



City of Watertown
Conservation Commission
Administration Building
149 Main St.
Watertown, MA 02472

Maria P. Rose, Chair
Leo Martin, Member
Jamie O'Connell, Member
Darya Mattes, Member
Rachel Danford, Member

MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2024, 7:00 PM, Remote Meeting on Zoom

Conservation Commission Members Present: Maria Rose, Leo Martin, Darya Mattes, and Rachel Danford

Absent: Jamie O'Connell

Also Present: Nicole Gardner (City Councilor), Megan Shave (DCR), Susie Markin (ARE), Edward Roberge (Stantec), Taylor Donovan (VHB), Bridget Hilgendorf (VHB), Taylor Donovan (VHB), and Nick O'Connor (National Development).

Staff Present: Katie Swan, Conservation Agent, Susan Jenness, Assistant

Rose took a roll call and proceeded to chair the meeting.

1. **Public Hearing:** Request for Extension of Order of Conditions – DCR Vegetation Test Plots (MA DEP #: 321-0170). DRC, Applicant, and Property Owner.

Megan Shave (Senior Ecologist, DCR) was present to discuss the request for an Extension of the Order of Conditions for a period of two (2) years. Additional time was needed to monitor the plot to stabilize the area with seed mix after changes were made in 2022 (relocated woody vegetation plantings in Cambridge) due to proximity to the Watertown Dam. The existing construction fencing and erosion controls will stay in place and additional erosion control will be placed on the dam side of the site.

Motion: Martin made a motion to allow the application to Extend the Order of Conditions for a period of two (2) years. Mattes seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Rose took a roll call and all members agreed with the motion made by Martin.

2. **Public Hearing:** Request for Extension of Order of Conditions – Arsenal on the Charles (MA DEP #: 321-0176). Alexandria Real Estates Equities (ARE) MA Region No. 75, Property Owner, Stantec and ARE, Representatives.

Suzie Markin (ARE) and Edward Roberge (Stantec) were present to discuss the request for an Extension of the Order of Conditions for a period of three (3) years. Additional time was needed to continue the monitoring of the plants to meet the two (2) year growing requirement. In addition, the City requested that they replace fifteen (15) trees that were diseased (located along the road) with native trees and monitor over the two (2) year growing period. Rose agreed that was a reasonable time to monitor the trees.

Motion: Danford made a motion to Extend the Order of Conditions for a period of three (3) years. Martin seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Rose took a roll call and all members agreed with the motion made by Danford.

3. **Public Hearing:** Request for Extension of Order of Conditions – 99 Coolidge Avenue (MA DEP #: 321-0175). ARE, Property Owner, and VHB and National Development, Representatives.

Nick O'Connor (National Development) and Taylor Donovan (VHB) were present to discuss the request for an Extension of the Order of Conditions for a period of three (3) years. Additional time was needed to continue the work on the enhancement of the existing stream corridor, including the remaining monitoring of the invasive species removal and remaining plantings to be installed. Martin commented that the photos of the site looked nice, and looked forward to the results.

Motion: Martin made a motion to Extend the Order of Conditions for a period of three (3) years. Danford seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Rose took a roll call and all members agreed with the motion made by Martin.

4. **Public Hearing:** Notice of Intent – 99 Coolidge Avenue and DCR bike path extension (MA DEP#: 321-0187). Application for the at 0 Arsenal St. in Watertown, MA within the 200-foot Riverfront Area. DCR, Property Owner, and National Development and VHB, Representatives.

The proposed work:

- NOI filed as a limited project as a redevelopment project under 310 CMR 10.53(6) for the construction of a non-motorized, accessible, multi-use path extension to connect with an existing multi-use pathway.
- Extending from the back of 99 Coolidge Avenue property across DCR to Arsenal Street with a total area of the proposed multi-use path: 2,890 SF.

- Within the jurisdictional Riverfront Area (RFA) as a previously disturbed area, Buffer Zone (BZ), and no impact to the local 50 ft No Build Zone (NBZ).

Commission questions and comments:

- Plantings or grass seed – will use native seed mix to stabilize the area when they are finished.
- Scour issues - there are no impacts to the bank.
- Current stockpiling and equipment seen in some of the proposal photos – equipment and stockpiling were from the Arsenal Roadway project and not related to the Coolidge Avenue project.
- Construction equipment entering the site – National Development uses Cranshaw Construction and will use the 99 Coolidge Garage for storage when not in use.
- For the proposed work, will minimize stockpiling on site, pour the pavement mix as they go along, and ensure that erosion controls are in place before construction starts (on the eastern side of the path).
- The project had not been signed off on by the DCR which is a requirement for members of the Conservation Commission to decide on the proposal. The applicant and Commission agreed to continue the hearing to May or an alternative date sooner if needed.

Public Comments:

Nicole Gardner (City Councilor) stated this was an important project for bike and pedestrians for connectivity and she thanked the Conservation Commission for their service and diligence in reviewing the project.

5. Vote for Vice Chair of the Conservation Commission: The Chair would like to nominate O'Connell for the Vice Chair of the Conservation Commission. O'Connell was not present, and the members decided to table the discussion and vote at the next meeting.
6. WPA Regulations Update: Rose shared that there have been significant changes to the WPA regulations (310 CMR 10.00) including the Stormwater Handbook. If the changes go through for WPA regs and handbook, it would be helpful for the Commission to get together to review and discuss the updates. The comment letters regarding the changes must be filed by Tuesday, April 30th. Martin noted that the changes to the regulations do not affect Watertown Wetland Ordinance regulations, but should cross reference in the Stormwater Handbook when reviewing applications.
7. CPC Updates: No update
8. Agent Report: Received a notification from MA DEP about Ch 91 Waterways Licensing for the Watertown Yacht Club. The Commission inquired about if the work that was listed in the permit was already done. Swan noted that she will follow up on that.

9. Minutes from the March 6, 2024, Conservation Commission meeting, to be tabled to the May meeting due to insufficient quorum this evening, who were also present at the March 6, 2024 meeting.

Motion: Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. Rose seconded the motion.

Roll Call: All members present were polled, and all agreed with the motion made by Martin.