

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Town of Upton



Massachusetts

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1 Main St, Box 9
UPTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01568

Meeting Minutes – Wednesday 7/23/2014

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

Members Attending:

Chris Scott, Mike Penko, Marcella Stasa, Scott Heim, Alan Miano, Sandy Lajoie and Tom Jango
Mary Overholt (Associate)

7:30 PM General Business

Meeting Minutes – motion to approve and sign minutes from 6/25/14 and 7/9/14 – 2nd and approved.

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

OSC- Discussed the email from Kurt Gaertner of MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs re: consolidation of priority preservation areas in North Upton. No real pros or cons to doing this except will we lose individual descriptions or the properties if we merge them? Contact the State to see what the objective is of consolidating – do they have any pros or cons – is this to simplify bookkeeping of the properties. Owner of Five Fork Farm (FFF) has asked to put up a deer fence on the west side of the property; the deer fence on the east side was approved. We will invite them to the next Con Com meeting on Aug. 13. Bill Taylor met with the FFF owners and several people from the USDA to discuss drilling a new well on the property to be used for an irrigation system; federal money may be used for this. There are concerns w/ using the existing pond as they are not sure of the capacity (for irrigation) and what impacts it would have on Warren Brook. They will also take into consideration any cultural resources. Motion to approve the deer fence on the west side – 2nd & approved.

LSC – Ashby Hobart will come to the next Con Com meeting on 8/14 to present his Eagle Scout project which is proposed at Peppercorn Hill. We need to think about an annual budget dedicated for maintenance at the Stefans land (such as clearing and mowing); we need to beat back the edges every year so we can keep it mowed; propose to chip/mulch the small stuff but what do we do with the larger debris that is cleared or cut? Perhaps incorporate this work into the Forest Management Plan. Also, with regard to the Forest Management Plan the suggestion of having Mass Audubon involved as they bring a different type of expertise; they are expensive but perhaps they could provide an abbreviated plan or only look at specific areas; we might be able to cut their cost by providing some of the GIS/mapping work. Suggestion was made to include mapping stonewalls in the Forest Management Plan. It was also suggested that we invite Mass Audubon to a meeting to discuss what they do and what they can offer or maybe they can provide an example of projects they have done.

8:15 PM RDA – 9 Mechanic St

L. Wahl

- Proposing to install 2 geothermal wells 75' from an intermittent stream – these are a closed loop system.
- Materials removed during the drilling can be used as fill elsewhere on the property just not near the wetlands.
- Hearing closed.

8:30 PM General Business (con't)

Motions:

- Motion to issue & sign a Determination (Negative #3) for 9 Mechanic St – 2nd & approved.
- Motion to issue a COC for the pump station at Mechanic St/North St (311-539) – 2nd & approved.

Finances - Current payroll signed

Misc Items:

- Updated job descriptions have been given to Sandy Hakala. She will keep them on file for the next round of review.
- Ask the DPW to relocate the boulders that were dumped in the parking area at Stefans to the edge; also trees at the Warren Brook parking area also need to be removed.

Beavers:

- Old Grafton Rd/Rte 140 - Tom Jango met w/ Mike Callahan and Matt (MassDOT) to look at the this area. The State will install culvert fencing and we can connect a pond leveler and pipes; Mike suggests waiting until the beavers are back before installing the leveler.
- Southboro Rd – the pond leveler and fencing is working but we need to trap all the beavers. There is a dam in the pond. Now is the time to breach the dam while the water level is low. Who will/can do this as it will require some equipment to remove it – can't be done by hand. Do we need to contact the State? Chris will check w/ DPW, BOH & Blythe to see if any plans to finish the trapping and removal of the dam.

9:00 PM Forester interview – Rupert Grantham

- Independent worker he does not represent any mills or logging companies.
- Starting his own firewood business using local firewood products; sustainable forest products.
- Worked w/ Town of Westport on their Forest Management Plan; also Walden Forest Conservation; UMass Dartmouth stewardship plan (400 acres).
- He has worked w/ Westport Land Trust – Trustees of the Reservation.
- Held workshops and field events to promote the UMass Dartmouth project and work w/ the Town of Dartmouth's Conservation Commission.
- Has created forest inventories, ecological inventories (not specific but in general way); not an official wetland scientist but has done some wetland delineation.
- Has worked w/ Chapter 61 land, stewardship plans, green certification plans, timber sales including layout harvest, marking trees, skid roads, contacting loggers, overseeing harvest operation and collecting payments (by commission).
- Does not use GIS – uses Photoshop for creating maps; prefers to walk the parcels; uses aerials.
- Uses techniques developed by UMass Amherst for old growth and successional practices.
- Encourages diverse habitat of trees and other species; positioning patches for natural regeneration.
- Prior to working in MA he worked in Vermont & Tennessee.
- Rates - \$50/hour; returning customers fees are based on acreage (chart provided).
- Plans are tailored to landowner's goal(s).
- Some experience with artifacts – historical/cultural; has seen some stone mounds and evidence of old farm sites; would map features such as stonewalls.
- “PR” for cutting plans – willing to set up walks to explain the project and provide info; willing to attend public meetings to educate the public about the benefits of sound forest management.
- Looking to get the message out regarding sustainable management of local forests and wood products.
- Hasn't done a lot of wildlife management; recently did a plan for bird habitat; encourage wildlife habitat for a wide variety of animals.
- Forest inventory – how many plots? 2 per stand; 1 per 5-10 acres.
- No clear cuts; usually cut patches.

- Awareness of any markets for particular products? Relies on good loggers, local saw mills; always tries to market to the fullest to maximize what we have.
- Timeframe to prepare the management plan would be this fall.

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

Minutes approved on: _____

