

**City of Marlborough
Conservation Commission
Minutes**

February 17, 2011
Memorial Hall, 3rd floor, City Hall
7:00 PM

Members Present: Edward Clancy Chairman, John Skarin, Dennis Demers, Allan White, David Williams, and Priscilla Ryder-Conservation Officer

Absent: Michelle Higgins and Lawrence Roy

Visitors – Members of Boy Scout Troop #2 were present with Troop Leaders Dave Allen and Joe Delgineo to observe the Commission's meeting. Chairman Clancy welcomed them.

Approval of Minutes: The Commission reviewed the Minutes of Feb. 3, 2011 and voted unanimously to accept them as written and place on file.

Discussion

- Flagg Brook Wildlife Management Area – Draft License Agreement with Pat Huckery Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) - Ms. Ryder noted that Pat Huckery, District Manager for the North East Region of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife had planned to come to the meeting to discuss the license agreement for the Flagg Brook Wildlife Management Area. Unfortunately, she was not able to make the meeting however, she provided Ms. Ryder with some of the answers to the questions posed in the draft license agreement the Commission members had reviewed previously. Comments from Ms. Huckery are in bold followed by the Commission's discussion as follows:

1. **First a habitat assessment must be performed for this property now before any trails can be developed. This will ensure that we all know what is out there and what needs to be protected (or managed). Ms. Huckery is wondering if there are any talented wildlife volunteers in the city that might be willing to do some tracking for DFW and Conservation Com.** The Commission asked Ms. Ryder to contact Larry Roy and the Marlborough Fish and Game club to see if there is anyone who might be willing to do some tracking for us. Ms. Ryder will inquire.
2. **Once a habitat assessment has been completed, then a trail system can be developed which will need to be approved by the DFW. DFW would need to approve trails and any wildlife improvement projects, invasives removal etc. before they are constructed or implemented.** The Commission said this was OK.
3. **Restricted uses: One restriction DFW is imposing on all properties is the "no more than 2 leashed dogs per person" to prevent areas from becoming "professional dog walker" locations. This can also be disruptive to wildlife, so this restriction would be required. DFW is usually silent to mountain biking and horseback riding, unless there are conflicts or concerns. So, it is allowed until and unless there are reasons to restrict it in these uses.** The Commission agreed with this and asked Ms. Ryder to include it in the draft License.
4. **Signage - Normally DFW posts minimal signage internal to the site however, they do post the boundaries.** The Commission noted that we should coordinate signage with DFW and some internal trail signs may be necessary to keep people from getting lost. Ms. Ryder should discuss this with DFW and find out what signage is to be use.

- Hunting - Hunting is permitted on DFW property and they would be allowing hunting on this 52 acres of land as well. Fall is primarily deer hunting, spring is turkey hunting. The DFW is firm on this and encourages hunting to help the control of: Lyme disease, collisions/accidents with deer and cars, and browsing/eating of shrubs in suburban yards by deer. Hunting is controlled by the state hunting laws which require: No discharge of fire arms within 500' from an occupied dwelling. No discharge of fire arms within 150' from a public way.** The Commission discussed this and needs to evaluate whether to allow hunting on the remaining conservation land which is closer to dwellings or not. The Commission discussed the possibility of only allowing bow hunting on portions of the city property. The Commission asked Ms. Ryder to talk to the Police Department and get their input as well.

Project Updates

- Fafard Indian Hill Open Space and Walking Trail Easement update - Ms. Ryder explained that there are still issues to be resolved on the walking easement encroachments and that she continues to work with Steve Reid, Don Rider and the legal office of Fafard Real Estate to work on resolving this issue to have the hill transferred to the city for conservation purposes to be protected in perpetuity, and for there to be a connection to Callahan State Park. She will update the Commission on progress at the next meeting. The recommendation letter to approve the open space for conservation purposes, the Commission approved at the last meeting, was not sent given the issues to be resolved. This will be discussed at a future meeting again.

Correspondence/Other Business

The Commission reviewed the following correspondence and voted unanimously to accept and place on file:

- Letter from Mass. Water Resources Authority, dated Feb. 3, 2011 RE: John J. Carroll Water Treatment Plant Stormwater Management O & M Plan.

Visitors – Members of Boy Scout Troop #2 were present with Troop Leaders Dave Allen and Joe Delgineo to observe the Commission's meeting. Mr. Allen explained that the scouts are working on a badge about how government works. Chairman Clancy explained the process of the open meeting law and the Wetland Protection Act regulations and the permit process. He also discussed the need for the Commission to do enforcement on occasion when developers are not following the rules and are threatening to pollute the streams with mud and silt. He also explained the need to manage the city's conservation land and where possible improve wildlife habitat. He thanked past scouts for all the work they have done to improve the city's conservation lands by creating and maintaining trails, installing signs and kiosks and building bridges. All of these projects are a huge help to the city.

Mr. White explained that there is a great deal of talent on the board. During hearings, inputs from residents are very important to be sure the Commission has all the information it needs about drainage and wildlife in areas before approval for construction is granted. The Commission has a diverse talent base, but everyone works together to issue a fair and consistent judgment on projects in order to protect the wetlands. He said that the city has changed dramatically over the years. He has lived here when there were from 15,000 residents to 37,000 residents. So, a lot has changed and the goal of the Commission is to ensure the wetlands stay healthy.

At the end of the meeting, Ms. Ryder showed the scouts some maps to locate the city's water supply, conservation properties and wildlife corridors. A few scouts indicated they had seen turkeys this year on

Conrad Rd. and in the State Forest near Hemenway St. Many knew where conservation lands were located. The Commission thanked them for coming.

Meetings – Next Conservation Commission meetings are scheduled for March 3rd, 2011 and April 7th, 2011 (Thursdays)

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Priscilla Ryder