



OFFICE OF THE
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN HALL, 511 MAIN STREET
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827-1313
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Conservation Commission Minutes
Monday, March 27, 2023

Approved: April 10, 2023

Chair Alan Chaney called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Members present: Juan Amodei, Leah Basbanes, Tiffany Naughton and Al Starbird

Members absent: Marijan Andacic, and Kate DeLoureiro

SCHEDULED ITEM

Request for Determination of Applicability, NE Power Electric Transmission ROW – *VHB, Stephen Herzog*

Mr. Herzog, a Senior Environmental Project Manager for VHB, represented New England Power Company's (National Grid) RDA application for a Determination of Applicability (DOA). The Administrator read the public meeting notice published in the Groton Herald on March 17th. Mr. Herzog explained the background on the project need as a refurbishment of the electric transmission corridor O42-5 line within Dunstable and Pepperell. National Grid seeks to replace the approximately 70 existing wooden poles with fewer metal poles. As part of the pre-construction planning they are seeking a DOA for geotechnical boring work needed to determine sub-surface conditions where they'd like to position the new poles. If/when the refurbishment of the poles was to occur in a few years, National Grid will plan to return to the DCC with a Notice of Intent (NOI).

For the current geotechnical borings sought, there will be a temporary impact of setting timber mats for a mobile drill-rig which will drive and crawl along the wetland corridor to cross the area. The nine borings planned will take a few days to perform and will probably start in the May timeframe. The boring will provide data on depth to bedrock (solid ledge) and the nature of the soils – or how cohesive soils are to support new structures.

Leah asked about whether there had been any Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program (NHESP) contact and/or response. Mr. Herzog replied NHSEP had been contacted that National Grid had an existing operational and maintenance plan. They have existing protocols to address listed species and are aware there are existing listed species in this project area. Protocols exist for turtle sweeps, and they will occur in the project zone and be reported back to NHESP. Alan noted they will quite likely encounter Blanding, Wood, Spotted and Box turtles. A request was made to share any turtle sighting data back to the Commission.

Leah agreed this is exempt activity under the WPA and made a motion to issue a negative 3 determination. Juan 2nd the motion. – Motion passed unanimously



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Members of the Commission signed the WPA Form 2 – Determination of Applicability, with a special condition request for notifying the Commission of any turtle observations.

Meeting Minutes of March 13, 2023

Leah made a motion to approve the March 13th meeting minutes. Tiffany 2nd the motion. – Motion passed unanimously.

Bills

- Leah made a motion to pay a \$10,577.52 Hoyle-Tanner invoice for Stevens Associates inspection of the Mill Street dam. Al 2nd the motion. – Motion passed unanimously.
- Tiffany made a motion to reimburse the Administrator \$20.58 for purchasing a copy of the updated MACC Wetlands Buffer Zone Guide for the Commission. Juan 2nd the motion. – Motion passed unanimously.
- Al made a motion to pay the \$58.99 Staples invoice for office supplies. Tiffany 2nd the motion. – Motion passed unanimously.

Payroll

Al made a motion to sign payroll. Tiffany 2nd the motion. – Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Property Appraisal for Morgan's Pond Mill Street Davis Property

Appraiser Jon Avery recently delivered his land appraisal for the Davis property and Morgan's Pond on Mill Street being considered for a conservation land purchase. The market appraisal offered is \$260,000.00. The owners have offered a \$200,000.00 reduction in appraisal value to cover dam repair needs. The Commission will review the appraisal report details further and plan to discuss at a future meeting.

Dunstable Conservation Commission Spring Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Alan provided an update on his finalizing submission of two Community Preservation Committee (CPC) applications for the projects being sponsored by DCC: Drew's Landing Boardwalk and the Conservation Commission Minutes – March 27, 2023



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Morgan's Pond Mill Street Davis conservation land property. DCC will seek funding support from the CPC, who will sponsor two warrant articles for consideration at the upcoming May 8th Town Meeting. The Drew's Landing Boardwalk construction project is contingent on securing a significant Mass Trails Grant pending response by June. The DCC will seek a self-help state land grant to fund a portion of the Morgan's Pond Mill Street Davis property purchase.

Al made a motion for the DCC to support the CPC's sponsorship of the Drew's Landing Boardwalk and Morgan's Pond Mill Street Davis Property conservation land CPA funding town meeting warrant articles. Leah 2nd the motion. – Motion passed unanimously

Joint Grass Brook, Main Street Culvert

Leah shared a report from a meeting held earlier in the day with the Town Administrator, Hoyle Tanner representatives, and DPW/Road Commissioner. It was recently discovered that the Joint Grass Brook culvert under Main Street is in failure. It has been deemed to be in poor to serious condition and must be fixed within the near future. There are three proposed options for replacing the culvert which all allow for the migration of fish down the continuous flowing stream. HT are recommending the second option to 'replace in kind' for an estimated \$325,000 cost to the town.

Leah will make additional inquiries on the culvert replacement options; especially surrounding materials used.

Leah made a motion to adjourn at 7:52pm. Motion seconded by Tiffany. – Motion passed unanimously.

The Conservation Commission will meet next on Monday, April 10th at 6:30pm, at the town hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Rock
Administrative Assistant
Dunstable Conservation Commission