

GROTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes

March 13, 2007

Chairman Evan Owen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor conference room in Town Hall. Members Craig Auman, Bruce Clements, Holly Estes, Marshall Giguere, and Peter Morrison were present. Bruce Easom was absent. Conservation Assistant Barbara Ganem was also present.

Upon a motion by C. Auman, seconded by H. Estes, it was

VOTED: to approve the minutes of February 27, 2007 as drafted.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by M. Giguere, it was

VOTED: to issue the Order of Conditions for DEP #169-975 for 54 Ridgewood Avenue under the Wetlands Protection Act.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by M. Giguere, it was

VOTED: to issue the Order of Conditions for DEP #169-975 for 54 Ridgewood Avenue under the Wetlands Protection Bylaw.

The Commission reviewed the delineation plan for Station Avenue. It was noted that the drainage area identified under the D series of flagging appears to be related to drainage for the Rail Trail. The F series of flagging defines an area that could be considered previously disturbed under the Bylaw because snow has been stored there for years. B. Clements and E. Owen questioned whether it was necessary to make this type of determination at this point. P. Morrison and C. Auman asked what values are protected by these areas. Mr. Morrison said he did not believe either area fell under the Bylaw. B. Clements thought it premature to make the determination and questioned why the form includes conditions. The state Order of Resource Area Delineation is also issued for projects that involve work more than 50 ft. from the resource area under the buffer zone simplified review process. In this case, the applicant (the Planning Board) has only applied for confirmation of the delineation, not the simplified review. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by M. Giguere, it was

VOTED: to issue an ORAD to the Planning Board for Station Avenue, DEP #169-976 confirming the delineation of the Bordering Vegetated Wetlands and the Mean Annual High Water mark defining James Brook. Series C is not confirmed due to the lack of flag numbers. Series D is considered a drainage structure, and Series F is non-jurisdictional due to previous disturbances. The 100 year floodplain is not confirmed.

7:15 p.m. - 147 Gay Rd. RDA

(Member Auman stepped down from the discussion as his property is likely within 300 ft. of the applicant's.)

Homeowner Seth McKibben explained he wished to remove several trees in varying condition. Two trees are too close to the house - a spruce and a cherry. Another tree is dead, but still standing. Member Giguere advised leaving the root systems intact by cutting the trees flush with the ground. No trees should be felled into the wetland. The spruce is quite large and very close to the house. P. Morrison said it would be necessary to remove the tree from the wetland and recommended doing the work when it is dry or frozen. H. Estes questioned whether the dead or dying trees had good wildlife cavities. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by H. Estes, it was

VOTED: to issue a negative #3 Determination requiring the work be done under dry or frozen conditions, no heavy equipment enter the backyard, root systems shall remain intact, and the wetlands shall be protected as much as possible throughout the operation.

7:30 p.m. - 60 Boston Road NOI continuation, DEP #169-974

At the applicant's request and upon a motion by M. Giguere, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to continue the hearing to March 27, 2007.

The Commission reviewed the draft Management Plan prepared for the Self-Help Program reimbursement for Surrenden Farm. C. Auman questioned whether amphibians and reptiles should be considered, and B. Ganem responded priority habitat is identified for the section of Surrenden Farm nearest the Nashua River where there are oxbows and floodplains suitable for amphibian and reptile habitat. He suggested contacting Kris Corwin to see if she has concerns.

Upon a motion by C. Auman, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to approve the draft Management Plan for Surrenden Farm.

Members discussed the configuration for signage for Surrenden Farm, and it was suggested the sign could feature the logos of all the parties involved in the project - The Trust for Public Land, Groton Conservation Trust, Town of Groton, Groton School, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Someone with artistic talent could contribute to the discussion, and B. Clements was suggested as the Commission's representative for a meeting with the Groton Conservation Trust. Two signs were proposed - one at the parking area for Lots 6 and 7 off the driveway and one on Farmers Row. The sign itself could be fastened to a wooden board. Whether the name Surrenden Farm should be maintained was another point of discussion.

7:45 p.m. - 10 Rustic Trail, DEP #169-977 continuation

Jim Comeau, engineer for Scott Buonopane, indicated Natural Heritage has responded to the NOI filing with no concerns. He submitted details on the retaining wall which will be a modular block retaining wall approximately 4 ft. in height. The height of the wall does not require tiebacks. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by C. Auman, it was

VOTED: to close the hearing for 10 Rustic Trail.

M. Giguere offered to be the Surrenden Farm representative, and upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by C. Auman, it was

VOTED: to appoint Marshall Giguere as the Commission's representative to work with the Groton Conservation Trust on signage for Surrenden Farm.

In discussion on potential agricultural activities on Lot 8 of Surrenden Farm, Commissioners suggested sending requests for bids to John Smigelski, John Greenhalgh, Roy McGregor, Chris Shattuck, Bruce Dubey, Gary Wilkins (Pepperell and Littleton), Hugh McGovern (Dunstable), George King Farm (Scales Lane in Townsend), and Kirk Farm. The request will also be distributed to the newly formed Agricultural Commission. This land could also be considered for community gardens.

8:00 p.m. - 1 Lost Lake Drive NOI continuation, DEP #169-978

Upon the request of the applicant, a motion by M. Giguere, seconded by C. Auman, it was

VOTED: to continue the hearing for 1 Lost Lake Drive to March 27, 2007.

The Conservation Commission FY'08 budget request for extra staff hours and the GPS unit have been denied at this stage in the planning process. P. Morrison expressed concern that the brush hog is something the Commission needs for summer maintenance of the trails.

B. Ganem reported the Mattbob appeal of the Monarch Path Superseding Order of Resource Area Delineation has been officially withdrawn. M. Giguere commented the road in from Gilson Rd. is under construction.

The demolition of buildings on the Norris property has been approved for funding by the Community Preservation Committee and Town Meeting; bids have come in at \$47,500, \$37,000, \$27,655, and \$23,670. Robert Black's proposal is the lowest, and the Selectmen voted last night to accept the proposal. Natural Heritage has agreed to extend the time period for demolition to April 15, 2007. Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by M. Giguere, it was

VOTED: to accept the bid of \$23,670 from Robert Black for the demolition of the buildings on the Norris property.

One bid has come in for the management of the waterfront at Sargisson Beach. The YMCA is proposing \$25,957 vs. last year's rate of \$21,585. C. Auman recommended some method to identify the lifeguards at the Beach - perhaps a t-shirt. B. Ganem noted there are lifeguard hats available for the staff. Complaints have come in about snowmobile use at Sargisson Beach, including riding over the docks. Commissioners agreed that signs prohibiting snowmobiling on the property would be appropriate.

C. Auman reported he attended a class on turtles at the recent annual MACC Conference. He indicated Natural Heritage is planning to have guidance on protecting turtles when mowing agricultural lands up on their web site this spring. One of the techniques is to mow field edges last and to mow at a height of 7 inches. He also explained there are grants available for recreation purposes through the federal Land and Water Conservation Program which is also the source of Self-Help Program funds.

Member Giguere said he researched publishing information in the *Groton Herald* about compliance filings with the Conservation Commission, and they did not think the topic was too newsworthy. They have, however, been publishing a column called 'Ask the Assessors', and the Commission could do something similar. B. Clements questioned whether a letter to the editor would be an appropriate format. The column must be under 500 words, and M. Giguere requested members send him suggestions for questions and answers. B. Clements recommended looking into a similar column with Nashoba Publication which has a wider, regional distribution.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara V. Ganem
Conservation Assistant

Approved as drafted 3/27/07.

