

GROTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

Chairman John Smigelski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with Marshall Giguere, Rena Swezey, Mary Metzger, and B. Easom present. Peter Morrison (Vice Chairman) and Susan Black (Clerk) were absent. Conservation Administrator Takashi Tada was present.

7:00 – RDA: In-ground Pool, 44 Pacer Way (A. Dean)

T. Tada explained the background of this Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA). The new homeowners, Jose & Nidia Valles, inherited an open Order of Conditions (OOC) issued to the previous owner, Alvar Dean. As part of the sale agreement, the Valles applied for a Certificate of Compliance (COC), which the Commission issued on 12/23/2014. The As-Built Plan showed an in-ground pool that was not included in the original approved plans. The pool was installed within the approved limit of work for the house construction. The Commission recommended filing an RDA to get the pool on record. Commissioners observed the pool during the COC site walk on 12/6/2015.

M. Metzger asked if there were any regulations for the draining of swimming pools. There are no such specific regulations.

Upon a motion by R. Swezey, seconded by M. Metzger, it was

VOTED: to issue a Negative #2 Determination for the in-ground pool, 44 Pacer Way.
The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Moving on to General Business, the Commission reviewed the draft meeting minutes from 10/28/2014.

Upon a motion by M. Giguere, seconded by R. Swezey, it was

VOTED: to approve the meeting minutes from 10/28/2014 as written. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

The Commission considered the request for Certificate of Compliance submitted by Carol Quinn for the septic repair at 42 Ridgewood Avenue, DEP #169-1114. The Commission conducted a site walk on 1/10/2015. The work was completed per the approved plan and the site appeared to be stable.

Upon a motion by M. Giguere, seconded by R. Swezey, it was

VOTED: to issue a Certificate of Compliance for 42 Ridgewood Avenue, DEP #169-1114. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

7:10 p.m. – Public Meeting: RDA, Irrigation Well, 583 Lowell Road (Iovino)

Attorney Robert Collins presented the RDA for installation of an irrigation well at 583 Lowell Road on behalf of the owner, Linda Iovino. The well is proposed on the east side of the existing fence, approximately 16 feet from the new garage and 52 feet from the wetland behind the garage. Erosion controls are proposed around the well installation area. The drill rig will access the site from the existing driveway in front of the garage. A portion of the fence will need to be removed to allow access.

M. Giguere asked about handling of the slurry material from well hole. Mr. Collins said the slurry would be removed offsite. M. Metzger asked if the well water would be used to clean cars. Mr. Collins said no. B. Easom asked for an explanation of the proposed well location. Mr. Collins said the location was selected in order to meet all of the Board of Health (BOH) setbacks. The BOH granted some variances due to site constraints. T. Tada informed Mr. Collins that the Commission would need a revised plan showing the location and details of the dewatering basin to be used during well testing.

Upon a motion by R. Swezey, seconded by B. Easom, it was

VOTED: to issue a Negative #3 Determination for the irrigation well, 583 Lowell Road, subject to the following three conditions. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

1. Applicant will submit revised plan with dewatering basin location and details.
2. Erosion controls to be installed prior to drilling.
3. Slurry to be removed offsite.

7:25 p.m. – Discussion: Petapawag Signage Proposal (M. Roberts)

Mike Roberts presented a revised proposal for interpretive signage at Petapawag Canoe Launch. The Commission previously approved Mr. Roberts' proposal for up to \$4,000; however a review of the available funds by Town Accountant Patricia Dufresne and Town Planner Michelle Collette indicated that some of the monies in the Sargisson Beach/Canoe Launch account was earmarked specifically for use by the weed watchers program at Lost Lake/Knops Pond and Baddacook Pond. Ms. Dufresne has since created a separate account for the weed watchers funds. The current balance of the Sargisson Beach/Canoe Launch fund is \$6,974.29. Ms. Collette recommended that the Commission strive for an equitable distribution of funds between Sargisson Beach and Canoe Launch projects.

Mr. Roberts' revised proposal is to complete the following tasks at an estimated cost of \$3,000:

- Task 1 – Conduct interviews and research on interpretive signage about cultural and natural resources on Conservation Commission properties. Develop thematic framework for interpretive signage using the six principles outlined by Freeman Tilden for the National Park Service in his book, "Interpreting Our Heritage." The product of Task 1 will be a technical memorandum which describes his research

- results, outlines a thematic interpretive framework, and recommends design and content of signs.
- Task 2 – Prepare a draft “Groton Conservation Commission Signage Policy and Standards” document.

Mr. Roberts said he would develop the thematic framework based on the Commission’s objectives, and he asked for input. M. Giguere said it would be nice to emphasize the unique geological history that shaped the natural landscape of Groton. Mr. Roberts responded that he was already working with local expert Bob Pine on developing a history of Groton as “Gift of the Glaciers” as part of the Connecting Communities regional initiative. Members M. Metzger, M. Giguere, and Chairman Smigelski all mentioned the long-term goal of implementing a Town-wide conservation property signage program that could be funded under the Community Preservation Act. Mr. Roberts said he would need input on some of the natural history components such as species identification. M. Metzger, who used to live on Cape Cod, added that the Harwich Conservation Trust partnered with the local Trails Committee to highlight unique habitats encountered on conservation trails. B. Easom said he would like to educate the public on both the natural geography as well as cultural history. He pointed out that the Nashua River once flowed southward, but its course was reversed due to glacial retreat. In more recent times the potential for hydropower resulted in the development of towns and industries located on the river.

Upon a motion by M. Metzger, seconded by M. Giguere, it was

VOTED: to accept Mike Roberts’ revised signage proposal with a budget not to exceed \$3,500.00, to be paid out of the Sargisson Beach/Canoe Launch account. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

7:45 p.m. – Discussion: Revised Regulations (Draft) under Groton Wetlands Protection Bylaw
M. Giguere presented the latest edits to the regulations under the Wetlands Bylaw. The main change is in the fee schedule, Section F(1)(h), the extension permit fee for minor projects associated with single family homes will be eliminated.

Town Planner Michelle Collette was present to provide input on behalf of the Planning Board. She said the Planning Board’s fee schedule was structured to keep the cost low for homeowners, while requiring developers to pay higher fees. She supported eliminating the minor project extension fee. B. Easom asked how the Planning Board’s expedited review process works. Ms. Collette replied that the expedited review is a separate process in which the applicant pays much more for the quicker review. Ms. Collette recommended that the Commission’s Wetland Bylaw Regulations incorporate references to the Stormwater Bylaw (Ch. 198) and its regulations (Ch. 352) to ensure consistency with the Planning Board process. She acknowledged the excellent work of M. Giguere to update the Commission’s regulations.

The Commission has not yet scheduled a public hearing to officially vote on the revised draft regulations. M. Giguere indicated that he would be away during most of February and it made

sense to make the changes as discussed, then revisit the issue upon his return before moving on to a public hearing.

Moving on to General Business – Land Management, M. Metzger presented the following Conservation Property Inventory report.

1. Walnut Run (Majenski) Conservation Area: 9.5 acres off Jenkins Road (Assessors Parcel 109-24). The hay field is in good condition thanks to farmer John Smigelski. There is a 20-foot swath of invasive plants along the tree line. One large tree has fallen into the southwest corner of field. Chairman Smigelski will remove the downed tree.

On the topic of the Conservation Forum to be held on February 11th at the Groton Country Club, M. Metzger provided a draft narrative on the Commission's background and responsibilities. T. Tada will submit the narrative to the organizers (Groton Conservation Trust) along with a head count of Commissioners who plan to attend (Metzger, Black, Easom, Smigelski, Morrison). In addition, M. Metzger compiled some photographs and other information that can be used to create a poster for the Commission to display at the Forum. Chairman Smigelski volunteered his wife Laurie to put together the poster.

On the topic of Invasive Species management, M. Metzger presented a native plants list that the Commission can use to guide wetland restorations and recommend buffer zone plantings to applicants. The list is borrowed from the Town of Brewster. She also compiled a list of local/regional vendors who supply native plants (retail and/or wholesale nurseries). M. Metzger also said she is hoping to organize an invasives patrol that can tackle small infestations before they get out of control. She is looking for ways to recruit volunteers. M. Giguere suggested starting with the Commission's Stewards list.

Moving on to Community Preservation Committee (CPC) updates, B. Easom reported that the CPC received the Commission's full draft application to add money to the Conservation Fund. In the Historic Preservation category, the CPC received an application to help fund repairs to the First Parish Church. The CPC did not receive an application for the Prescott School as anticipated.

Under Open Session, R. Swezey reported that the McCarthy property on Massapoag Pond (Island Pond Road) has been refinanced and is being sold to the persistent buyer from Pepperell who has made numerous, unsuccessful offers to purchase this property over the years. She said the buyer appears to be aware of the permitting issues associated with the property.

There being no further business, upon a motion by R. Swezey, seconded by M. Giguere, it was

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Notes taken by

Takashi Tada
Conservation Administrator

Exhibits on file at Conservation Commission Office:

1. RDA, In-ground Pool, 44 Pacer Way (Dean)
2. RDA, Irrigation Well, 583 Lowell Road (Iovino)
3. COC, Septic Repair, 42 Ridgewood Avenue (Quinn), DEP #169-1114
4. Revised Petapawag Signage Proposal (Mike Roberts)
5. Draft Revised Regulations under Groton Wetlands Protection Bylaw
6. Conservation Property Inventory reports
7. Native Plants List and retail/wholesale suppliers list

Approved 3/24/2015