

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Town of Upton



Massachusetts

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1 Main St, Box 9
UPTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01568

Meeting Minutes – Wednesday 5/28/2014

To: Members of Upton Conservation Commission
CC: Kelly McElreath, Town Clerk
From: Denise Smith, Administrative Assistant

Members Attending:

Chris Scott, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Alan Miano and Sandy Lajoie
Mary Overholt (Associate); Selby (Agent)

7:35 PM Phil Benjamin -- Forester

- Been in business (private) for 36 years; licensed – has 1 assistant.
- Works forest management plans for private land owners; fuel wood sales, timber harvests; tree planting – reforestation.
- Works w/ municipalities - long term projects.
- Has worked w/ some private land owners that have CRs; was a Board member of the Wildlands Trust (Plymouth County).
- Recognizes that public outreach is extremely important prior to any forestry activities (especially cuts); need to notify the public and abutters of projects; even plan to walk the property w/ people to explain what the project entails.
- Not a procurement forester; doesn't work for saw mills or loggers; has worked w/ a few very competent loggers.
- Wildlands Trust; Natural Resource Trust of Easton; Upper Charles Conservation Trust (Sherborn/Dover/Medway); worked with towns of Sherborn – Barber Reservation & Sherborn Rural Land Foundation; Duxbury – Ash/Dodd Woods; also town of Lakeville.
- Old Growth Areas – has experience identifying these areas; understands the importance of these stands/areas; Did a short walk of the Warren Brook watershed property; is interested in how past use affects the trees and land.
- Limitations – market conditions drives the sale of timber.
- GIS – not proficient but is learning and his assistant knows GIS.
- Costs – his rate is \$70/hr; his assistant is \$40/hr; recognizes that outreach is important so he will factor outreach into the scope of the plan; tries to minimize costs.
- Wildlife management – not his strong suit as he has been working with private landowners; aware and supporter of the “Foresters for the Birds” project in Vermont.
- Indian cultural artifacts – has had some experience w/ a property that has native American structures, walls and rock formations; he has walked w/ someone who has experience in identifying these features; has some knowledge of what to look for.
- Ideas about public input/comments – is respectful of different opinions; he sees the biggest issue as the “not in my backyard” attitude; proponent of giving people info on the project.
- Concerned about invasive species; is not licensed to spray pesticides but does recognize that there may be the need to do so.

8:45 PM Whitney Farms at Cotton Gin Cir – Con't NOI B. Saluk

- Update – revised plans; Addendum #3 Stormwater Maintenance Plan
- Addressed FST's comments; revised ground water recharge area on Lot 1; backyards of Lots 1, 2 & 3 has a grass swale that runs to the catch basin on Lot 1; detail provided; Filtermitt barrier.
- Discussed possibly planting some type of trees (not arborvitaes) on the Winchell's property (directly across Grove St from the subdivision road) to block headlights.
- Waivers: much discussion w/ the Planning Board regarding Open Space component; discussed doubling the number of street trees outside the r-o-w; looking to create some Open Space along the back of the property (near the RR tracks) by creating a 10' wide strip; keep any deciduous trees to screen the RR sight & noise.
- FST will provide an opinion on Stormwater.
- Reviewed draft letter to the Planning Board;
- Public hearing has been continued to 6/11/14 at 7:30 pm.
- Motion to approve letter to the Planning Board as amended – 2nd & approved.

9:15 PM Rockwood Meadows Trail Easement

- Developer is looking to revise the trail location; will create a parking lot off East St and add a community garden; less impact to the residents.
- Looks like the revised trail is crossing the Zone 1 wellhead area – is that allowed??
- Proposing to walk the site w/ Kevin on Tuesday 6/3 or Wed 6/4; Mike will confirm date & time.

9:30 PM Agent's Report

- Reviewed submitted report (5/15 – 5/28/14)
- Draft letter to the Planning Board re: Hartford Highlands; couple changes made; also Mike suggested amending the letter to say that Open Space could be gotten from the triangular piece of land on Lot 2; would be ideal as it is adjacent to State Forest land and provides some protection to the abutters; access would be from the State Forest off Glen Ave.
- Motion to accept the letter as revised – 2nd & approved; Selby will sign for Chris.

9:30 PM General Items

Meeting Minutes – Motion to approve and sign minutes from the 5/14/14 mtg – 2nd & approved;

Finances - Current payroll signed; motion to sign expense voucher – 2nd & approved; discussion of spending expense funds before end of FY.

Website – continue to update w/ pertinent links and new info.

OSC –looking into purchasing the Kibbe property off Merriam Way along Warren Brook; owner has died and this property may be subject to tax taking.

LSC – the Lam's (new owners) installed an electric fence; they have been notified that they need to come before Con Com & SVT; the fence was leaning into the trail but it has been moved; the Lam's need to provide further info. Bill has posted signs warning that the fence is electric.

Whitney Conservation parking area: Bill has a plan for the lot proposing to use granite wheel stops which are 4" tall by 7" wide by 6' long (or 5.5 '); will use 6' x 6' posts to delineate sides of the lot and the trail easement (alongside the garage) to prevent encroachment onto the easement. Still waiting to coordinate plans with Mr. Potheau.

Marcella announced that we have been awarded a grant for trail work which will entail put up kiosks for all properties. Will send info to Blythe to include in her weekly report.

Motion – Draft letter to Planning Board re: Whitney Farms – 2nd and approved.

10:30 PM Motion to Adjourn – 2nd & Approved

Minutes approved on: _____

