

**TOWN OF STURBRIDGE, MA
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Thursday, March 19, 2015
Sturbridge Center Office Building, 2nd Floor**

Meeting Called to Order: 6:00 – 6:45 pm Conservation Restrictions Review; working session for Commissioners
6:45 pm Reconvene Meeting for Regular Business

Quorum Check: Confirmed
Members Present: Ed Goodwin (EG), Chairman **Members Absent:** None
David Barnicle (DB), Vice Chair
Donna M. Grehl (DG)
Calvin Montigny (CM)
Joseph Kowalski (JK)

Others Present: Glenn Colburn (CG), Conservation Agent
Cindy Sowa Forgit, Conservation Clerk
Applicants and/or Audience Members: Mark Carlson, Anthony J. Grossi, Joseph Grover, Bob Meunier, Teresa Gorman, Sue and Mike Riel

Committee Updates:

- CPA – (EG) Met with BOS on Monday night to discuss Plimpton Property. To re-cap the project: 320 acre parcel, with 295 acres in Sturbridge, and 25 acres in Brookfield. \$1.7 million asking price. Fish and Wildlife is paying \$150,000 for the Brookfield parcel. The Sturbridge parcel will also contain 16 acres of for Town Recreation and an 11 acre well site. The \$400K will come from a State Grant, \$330K from the Forest Service grant. CPC funds can pay for the balance, however we need a bridge loan for the \$400K until we purchase. According to Darci Schofield, Trust for Public Lands, the CPC funds can pay but need the \$400K bridge loan until we purchase. The \$400K bridge loan is to process the land and will get reimbursed by grant.
- Trails Committee – (DB) Meeting held last week, discussed plans for work to start but too much snow. GC is preparing an NOI for the Leadmine property. Sat, June 13th at 12 – A town wide picnic sponsored by FROST. Trails Committee will provide BBQ's and water. Participants are to bring your own food to cook. There will be a lifeguard on station. At 3pm, there will be a walk from Camp Robinson Area to Heins Farm and back.
- Lakes Advisory Committee – (DG) DG spoke with Marita Tasse and will continue to gather information. DG will work with the new Conservation Clerk to compose the guideline literature into a simple document.

Approval of Minutes: March 5, 2015: Motion: DB: 5-0 EG: 2nd vote: 5-0
March 12, 2015: Motion: DB: 2nd: EG vote (3-0; CM & DG abstain)

Public Hearings:

7:00 pm Notice of Intent, DEP #300-922, 136 Lake Rd, Bruce Gran. Raze and replace two single family homes, replacement of retaining wall, driveway re-configuration, removal of two sheds, grading and associated site work. (cont. from 2/5 for favorable snow conditions and site visit). Still too much snow for a site visit, so requested a continuation to the April 2nd meeting. Request granted.

Old Business:

- **Hamant Brook Dam Removal Project.** The 60% Hamant Brook dam removal presentation is scheduled for Wed, April 8th at 10am at the Center Office Building. Update: more information was sent to Stan Tech regarding the traffic pattern for when we have to close OSV and install the new arch. Invited guests are Bob Brier, Trials Committee and BOS.
- **LAND Grant:** State LAND Grant – need signatures. Local acquisition for Plimpton property. This is part of the paperwork for accepting the grant. It's a Project agreement stating that if we give you money then you allow us, public access, to install a sign indicating terms of the grant (ex: no motorized vehicles). Signatures received.
- **BOH Septic Set Backs:** GC relayed Concom concerns of the setbacks to BOH, and that we must make sure our bylaw doesn't conflict with their Bylaw. This will be addressed at a later date by BOH.

New Business:

Trail Committee (TC) project work is schedule for April 18th (weather permitting), May 16th & June 20th . GC scheduled work is:

- 4/18: Finish fine gravel. Heinz Trail: inspect, repair and remove debris

- 5/16: Morgan Trail: finish clean up, paint & mark 7 Ridges and install signage
- 6/20: Complete signage installation and trail marking, start crossing D Ridge. Arbutus trail: TC will want to contract that work out for drainage as concerned with TC capability.
- Update on Trail Mapping Project: (GC) I have done extensive work for Trails Committee, in creating maps of the trails. Now with no assistant in the office, TC may not have an NOI for the bridge work scheduled for June. Since I'm down an assistant, then it will have to be put on hold at this time. I will try to work on Bridge A once time allows.

Forest Cutting Plans:

Main Street and Shepard Road, Araina, Inc. 50 acres. Continued from 2/19/15. 105 Main Street, Theresa Johnson. 4 acres, Anthony Grossi, Grossi Forest Products.

Agent Briefing:

- Using same landing as Main/Shepard.
- Ariana has two potential vernal pools on the property.
- The Johnson parcel has one potential vernal pool. Toni Grossi, Grossi Forest Products, is representing both cutting Plans.
- I supplied copies of Best Management Practices (BMP) of Vernal Pools (VP) for the Commission at the last meeting. According to State BMP for certified vernal pools, one must show the location(s) on a map, adhere to filter strips but exceptions maybe made by the Forester, no harvesting or activity in the depression of the VP and to keep tree tops out of VP and/or depression. However, during Mar 1st – July 1st, if a tree lands in the VP or depression, you must leave due to breeding.
- State Guidelines: Must avoid making 6" ruts within 200' of VP, prevent sedimentation, the understory vegetation will remain to maintain temperature in forest. Avoid leaving dead trees, operate equipment 50' away (preferable in frozen conditions) and minimize leaf litter and soil disturbance.
- Town Wetlands Bylaw (Chpt 9): GC feels we need to treat VP as certified VP and work is to be 50' away. My suggestion will be to use the BMPs for forestry work near potential VP

Tony Grossi: I spoke with state forester and GC. We will treat VP as if they were certified VP. We will have 50' filter strips, no skid roads, debris will be left and we will follow BMP. We modified the plan – filter strips around all 3 VP. JK: So you have more than what State requires? TG: Yes.

Documents Submitted: Revised plan from Oliver GIS, now shows VP.

- Landing – Wood will now come out on Shepard Road, the alternate landing was on Rt. 131. We can no longer use the Johnson property due to an underground brook. It's covered with corrugated metal so will take everything out Shepard so to avoid this 2nd landing area. DPW said very costly to do a curb cut and wouldn't make sense for the scope/duration of the work. However, other abutters maybe other options for landing, but nothing has come of this at this time.

Commission comments, questions:

- DG: I won't allow a cut 50' to VP. Our bylaw says 200' and it's not a hardship, then want a 200' bz around the VP. GC: VP regs are in the Sturbridge regs, but this is a timber harvest and ConCom must apply the regs for Forestry. State regs read to use filter strips, TG will leave 50% of basal area and no machinery. This wooded lot will return to a wooded lot.
- EG: concerned with plan, need a site visit. Concern with proposed landing onto Rt. 131 and the culvert vs. Shepard Road landing.
- DG: How much snow is there? TG: 14" most areas. DG: I am concerned with 50' buffer around VP. DB: We can't change the regs. Forestry is exempt.

Audience comments, questions:

- Teresa Gorman: 10 Orchard – How will traffic be effected? It's hard enough when 2 cars want to pass. How will a large truck pass another car? TG: We use signs.
- Sue & Mike Riel, we live next to the proposed landing. How does this landing work? TG: as you harvest the trees, it's an area where the logs get stacked and a truck takes away. The size of the landing is a 150' x 100' area. It will be a flat spot. DB: there is one now on Fiske Hill so that you can see it. ML: There will be surface water (every spring during the melt) that will run into this area. How can we help this? TG: We can put some gravel down. SL: How will you get out of Shepard and up the hill? There is a blind spot coming down Shepard Rd. TG: We use signs.
- Bob Meunier, 73 Shepard – What type of cutting? TG: Select harvest. The lot is marked and over a certain size and some trees where it's need. Min size tree: 14' – 15" diameter. Will still be a forest? Can you show where cutting? TG: Yes. 50 acres is harvested of 77 acres total. What kind of buffer zones are required for residential properties? TG: There are no buffers required but we will be within 10'-20' of property line. Has the property been surveyed? TG: Not sure, but I can send the Forester to show you the pins. Concerned with flooding as we have it now, but more

concerned when trees get cut, what will flooding be like? Any protection? TG: I have never heard of protection for flooding and/or water drainage in my 32 yrs. of doing this. Sedimentation and erosion controls will be used as BMP. We could lose our license if we flooded properties. JK: Logging won't affect well water. Is that your concern? BM: No, concerned with surface water. JK: Surface water will be mitigated by an NOI by the State. Do we have any recourse if there is any flooding issues? TG: Not sure JK: I'm sure it's possible that you can try to sue someone. Landing areas, will they be fenced off? We are concern with children playing there. TG: It's a wide open area. DB: Would it cause hardship if you could give them a 50' buffer strip to where you are cutting? TG: The lots are 250' deep, the closest to lots we would get is about 10-20'. Yes, it would be a hardship as we have already purchased contracts. Our start time would be during frozen, dry or stable conditions. We are cutting about 15-20 trees per acre. Phase I: Timber harvest. Depending on weather, it's a 1-2 man crew for about 10-12 wks. Phase II: Firewood phase: cleanup of tops and harvesting of dead trees. SL: My house is nearby and I run a day care. Noise and strangers walking in the woods. What are the benefits for this project? TG: Think of it like a garden, when tomatoes are red, then you pick them. The last time this area was cut was about 80-90 years.

- Joe Grover, 101 Shepard – Will this area be used for logging or just cleared? TG: Not clearing, but there will be open areas. Seeded after? Stumps? Yes, seeded but we don't touch stumps. Stumps will be 3"- 4" high at time of cut.
- Bob Meunier – How much brush will be left behind? TG: Little or nothing, depends on the crew who cleans up. Bio-mass (chipping) is now popular here. Nitrogen comes from the tops, but when it's chipped, it's not there. This will be a conventional cut, but we have to follow slash laws. What will I be looking at? Open field? TG: No, you will see holes in areas due to canopy loss. It will remain a forest after the cut. How long will this go on? TG: If we start in late May, for about 8 month's total. Noise? TG: In the landing, but chainsaws have come a long way in terms of decibel levels, a lot quieter now. Hours of operation? TG: M-F, 7-5pm DB: Hours are set per BOS. Sat 8-12, no work Sundays or Holidays. No trucks during bus routes times. A \$5000 road bond is also required so if the roads are damaged, this will cover that. Commission is the guiding agency to BOS, but the decision comes from BOS. Mark Hosimer (?) Shepard – What are the guidelines on trees? TG: Marked with blue paint. Currently, 2/3 of the area marked, the rest will wait due to too much snow. All trees have been marked near the VP and wetlands. Who monitors? TG: The state forester and myself.

Consensus: None. DG, EG want to look at the site first. DB, JK & CM – are all set with plan as presented. No recommendation at this time to BOS until DG and EG perform a site visit.

Enforcement:

29 Main Street, Brian Eisold/Clearview Landscaping. Fill in a wetland. Work in the buffer zone without a permit. A 3/31 site visit pending on snow conditions. Pending until snow melts.

OSV Fire Update:

GC: Questions, concerns regarding accelerants over the last several days. Applicant will use propane. They will ignite hay bales and pump propane into hay bales to accelerate. Using (4) 100 lb. canisters. Once the burn is self-supporting, the canisters to be removed from site. I conducted a site visit, straw waddle location is good and elevated a few inches. However, they need (2) 25' rows of straw waddles along the road and close to burn area. Other side of road, another row of waddles. DB: concern that the waddles aren't put down too soon to the burn date due to concern over snow melting. EG: feels comfortable with GC as he continues to check it out from time to time, on site.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:55 pm Motion: DG 2nd: CM Vote: Unanimous

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 7:00 pm

A copy of tonight's meeting can be found on our Town's website or is available upon request via the Audio Department: 508.347.7267

The items listed, which may be discussed at the meeting, are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair.~ Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.~ For those items that will be discussed, the Conservation Commission will address its questions and concerns with a proponent before allowing the public to weigh in on the topic being discussed with the proponent.~ For public discussion of non-agenda items, such discussion will be handled during the Walk-in period or as allowed by the Chair.