

Town of Franklin



Conservation Commission

**December 14, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

As stated on the agenda, this meeting is available to be attended in person and via the Zoom platform. In an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number, or citizens can participate by using the Zoom link provided on the agenda. This meeting will be held in the Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, for citizens wishing to attend in person.

Commencement

Chair Jeff Livingstone called the above-captioned meeting to order this date at 7:00 PM as a remote/virtual/in-person meeting. Members in attendance: Jeff Livingstone, Jeffrey Milne, Richard Johnson, Michael Rein, Meghann Hagen, Mark LePage, Roger Trahan. Absent: None. Also present: Tyler Paslaski, Administrative Assistant.

Note: Documents presented to the Conservation Commission are on file.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing – ANRAD – 1 Paddock Lane

Chair Livingstone noted this application was open in March 2023, and nothing has really happened since then.

Mr. Mitch Maslanka, wetland scientist of Goddard Consulting (via Zoom), representing the applicant, discussed a few updates. He said they were waiting to have a few flag revisions surveyed. They just received the ANRAD plan back and will send it in tomorrow. He said they would like to proceed with a review of the revised plan.

Chair Livingstone stated that Ms. Goodlander is out until January 2, 2024; however, others are filing in. He recommended the applicant send in the revised plan as fast as possible to get reviewed. Mr. Maslanka said he would send it in immediately. Ms. Hagen asked if the revised plans can be reviewed. Member of the audience who did not identify themselves said he saw no reason why they cannot get out there. Chair Livingstone stated that emails can be sent to Director of Planning and Community Development Bryan Taberner, and Mr. Taberner can get in touch with Mr. Jonathan Niro of BETA Group.

There was a motion made by Mark LePage to continue the ANRAD for 1 Paddock Lane to January 11, 2024, at 7:01 PM. The motion was seconded by Richard Johnson and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Public Hearing – NOI – 15 Liberty Way

Chair Livingstone confirmed that the second scope and fee that was sent out is not yet paid.

Mr. Andrew Thibault of Goddard Consulting (via Zoom), representing the applicant, provided an update. He said the check was originally sent to the wrong location; it was hand-delivered today. He stated that they are requesting a continuance.

Chair Livingstone stated that further updates should be provided at the next meeting. He stated that he has been speaking with Ms. Goodlander who pointed out that there is probably going to be a need for some additional review if there are changes to the plan because of the stormwater requirements. Mr. Thibault said that was understood.

There was a motion made by Meghann Hagen to continue the NOI for 15 Liberty Way to January 11, 2024, at 7:02 PM. The motion was seconded by Jeffrey Milne and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Public Hearing – NOI – 0 Upper Union Street Solar

Ms. Colleen DeBenedetto of Valta Energy, on behalf of the applicant VS Union Solar Smart LLC, stated that they would be requesting a continuance. She said Atlantic Design Engineers will provide an update on the project, and Mr. Andrew Thibault of Goddard Consulting (via Zoom), representing the applicant, is present.

Mr. Richard Tabaczynski of Atlantic Design Engineers on behalf of the applicant addressed the Planning Board. He provided an overview. He said they are working to address comments from BETA on the NOI and the stormwater review for the Planning Board. He stated they submitted some revised plans yesterday, another round of response letters to received comments, and an updated drainage addendum. He said the site plan changes were minor in nature and did not affect the size of the project or buffer zone impacts; he reviewed the few changes. He said the stormwater addendum was a series of additional calculations required by BETA. He noted about 99 percent of the drawings the Commission looked at previously are the same.

In response to Chair Livingstone's question, Mr. Tabaczynski said the table was provided on the revised set of plans, but the numbers did not change. Chair Livingstone reviewed that the numbers show 1,647 sq. ft. of alternation in the isolated wetland and 3,294 sq. ft. of wetland replication area as mitigation, and for the buffer zone in the 0 ft. to 25 ft. there is 773 sq. ft., for the 25 ft. to 100 ft. there is 55,963 sq. ft., and the mitigation proposed for that collective is 617 sq. ft. of mitigation planting area. He said the applicant is basically saying there is no other place to create a 2:1 replication ratio because the site will not provide that area given the way the project is laid out. Mr. Tabaczynski said the issue is that with the 773 sq. ft. in the 0 ft. to 25 ft. buffer, they have looked through the site for areas to replicate the disturbance, but are only able to come up with 617 sq. ft. of area that could be enhanced and upgraded to that level mainly because there is a utility easement running through the middle of the property.

Mr. Thibault stated that he confirmed what Mr. Tabaczynski said. He said that he personally went out there.

Chair Livingstone asked Mr. Niro his opinion, and he noted the Commission usually does a 2:1 ratio.

Mr. Jonathan Niro of BETA Group said that in some cases on some projects you look at this kind of restoration work, for example, like a large residential development, you can make some changes like with a redevelopment, where you maybe scale back an area of the project and use that previously developed area to restore instead of putting a unit there or something of that nature. He said what he thinks the applicant is referring to is a reasonable assessment of this site that it is currently fully forested so if they were to do any restoration beyond that area of compacted cleared of vegetation walking path that they propose, they would effectivity be kind of cutting down trees to plant trees. He confirmed that the majority, if not all, of those 25 ft. buffer zone impacts are within the utility easement. He said they do not meet the 2:1, but they do meet the spirit of providing some meaningful mitigation.

Mr. Tabaczynski said the impact in the 0 ft. to 25 ft. is solely for the access road coming in; it is not to make the project larger.

Mr. Rein asked if there is anything that can be done under the solar panels that can help with mitigation. Mr. Tabaczynski stated that the seed mix under the panels can be a pollinator mix to change the habitat from a forested area.

Chair Livingstone discussed that plants cannot grow larger than the panels and shade the panels, and asked do they need to do maintenance to make sure the plants do not get too tall. Mr. Tabaczynski discussed that they will have a maintenance plan to keep it trimmed back. Mr. Niro stated that one of their recommendations was implementing a native wildflower seed mix supplemented by loam under the panels. He said they usually recommend a once-a-year mowing.

In response to Mr. Trahan's question, Chair Livingstone explained this could be conditioned. Mr. Johnson discussed that this would need to be trimmed so it does not overtake the solar panels. Ms. Hagen said she would like to see that. Mr. Tabaczynski said there was a general note on the plans now that the seed mix would be submitted to the Commission for approval.

Mr. Niro said that barring the questions the Commission had about some of the mitigation number values, we are largely all set on the wetlands side; the stormwater engineer is still working with the Planning Board. He said that generally the Commission waits for the Planning Board's okay. He noted Ms. Goodlander said the applicant should update their variance request as they will not be doing the 2:1. Mr. Tabaczynski said the latest waiver request letter included all of the current numbers.

Chair Livingstone said they would continue to next meeting, but they are very close.

There was a motion made by Richard Johnson to continue the NOI for 0 Upper Union Street Solar to January 11, 2024, at 7:03 PM. The motion was seconded by Mark LePage and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Public Hearing – ANRAD – 124-126 Grove Street

Chair Livingstone stated that the certified mail green cards have not been received. A staff member of Guerriere & Halnon Inc. in the audience who did not identify themselves said they request a continuance.

There was a motion made by Jeffrey Milne to continue the ANRAD for 124-126 Grove Street to January 11, 2024, at 7:04 PM. The motion was seconded by Richard Johnson and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Public Hearing – ANRAD – Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical HS

Ms. Hagen recused herself.

Chair Livingstone stated that the certified mail green cards have not been received.

There was a motion made by Mark LePage to continue the ANRAD for Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical HS to January 11, 2024, at 7:05 PM. The motion was seconded by Richard Johnson and accepted with a roll call vote of 6-0-1. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Ms. Hagen re-entered the meeting.

Public Hearing – NOI – 0 Bent Street

Mr. Paslaski stated that a letter was received from the applicant requesting a continuance to the January 11, 2024, meeting.

Mr. Niro stated that the only correspondence from the applicant was an email request for a continuance. He stated that they noted that they anticipate they will submit material soon that addresses peer review comments.

Ms. Hagen stated that an abutter submitted a letter with pictures of the flooding in the area that has previously been discussed. She stated that she does not know if the individual is looking for a response back. Chair Livingstone asked Mr. Niro to ask Mr. Taberner to reach out to the person to acknowledge receipt of the letter.

There was a motion made by Richard Johnson to continue the NOI for 0 Bent Street to January 11, 2024, at 7:06 PM. The motion was seconded by Meghann Hagen and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Public Hearing – NOI – Proposed Solar Array – Parcel 3, 160 Maple Street

Mr. Greg DiBona of Bohler (via Zoom), Ms. Allison Finnell of Brown Legal (via Zoom), and Mr. Dan Wells of LEC Environmental (via Zoom) addressed the Commission. Mr. DiBona shared his screen and reviewed the project and showed the entire Maplegate golf course. He stated that the north portion of this project was already approved. He reviewed that this is the first public hearing for an NOI located at Parcel 3, 160 Maple Street, otherwise known as Maplegate South for the construction of an approximate 103-acre solar field with associated gravel access drives, utilities, stormwater management features, and a replacement stream crossing as provided in section 5 of the NOI. He reviewed how the two projects connect through the gravel access roads. He noted the panels located on both sides of a relatively large Y-shaped wetland feature that evolves into an intermittent stream. He noted the proposed stream crossing. He said there are two equipment pads for the project. He reviewed onsite resource areas under the Act and local bylaw and regulations include bordering vegetated wetlands, intermittent streams, bank, isolated land subject to flooding, and a vernal pool. He stated that with removing the golf course vegetation and the tree vegetation out there and converting the entire understory of the golf course, it will now be seeded with the New England wetland meadow mix which will be mowed two times per year. He stated that as part of the plan set, they provided a color plan and detailed the demolition plan. He noted areas of current and proposed disturbance. He pointed out the areas of proposed restoration. He reviewed impacts to resource areas and 2:1 mitigation areas. He said that they expect a site visit will be warranted and the BETA peer review will be starting. He said they have confirmation that the peer review check was mailed from their client on Friday. He said the intent is to have BETA start on their peer review. He said they feel like they are ready to get the peer review underway and schedule the site walk.

Mr. Wells showed a photo of where the project would be located. He pointed out the Y-shaped wetland system. He pointed out the location of the vernal pool and isolated land subject to flooding. He discussed the creation of more of a vegetated buffer surrounding the vernal pool and that it will continue further down to the wetlands which is an improvement over the existing conditions. He showed the location of the stream crossing. He showed photographs of the existing golf cart bridge and where the marsh and channel forms and flows. He said the design is intended to avoid impacting the bank so it will span over it completely. He noted 854 sq. ft. that will be impacted mostly from shading but will be replicated up to the north area with a 2:1 replication as required by regulations. He stated that the area for the crossing is already highly disturbed. He noted the stream crossing standards and how it is calculated; it would have to be 29.7633 ft. width, and it is proposed at 33 ft., so it greatly exceeds and will be wider with space for wildlife passage. He noted it is an intermittent stream and dry for the majority of the year. He explained the openness ratio requirements of the stream crossing. He showed and explained the summary table of the impacts under the bylaw provided in the

meeting packet. He stated that they feel that this mitigation package will provide a net benefit to the wildlife and the wetland resource areas.

In response to questions, Mr. DiBona explained how far down they must dig to remove golf course bunkers and maintained greens that are part of the restoration to bring them back to undisturbed native soil level. He noted that there is a lot of area to move around dirt and keep it on the site. He said it is not going to be a big export project. He noted there are no additional structures being demolished on this south project.

Ms. Hagen stated her concern is how close the access road is to the active vernal pool. Mr. DiBona said there was a gravel access road that comes close to the 25 ft. to 50 ft. buffer. He said the maintenance using the gravel access road is about four times per year.

Mr. Peter Mulliken, 31 Oak Street Extension, asked how close they are building to Mine Brook. Mr. Wells said the riverfront area was well beyond the project limits, so they are not even showing that.

Audience member who did not identify herself asked why they were getting these letters for Oak Street Extension and how is it going to affect us, the wetlands, and our street. She asked who is benefitting from these solar panels. Mr. DiBona said that as part of the NOI process, they are required to provide public notice to anyone with 300 ft. to the property; however, it is not necessarily 300 ft. from the disturbance area. He said there are no impacts to where Oak Street Extension is. Chair Livingstone said that typically the Town purchases power and basically uses it as a supplement. He said he does not know the details of any contract that was done. He said he is not privy to any negotiations. Mr. LePage reviewed that Franklin provides residents with a discounted power supply program; he said that all figures into that. Mr. Rein said it is 100 percent renewable.

Mr. Bill Lessard, 3 Depoto Drive (via Zoom), asked how many acres of trees would be removed. Mr. DiBona said roughly 10.5 acres. Mr. Lessard asked about the spotted salamanders that thrive in the forest. He said he thinks this is going well overboard for another solar farm for taking more wooded areas from wildlife. Ms. Hagen said that in Franklin we do not currently have a tree bylaw, so what we can do as a Commission is that our role is to look at these projects and the impacts on wetlands; so, we are looking to make sure all projects follow the Wetlands Protection Act and the Town bylaws.

Chair Livingstone said he sits on the board of MACC and solar panel construction has become a major source of debate among MACC and state legislators. He said some towns have risen to the call for tree bylaws. He said that right now everyone is on the green power wagon, and this is part and parcel, so it looks good politically to be doing this, but you are hearing more and more grumbling from towns and if we would like to mitigate the amount of acreage of trees being eliminated for solar farms. He thinks in time there may be some new regulations on the books for this. Mr. Lessard said it has to start somewhere for towns to take a stand against this. Chair Livingstone said that energy and energy production is a huge investment. He said multiple forms of green power are being developed and some of these new technologies ultimately will make solar farms in their current configuration obsolete. When that happens, what happens to these solar farms and where do they go, there are rare elements in them and we cannot just let them decay, but we are in the beginning of this process. No one is thinking that far ahead regulatorily, but at some point, they will as technology accelerates which includes how we are going to manage the solar industry in Massachusetts.

Ms. Hagen noted that she appreciates the work this group is doing in restoration to help protect the wetlands. Mr. LePage and Mr. Johnson noted that a lot worse things could go in there.

There was a motion made by Richard Johnson to continue the NOI for the Proposed Solar Array for Parcel 3, 160 Maple Street to January 11, 2024, at 7:07 PM. The motion was seconded by Meghann Hagen and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Public Hearing – NOI – Lot 1 at 60 Spring Street

Mr. Jonathan Niro of BETA confirmed that as of the last time he checked, there was no DEP number.

Mr. Bruce Wilson (via Zoom), representing Turning Point Engineering, confirmed there is not a DEP number yet. He said they will have to discuss the project and continue to the next meeting. He stated that he has all the green cards and will bring them to the Conservation Department. He said he has a plan showing breaking the property into three lots. He said this was originally part of a solar plan. He said this was submitted to Conservation in 2019. Since the wetland line was five years old, they had Mr. Russell Waldron from AES update the flags and submit a new report. He showed the location of Lot 1. He said they are doing a single-family house with a septic and well on it. He showed the 15 ft. buffer zone and wetland line. He said there was a small amount of disturbance between to the 50 ft. and 100 ft. zone, mostly for the grading and well application. He said the house and septic are outside the zone. He said the house will be a walkout foundation to minimize backyard grading. He explained and showed the entrance to the solar farm and where the remaining land is that they broke into three lots. He noted that for Lot 2 they have everything above the 100 ft. buffer and Lot 3 is barely in it. He confirmed that the road was cut in for safe and adequate access.

Chair Livingstone confirmed there is roughly about 5,300 sq. ft. of alteration; however, there was not any proposed mitigation. Mr. Wilson said they did not plan to mitigate anything between the 50 ft. and 100 ft. He showed an aerial view showing the solar farm and the three lots. Chair Livingstone stated that the Town asks applicants to use biodegradable wattles, and he asked for more detail in the project narrative.

Mr. Niro stated that they just received authorization to proceed with both the Spring Street Lot 1 and Lot 3 review. He said they plan to get out there early next week and write up the letter to provide to the applicant.

There was a motion made by Richard Johnson to continue the NOI for Lot 1 at 60 Spring Street to January 11, 2024, at 7:08 PM. The motion was seconded by Jeffrey Milne and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Public Hearing – NOI – Lot 3 at 60 Spring Street

Mr. Bruce Wilson (via Zoom), representing Turning Point Engineering, stated that there is much less impact. There is only a small amount of disturbance between the 50 ft. and 100 ft. buffer with about 2,500 sq. ft. of buffer. He noted the location of the proposed well. He said they will note the previous comment about the compost sock and add more detail to the narrative.

There was a motion made by Mark LePage to continue the NOI for Lot 3 at 60 Spring Street to January 11, 2024, at 7:09 PM. The motion was seconded by Meghann Hagen and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Minor Buffer Zone Activities: 155 King Street

Mr. Jonathan Niro of BETA noted this MBZA is for an after-the-fact filing for the unpermitted removal of two trees within the 50 ft. to 100 ft. buffer zone to BVW. He noted the trees were located on existing, disturbed lawn, and stumps were left in place. It was confirmed that the check was received. He stated that Ms. Goodlander recommended approval.

There was a motion made by Richard Johnson to approve the Minor Buffer Zone Activity for 155 King Street. The motion was seconded by Mark LePage and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Minor Buffer Zone Activities: 22 Southgate Road

Mr. Jonathan Niro of BETA stated that this is similar to the last one. This MBZA is for the removal of six hazardous trees within and on the border of existing, disturbed lawn that are girdled and decaying, and vista pruning of four additional trees within the 25 ft. to 100 ft. buffer zone to IVW. The stumps are proposed to be left in place with mats used for access and to prevent soil destabilization. He stated that Ms. Goodlander recommended approval.

There was a motion made by Mark LePage to approve the Minor Buffer Zone Activity for 22 Southgate Road. The motion was seconded by Jeffrey Milne and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Request for Determination of Applicability: None.

Permit Modifications/Extensions: 515 West Central Street

Mr. Jonathan Niro of BETA said that Mr. Matt Crowley of BETA issued a memo regarding this field change. He had asked for some additional clarification on the porous pavement detail and a few confirmatory questions for the applicant. Chair Livingstone stated they are looking for the final stormwater review. Mr. Niro said the Planning Board is meeting on Monday and will probably discuss this then.

Mr. Michael Hassett of Guerriere and Halnon, Inc. stated they are here to discuss the field changes proposed for the Franklin Learning Experience Center. He pointed out and explained the changes. He said one change is the replacement of pervious pavers with permeable pavement. He said associated with that is the installation of an under drain beneath the permeable pavement. He said in addition, they are coming back with the official structural wall design in the back. He said originally it was shown as a single wall, and now it is shown as a tiered wall due to the level of groundwater. He noted that BETA is reviewing and providing comments, but he does not believe there are any issues with the wall. Discussion commenced on the drainage system. Mr. Hassett confirmed there is no additional buffer zone impact with the change to the wall. It was asked if the wall portion of the field change could be approved tonight as it is of a time critical nature. Commission members said it would be better to build the wall now. Mr. Hassett noted that at the highest point it is a 17 ft. wall.

Mr. Niro confirmed that BETA had provided an initial review of the draft plans. He said they are deferring to the boards and commission if they are comfortable in splitting this up.

There was a motion made by Richard Johnson for approval to proceed with the retaining wall for the Permit Modifications/Extensions for 515 West Central Street. The motion was seconded by Jeffrey Milne and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

There was a motion made by Mark LePage to continue the Permit Modifications/Extensions: 515 West Central Street for permeable pavement and drainage to January 11, 2024. The motion was seconded by Richard Johnson and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Certificates of Compliance: None.

Violations/Enforcement: 305 Union Street

Chair Livingstone stated there was a recommendation to continue this item for 30 days.

There was a motion made by Richard Johnson to continue the Violations/Enforcement for 305 Union Street for 30 days. The motion was seconded by Meghann Hagen and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Minutes: November 30, 2023

There was a motion made by Meghann Hagen to approve the meeting minutes for November 30, 2023. The motion was seconded by Jeffrey Milne and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Discussions: None.

Chair and Commission Comments: Friends of Franklin Liaison Update

Mr. Rein stated that he missed the meeting. Ms. Hagen said they met, and Mr. Trahan was there as well. She said they did introductions and goals. She said the group goals include education for adults and children, publicity for open spaces, signage, management of the turtle habitat, a table at the Farmers Market to share education and have the group man one of tables, help run the Earth Day event and the Autumn event, trail maintenance, the BEE program and volunteering to run the workshops, and looking at accessibility for the open spaces. She said there was a volunteer to be the marketing person. She said Ms. Goodlander said she applied for a grant to fund the group.

Chair Livingstone asked Mr. Niro if he heard any information to move Conservation into its own department. Mr. Niro said he has not heard. Ms. Hagen said it is part of the Master Plan.

Chair and Commission Comments: Master Plan Liaison Update

Ms. Hagen noted two specific public outreach sections for events for open space and recreation and natural, cultural, and historic resources. She said the SNETT does a trail walk on the last Saturday of every month, so they are looking at inviting people to come to the trail walk on February 24, 2024; if inclement weather, they will look to reschedule to inside potentially at the Y or the Farmers Market being held at Fairmount. She said for natural, cultural, and historic resources, they were looking at potentially Saturday, February 10, 2024, at the library. She said they shifted up the first objective under goal number five regarding the specific stand-alone department of conservation. She said currently the Conservation Department is now under the Planning Department. She said this new department would report directly to Town Administrator Jamie Hellen. Mr. Trahan noted that a conservation commissioner may have more authority than a conservation agent. Ms. Hagen said it would depend on how it was structured. Chair Livingstone discussed financial transparency for the Conservation Department; currently it is done by Planning. Discussion commenced about how some towns do not even have an agent. Chair Livingstone noted that this is the first time the Town has had a full-time agent.

Chair and Commission Comments: Succession Update

Mr. Livingstone noted that the last few months he and Ms. Hagen have been working hand-in-hand regarding the chair position. He said that starting the beginning of next year, he would like to propose the succession for Ms. Hagen. He said that after this meeting, Ms. Hagen will be chair and Mr. LePage will be vice chair if all members are in agreement. He said he thinks operationally they need to vote.

There was a motion made by Jeff Livingstone that starting the next meeting on January 11, 2024, Ms. Hagen will act as chair and Mr. LePage will act as vice chair. The motion was seconded by Richard Johnson and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

Chair Livingstone thanked everyone for supporting Ms. Hagen during the transition and thanked Mr. Niro for stepping in while Ms. Goodlander is out.

Executive Session: None.

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There was a motion made by Richard Johnson to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Jeffrey Milne and accepted with a roll call vote of 7-0-0. Roll Call Vote: Livingstone-Yes; Johnson-Yes; Milne-Yes; Rein-Yes; Hagen-Yes; LePage-Yes; Trahan-Yes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary