It was discussed that some of the sheep will be contained in an area close to the wetland. The runoff from the pigsty does not get to go directly into the stream and was designed to treat water after collecting at the bottom, to be used for composting. Martin asked if anything stayed in the water, and he was told they could make an improvement by adding swales before going into the stream. Rose said it would then get some treatment, but very little. O'Connell said that did not seem like the best practice as it was so close to the stream and said she could not say whether this qualified as a limited or exempt project. She clarified there is too little in the application to say that the project fits the definitions.

Fairbairn said he would like to review the wetland boundary on-site with a hard copy in hand as flagged so he could take notes. He pointed out he had a concern whether this was an intermittent or perennial stream. Martin agreed that was an important question and noted the topography seemed to say the wastewater is going to areas of the land without treatment. Martin said that Fairbairn's comments indicate a site walk is necessary.

Rose asked Scott, the proprietor of the farm, if it was true they had not raised pigs in 5 years. He said that that is correct and that their animals are out in the pasture 90% of the time and the buildings are just for their protection. There are 15 sheep in the permanent flock and pigs were to be just seasonal. Rose commented the stream seemed perennial and Martin said it was flowing and they would need to get a look at the open flow channel.

Bering said there were a lot of regulations that would require them looking into and said normal maintenance and improvements have specific criteria in the regulations.

Public Comments

Doreen Daley from Edwards Rd. commented that this seemed like it was great project that intended to make improvements. She said her street gets a lot of water already and wanted to know where it was coming from and how this project could affect her street in the future. Martin clarified this work is on the west side of the stream and the work would not affect anything upstream. Azor agreed.

Rose inquired as to the square footage of the building being removed and the new structures. O'Connell asked about the gravel roadway and the number and size of the trees that are proposed to be cut down. Scott said this is considered the Gore Mile Walk, a tradition of the property from the 1800's which has trees on either side of the permeable turf material. Rose said she would be interested about the clean-up and maintenance of the gravel bed and how often it would be cleaned.

Dave McDonald, former Chair of the Conservation Commission, stated that he spoke with the Conservation Agent Schwab at length about the proposal, and there needs to be more detail to these plans. He said it should be clear what is going to be in the waste basin. He clarified that if the waste is from animals, what types of chemicals might be contained in the waste such as antibiotics etc.? The process for removal of the waste from the site should be reflected as well as the maintenance of the stormwater system given the more intense weather patterns that are being experienced.

Martin explained to Azor we can continue this project to the December meeting on December 1, 2021, in order to receive a definitive statement of exactly why this project is exempt from the Wetlands Protect Act and some supplemental materials answering the questions that were brought up this evening.

2. **Public Hearing (continuance has been requested to Dec. 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 updated members of the Conservation Commission that the owner sought a continuance until the December meeting.

3. Agent Report

- a. CPA- Martin updated the Commission that the CPA project he had submitted was pulled as there was no parcel available.
- b. Climate and Energy Plan- Schwab updated the Commission that the comments from last week's working group meetings about detailed Actions will be worked on for the next month or 2. There is a December public meeting for input scheduled. Martin is working with the stakeholder group on Open Space. The second general survey is still open.
- c. Pollinators- There are 2 more sites being looked for to set up pollinator gardens in the spring. The DPW is looking for new larger sites.
- d. Ongoing Orders of Conditions- Schwab inspected the erosion control at Charles River Rd. Park Phase II. Work started this week going west to east and erosion controls have been installed along the riverbank. DCR is managing the project. They will install project signage and Schwab will send out a Notify Me and post to social media. Erosion control has also gone in at 64 Pleasant St. at the Historic Mill Building that goes right up to the river.

Rose reported she saw the site at 650 Pleasant St., and she said the hill on the west side looks very overgrown. It has not been maintained at all and needs to be whacked down. Schwab said she will take a look and reach out.

- e. Arsenal Park Arsenal Park Phase A is 90% done and they are waiting on concrete pathways, signs, and pavilions. Phase B will be filing a NOI soon that will be set up for a public hearing.