

**TOWN OF NEEDHAM
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 8, 2015**

LOCATION: Public Services Administration Building (PSAB), Charles River Room

ATTENDING: Janet Carter Bernardo, Artie Crocker, Stephen Farr, Peter Oehlkers, Cory Rhoades (arrived @ 8:15 pm), Matt Varrell (Director of Conservation), Debbie Anderson (Conservation Specialist)

GUESTS: Ronald Lopez, Stephen O'Brien, Jack Sullivan, Rachel Watsky

J. Carter Bernardo opened the public meeting at 7:30 pm.

MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes of December 11, 2014, by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 4-0-0.

ENFORCEMENT & VIOLATION UPDATES

280 NEHOIDEN STREET

M. Varrell reported that the Enforcement Order and Notice of Violation (including fine) had been sent to the owner's of 280 Nehoiden Street. As of today, they have not contacted him.

HEARINGS

NONE

OTHER BUSINESS

REQUEST FOR PARTIAL CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE – 121 CHARLES RIVER STREET (DEP FILE #234-672)

M. Varrell reported that the Applicant has requested the Commission postpone their review of the Certificate of Compliance request to the January 22, 2015 Conservation Commission Meeting.

REQUEST FOR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE – 21-23 BIRCH STREET (DEP FILE #234-708)

M. Varrell reported that he had visited the site and found the work completed to be in compliance with the Order of Conditions. A copy of the Homeowner's Association language about restricting herbicide and pesticide use was submitted to M. Varrell, as required by the Order of Conditions. The Applicant, Jack Sullivan, thanked M. Varrell for his assistance in closing out the permits. J. Sullivan described the two deviations from the approved plan including: (1) an additional 40 square feet of pavers were installed to connect the paver driveways and walkways; and two (2) proposed 500 gallon drywells were replaced with one (1) 1,000 gallon drywell at the front of property.

Motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 21-23 BIRCH STREET (DEP File #234-708) by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 4-0-0.

REQUEST FOR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE – 21-23 BIRCH STREET DEMO (DEP FILE #234-695)

M. Varrell reported that he had visited the site and found the work completed to be in compliance with the Order of Conditions.

Motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for the Demo at 21-23 BIRCH STREET (DEP File #234-695) by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 4-0-0.

REQUEST FOR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE – 27-29 BIRCH STREET (DEP FILE #234-707)

M. Varrell reported that he had visited the site and found the work completed to be in compliance with the Order of Conditions. A copy of the Homeowner's Association language about restricting herbicide and pesticide use was submitted to M. Varrell, as required by the Order of Conditions. The Applicant, Jack Sullivan, thanked M. Varrell for his assistance in closing out the permits. J. Sullivan described the two deviations from the approved plan including: (1) an additional 40 square feet of pavers were installed to connect the paver driveways and walkways; and two (2) proposed 500 gallon drywells were replaced with one (1) 1,000 gallon drywell at the front of property.

Motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 27-29 BIRCH STREET (DEP File #234-707) by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 4-0-0.

REQUEST FOR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE – 27-29 BIRCH STREET DEMO (DEP FILE #234-694)

M. Varrell reported that he had visited the site and found the work completed to be in compliance with the Order of Conditions.

Motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for the Demo at 27-29 BIRCH STREET (DEP File #234-694) by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 4-0-0.

REQUEST FOR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE – 33-35 BIRCH STREET (DEP FILE #234-706)

M. Varrell reported that he had visited the site and found the work completed to be in compliance with the Order of Conditions. A copy of the Homeowner's Association language about restricting herbicide and pesticide use was submitted to M. Varrell, as required by the Order of Conditions. The Applicant, Jack Sullivan, thanked M. Varrell for his assistance in closing out the permits. J. Sullivan described the two deviations from the approved plan including: (1) an additional 40 square feet of pavers were installed to connect the paver driveways and walkways; and two (2) proposed 500 gallon drywells were replaced with one (1) 1,000 gallon drywell at the front of property.

Motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 33-35 BIRCH STREET (DEP File #234-706) by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 4-0-0.

REQUEST FOR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE – 33-35 BIRCH STREET DEMO (DEP FILE #234-693)

M. Varrell reported that he had visited the site and found the work completed to be in compliance with the Order of Conditions.

Motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for the Demo at 33-35 BIRCH STREET (DEP File #234-693) by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 4-0-0.

REQUEST FOR A PARTIAL CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE – 112 EDGEWATER DRIVE (DEP FILE #234-534)

Rachel Watsky of Goddard Consulting represented the Applicant. D. Anderson gave a brief overview of the permitting history of the site. The project consisted of the removal of an existing porch and construction of an addition, deck and patio to an existing single-family house within the 100-foot Buffer Zone and the Riverfront Area associated with the Charles River. In November of 2010, the project was amended to include restoration of the property for unpermitted vegetation clearing and filling that took place beyond the limits of work approved under previous orders.

A previous owner filed a Request for Certificate of Compliance in November of 2011. The Commission denied the Request for a Certificate of Compliance and required that the restoration and mitigation areas be planted and monitored in accordance with the referenced plans. Ms. Watsky stated she had directed the contractor where to plant the additional plantings not previously installed in order to be in compliance with the approved plans. D. Anderson reported that she had visited the site with Ms. Watsky and determined the plantings had been installed in relatively close proximity to the approved locations. The plantings require a two-year monitoring period, the submission of monitoring reports and a 75% survival rate for a complete Certificate of Compliance to be issued.

The only deviation noted from the approved plans was an additional set of stairs associated with the retaining wall. D. Anderson reported that a fire pit type structure was located on the lawn within the 100-foot Buffer Zone. The structure consisted of rocks laid on the surface, no excavation was performed. In addition, D. Anderson noted logs from a tree had been cut into two-three foot sections and stood upright in a row along the boundary of the easement a few feet from the wetland edge creating a sort of barrier. M. Varrell stated that perhaps the owner had placed the logs there and planned to split them at a later time to use in the fire pit. The Commission did not have an issue with the fire pit located on existing lawn or the row of logs, although they did question what tree had been cut.

Motion to issue a Partial Certificate of Compliance for 112 EDGEWATER DRIVE (DEP File #234-534) by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 4-0-0.

REQUEST FOR A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE – 100 WILSON LANE (DEP FILE #234-647)

M. Varrell reported that he had visited the site and found the work completed to be in compliance with the Order of Conditions. He noted that the Order read that up to 18 plantings shall be installed. The homeowner installed at least 19 trees in the 100-foot Buffer Zone. The main project was installation of a sewer connection. Some trees were cut for the project and invasive species control work was undertaken. M. Varrell stated the invasive species control efforts on the invasive oriental bittersweet appeared to be effective. There was no two-year plant monitoring condition.

Motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 100 Wilson Lane (DEP File #234-647) by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 4-0-0.

RIDGE HILL RESERVATION – 2015 PROJECT DISCUSSION (STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION)

M. Varrell presented a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the potential Student Conservation Association (SCA) project at Ridge Hill. He had previously described the SCA and its work to the Commission. The organization consists of college students who are given the opportunity to learn about conservation and gain skills such as woodworking and trail maintenance/building. Participants stay at the work location for a period of one to two weeks and complete assigned projects for a fee. He explained that he had met at Ridge Hill with members of the SCA and they inspected Ridge Hill and discussed projects that the group may be able to complete and the timeframes necessary including:

- The Ridge Hill Loop Trail which is part of the Trails Master Plan. Projects may include: constructing a footbridge across a small stream; invasive plant removal; and work on the trail itself. SCA members felt the construction of the footbridge may take more than 5 days and recommended a two-week time period may be necessary to complete several of the proposed projects. M. Varrell stated the main project would be to build the bridge but if time remained, they could remove stumps from the trail by hand.
- During the site walk, trail drainage projects were also discussed.

The Commission discussed several areas on the trails that could use improvement. M. Varrell noted that, at this time, he is not looking for a definitive list of proposed projects for SCA. The Commission discussed access to bring in materials for the footbridge project. SCA would prepare the footbridge design and submit a materials list to the town. The town will provide the materials and transport them to the site. M. Varrell stated that the Town of Dedham had the SCA complete a footbridge project for them and were very satisfied with the results.

SCA is currently holding ten days during the summer of 2015 for proposed work in Needham. M. Varrell has a placeholder for \$10,000 in CPA funding for the project and hopes to gain funding for the project at the May 2015 Town Meeting. The funds will not be available until after July 1, 2015. The SCA fee for the 10 days without materials is \$7,200. With material, the total project cost is estimated to be \$10,000. The Commission discussed the likelihood of getting funding for the project. J. Carter Bernardo stated that she believes the Commission needs to concentrate on getting the Charles River Trail completed. The Commission discussed shifting the focus of the SCA to the Charles River Trail. If the project moves forward, participants would camp at Ridge Hill and use available water and toilet facilities. M. Varrell described several other projects in town that could utilize SCA in future years if this project went well.

TIMOTHY FULLER TRAIL DESIGN DISCUSSION

M. Varrell had provided the Commission with a spreadsheet detailing bids, etc. for the Timothy Fuller Trail Design. The project was put out to bid in November and seven or eight companies showed interest in the project but the town received two formal bids. The two bids received were approximately \$100,000 above the budget. The lowest bid was from Solid Earth Technologies. The Commission discussed the bid and budget and where the funds were coming from. M. Varrell had reached out to several of the companies that had shown interest in the project and the majority thought the bridge was over engineered. M. Varrell stated that he had spoken with Solid Earth Technologies and they indicated they could potentially save the town money on the project by proposing the use of different building technology but would not explain their proposed design changes to Gill Engineering, the town's structural engineer consultant. The Commission discussed the necessity of providing handrails as part of the design. M. Varrell is planning to speak with Mark Gluesing of the CPC regarding the availability of funding in relation to the design including handrails or not. M. Varrell explained they are still in the process of

gathering information and eventually will put the project out to re-bid with revised engineering specifications in order to obtain bids that are within the project budget.

S. Farr asked M. Varrell about the use of swamp mats during the project. The Commission had not approved the use of swamp mats in the OOC and this constraint may have prevented some firms from bidding. M. Varrell responded that he had checked the most recent U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulations and the use of swamp mats would count towards the 5,000 sq. ft. of fill threshold and, therefore, require additional permitting. The additional permitting would add 4-6 months to the process and potentially push back the start of the project to the summer of 2016. S. Farr stated when the project is sent out for re-bid, they could specify the plan specifications note helical piles or approved equivalent and specify pounds per square foot. The proposed changes to the engineering specifications could be approved as long as the Engineer is comfortable stamping the Plans.

RIDGE HILL WALL REPAIR DISCUSSION

M. Varrell presented the Commission with photos showing a stone wall near the entrance to Ridge Hill Reservation has been damaged most likely over the summer, obviously by a vehicle. M. Varrell had solicited a price quote to repair the wall from the Contractor that had previously done repair work to the wall. The Contractor quoted \$1,850 to complete the repair. S. Farr asked if any police reports had been filed regarding a car accident at the location. M. Varrell reported that he had checked and no police reports were filed. J. Carter Bernardo asked where the repair money would come from. M. Varrell replied it would come out of the Conservation Trust fund. S. Farr asked if the quote included mortar or dry stone. M. Varrell replied mortar was proposed. The Commission noted that the repair should not take place until the weather is warmer so the mortar will set properly.

Motion to approve the allocation of \$1,850 from the Conservation Trust Fund for the repair of the stone wall at the entrance of Ridge Hill Reservation by S. Farr, seconded by A. Crocker, approved 5-0-0.

CAROL-BREWSTER MONITORING LETTER

M. Varrell explained the Carol-Brewster Monitoring Report was sent to members for their review, but no formal action was necessary. J. Carter Bernardo has visited Carol-Brewster a number of times and had noted the mowing that took place in the fall. She stated that most of the restoration trees planted were in good health. M. Varrell noted 74% of the plantings had survived since their installation in 2011. D. Anderson explained that several shrubs had been accidentally mowed over by the town workers. M. Varrell stated that the Parks & Forestry Division Superintendent, Ed Olsen, has spoken to the workers and they have been informed of the limits of mowing.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by J. Carter Bernardo, seconded by S. Farr, approved 5-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

NEXT PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, January 22, 2015 at 7:30 PM in the Public Services Administration Building, Charles River Room.