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Conservation Commission Minutes - 03/03/2016

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Franklin Conservation Commission Minutes of Meeting March 3, 2016

To: Town Clerk
cc: Members
File

Present: P. Harrington, R. Pendkar, B. Batchelor, S. McLean, T. Henrichon, George Russell, Conservation Agent, Kathleen Celorier, Secretary.

Vice Chairman Harrington announced the meeting would be audio and video recorded.

Mr. George Russell's Agent's Report has been appended to the minutes.

Mr. Russell stated there was a resignation from the Commission. Ms. Angela Gelineau, 12 Townline Road, a potential new Commission member, was asked to speak at this meeting so the Commission could make a recommendation to the Town Administrator.

Ms. Gelineau provided her background and professional experience as well as her concern for environmental protection.

There was a motion made by Ravi Pendkar to recommend Angela Gelineau as a member of the Conservation Commission. The motion was seconded by Bill Batchelor and accepted with a vote of 5-0-0.

Continued - Public Hearing - ANRAD - 100 Financial Drive - Hancock Associates

Mr. Russell stated the peer review was completed and a review letter was received from Wetland Strategies, Inc., the peer review consultant.

Mr. Dan Bremser, Principal of Hancock Associates, Mr. David Cowell, Senior Wetland Scientist of Hancock Associates, and Mr. Doug Hartnett, Engineer of Highpoint Engineering, addressed the Conservation Commission. While displaying the plans, Mr. Bremser provided background information on the project for an ANRAD to define the wetlands lines. He stated there are two applicants: CRE Management, LLC owns about 180 acres and Ben Franklin Education Foundation owns smaller parcels. CRE and the Foundation are hoping to do a trade of land. As a first step they needed to locate the wetlands and bring before Conservation Commission. The wetlands were delineated; wetland consultant Lenore White completed peer review and approved line. Mr. Bremser reviewed the wetland areas on Sheet 2 which included perennial stream Dix's Brook, bordering vegetative wetlands, intermittent stream, setbacks, buffer zones, no-build zone, and no-disturb line. He reviewed Sheet 3 which showed an abandoned railroad right-of-way that runs through the property. The wetland area seems to have been cut into sections; treating them as bordering vegetative wetlands. He noted there is a question of vernal pools.

Mr. Russell stated Item 8 in letter from Wetland Strategies, Inc. regards vernal pools on the property and the applicant is aware of this issue.

Mr. Cowell discussed three separate wetland systems and stated each is identified as having a potential vernal pool. Given this is off season/winter, he has attempted to characterize these vernal pools as best as possible and he does see suitable habitat. Under the ANRAD process of approving the wetland boundaries he stated they accept the known liability and will come back and characterize these vernal pools doing seasonal sweeps if an NOI is processed.

Mr. Russell noted the applicant is aware of Item 7 of WSI's letter. He stated the maps that were submitted are showing the reviewed and accepted line.

Mr. Bremser stated it is a 180 acre parcel; the area surveyed is 60 acres.

There was a motion made by Scott McLean to close the public hearing for the ANRAD for 100 Financial Drive. The motion was seconded by Bill Batchelor and accepted with a vote of 5-0-0.

There was a motion made by Scott McLean to approve the ANRAD for 100 Financial Drive. The motion was seconded by Bill Batchelor and accepted with a vote of 5-0-0.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Discussion Item: Education & Outreach - Charles River Watershed

Ms. Henrichon discussed a proposed education outreach event for April to do an Earth Day-type event/cleanup at DelCarte. It would involve potentially two projects and be kept small and manageable as there is no volunteer base yet. One project could be trail work such as clearing, and the other a more kid-friendly activity like planting or installing a rain garden. She spoke to the botanist/sanctuary director at Stony Brook and he offered to do a natural history walk on the trails after the event. She suggested two project leaders for each project. She asked members to consider items needed to provide to volunteers such as food, water, and snacks, and asked if there was a budget or would donations need to be solicited for such items. She questioned what could be done in terms of outreach for the events such as Facebook and social media to get volunteers to sign up. She asked if there was an option to send email or flyer to the high school. Future discussion items should include how to maintain volunteer email list and keep them engaged, and should some kind of monthly walk in open space be offered.

Commission members suggested contacting schools to involve student population, and discussed proposal and possible activities. It was agreed a prescreening of the area by members should occur and the date of April 23 was considered.

Mr. Russell stated he can determine what the Town uses for its outreach mechanisms with both the Administration Office and the Recreation Department. He cautioned Commission if they are going forward with this and there are more than four commissioners there, the open meeting law kicks in. He also noted if Commission can tie events directly into promoting the interests of the act, then can pay for some things out of the wetlands filing fee account. He stated he will check if the Administration has any budgetary considerations for something like that.

Ms. Henrichon stated she would write an announcement and forward it to Mr. Russell to send out to all Commission members and Administration. She also discussed posting on Facebook, through the Town

Administrator, information about Big Night, the annual amphibious migration, and possibly one item per month for wetlands education.

Commission members agreed Mr. Russell should send information to Town Administrator next week.

Discussion Item: DelCorte Pond Area

Mr. Russell stated he and Mr. Harrington presented the DelCorte Report to the Town Council and explained both the findings and recommendations. The Town Council seemed to receive the report favorably and understood if action was not taken the pond would die. The Town Administrator put in the Capital Budget to fund the first two years. Mr. Russell stated he and Chairman Livingstone gave an interview about the report on local TV providing history of DelCorte, findings, and recommendations while showing the Conservation Commission is more than just the enforcement of wetlands protection. He stated additional funding opportunities are being investigated to help with costs of implementing the report recommendations. Positive emails and responses about the report have already been received.

Mr. Harrington noted the Wetlands Bylaw was also discussed at the Town Council meeting. It is an ongoing process; it seemed like the Council will continue to talk about it before they come to a decision.

Mr. Russell stated there has been no action taken on the proposed amendment. Currently, the bylaw as it exists is in force.

Minutes:

There was a motion made by Ravi Pendkar to accept the minutes from the February 18, 2016 meeting. The motion was seconded by Bill Batchelor and accepted with a vote of 4-0-1. (Mr. McLean abstained as he had not attended the meeting.)

Signed Order of Resource Area Delineation

Order of Resource Area Delineation – 100 Financial Drive – Daedalus Projects – CE159-1118

There was a motion made by Ravi Pendkar to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Bill Batchelor and accepted with a vote of 5-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary