

GROTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes

Tuesday, August 11, 2015

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

7:00 p.m. – Public Meeting: RDA, Invasive Plants Removal, Prescott School, 145 Main Street

Applicant: Mary Metzger

Owner: Town of Groton

Site Walk: 8/8/2015

M. Metzger presented her proposal to remove invasive plants growing on the Prescott School property in the area beyond the chain link fence. She said her husband, Michael Metzger, would do most of the work to manually uproot the plants. The primary invasive plants are bittersweet, honeysuckle, and multiflora rose. Work will be done gradually, with no timetable for completion. Portions of the area extend into the wetland buffer zone.

S. Black suggested removing the fence that supports some of the invasive plants. The property is owned by the Town and managed by the DPW. Removal of the fence would require coordination with the DPW Director, Tom Delaney. The disposition of Prescott School is a topic of current discussion.

Upon a motion by M. Giguere, seconded by S. Black, it was

VOTED: to issue a Negative #3 Determination to M. Metzger for Prescott School Invasive Plants Removal.

Moving on to General Business, the Commission considered a Request for Certificate of Compliance, 125 Reedy Meadow Road, MassDEP #169-358, submitted by Hans Antonsson. Mr. Antonsson is selling the house and would like to ‘invalidate’ the expired Order of Conditions (OOC) on the basis that the work never commenced. The house was eventually built under a subsequent OOC, MassDEP #169-484, for which the Commission issued a Certificate of Compliance on 2/22/1999 (this Certificate was not recorded and Mr. Antonsson lost the original, but a True Copy has been prepared by the Town Clerk for recording).

Upon a motion by B. Easom, seconded by M. Giguere, it was

VOTED: to issue a Certificate of Compliance invalidating the expired OOC, MassDEP #169-358. The vote was unanimous.

Taking up Meeting Minutes Approval, the Commission reviewed draft minutes from 7/14/2015. There were no comments.

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

VOTED: to approve the meeting minutes from 7/14/2015, as written. The vote was unanimous.

Moving on to Invoices, the Commission approved payment of invoices from Harris Farms (\$2,500 for mowing of Baddacook Field) and *The Groton Herald* (\$170.63 for legal notices).

7:10 p.m. – Discussion (cont'd): 366 West Main Street (Decilio)

Robert Collins, attorney for Robert & Patricia Decilio, said he was working on a possible scenario that would result in the protection of a significant amount of frontage on the Nashua River, while alleviating some of his clients' immediate financial burdens. The scenario would involve a private third party intermediary. Mr. Collins asked if the Commission might designate a member, or two, to negotiate a deal. He also encouraged members of the Commission to take advantage of the offer by Diane & Pete Carson, The Nashoba Paddler, to view the property from the river.

P. Morrison said it seemed like a good idea that was worth pursuing. R. Swezey volunteered to be the Commission's designee.

Upon a motion by B. Easom, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to designate R. Swezey to negotiate a possible land acquisition with the Decilios. The vote was unanimous.

7:15 p.m. – Discussion: Parcel 227-135, off Nashua Road (Town of Groton)

Mr. Collins also presented a potential deal on behalf of Richard Lewis, abutter to the Town's tax possession parcel off Nashua Road (Assessors Parcel 227-135). Mr. Lewis submitted a proposal to the Board of Selectmen to purchase the Town's parcel and combine it with the abutting Parcel 227-133 which he owns. He would then create one buildable lot and donate the remainder to the Commission. Mr. Collins said the Town's tax possession parcel abuts Reedy Meadow Conservation Area; however, T. Tada pointed out that the Assessors' database lists the owner of the abutting parcel as Warren Palmer. Mr. Collins said Warren Palmer is a business associate of Mr. Lewis. He said he would look into the ownership status of the abutting parcel and get back to the Commission. T. Tada sent letters to three property owners who share the driveway access with the subject parcel and has received permission from two of three. T. Tada will schedule a site walk to view the parcel.

On an unrelated topic, B. Easom asked if Mr. Collins was familiar with the easement to cross the old railroad bed in Bertozzi Conservation Area. B. Easom is a member of the Squannacook

River Rail Trail group that would like to create more parking for the future rail trail. Mr. Collins said he would look into the easement.

Moving on to Invasive Species updates, M. Metzger presented the 4-page educational flyer she put together for the Commission to use. She said the new Invasives Control Committee and other groups in town could use it, too. M. Metzger also reported that Jacob Llodra, a student at Groton-Dunstable Regional High School, is interested in invasive plant identification and control, and is looking for community service hours to meet the National Honor Society requirements. M. Metzger would like the Commission's blessing to work with the school, Jacob, and any other students who might be interested in controlling invasives. The Commissioners unanimously supported M. Metzger's collaboration with the school.

7:30 p.m. – Public Hearing (cont'd): NOI, Boulder Wall/Site Stabilization, 60 Valley Road, MassDEP #169-1125

Applicant/owner: Paul Johnson

Site Walk: 6/6/2015

The applicants requested continuation of the hearing to the next meeting.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by B. Easom, it was

VOTED: to continue the public hearing for 60 Valley Road, MassDEP #169-1125, to 8/25/2015. The vote was unanimous.

Moving on to an Open Session item, Chris Brocks provided new information related to a potential Eagle Scout Project at Bertozzi Conservation Area. He researched various fencing options to keep people and pets off the eroding riverbank. He thought a fence made of wood and wire fence, based on similar fences used on sand dune stabilization projects, could work at Bertozzi. He presented an outline of his project including goals, fundraising, timeline, material costs, and signage.

M. Metzger recommended that Mr. Brocks conduct an inventory of the existing vegetation in the area of the eroding bank, and she offered to help him with this. S. Black recalled from the site walk that there is a lot of Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*) and some Catbrier. Commissioners indicated to Mr. Brocks that the RDA process seemed to be appropriate for his potential project. He said he would prepare a site plan and submit the RDA.

On another Invasive Species topic, S. Black asked about the overgrown field at Cox-Walker Conservation Area. T. Tada said the management of this field, and creation/maintenance of an access path to it, is to be part of the overall management plan.

On the topic of Land Management – Academy Hill, T. Tada reported that NHESP is responsible for monitoring/enforcing their Conservation and Management Plan (CMP), which includes the turtle fence and the two nesting areas. The developer (Bruce Wheeler, Habitech Inc.) is on the hook for compliance with the CMP until the subdivision is completed, at which point the homeowners association would assume responsibility for compliance. The two escrow accounts controlled by the Commission were established as contingencies to be used only if the entities responsible for CMP compliance fail.

Under Land Management – Property Inventory, M. Metzger said she is now working on the southwest conservation properties and provided reports on (Charles) Bixby Conservation Area and Old Mill Conservation Area. She reported moderate invasives along the roads at Bixby. She observed evidence of turtle nesting and other wildlife at Old Mill.

On other Land Management updates, M. Metzger reported that the perimeter of the field at Hidden Valley Road/New Pond Road had been mowed, along with a path to the bench by the pond. She also mentioned that the recent water sampling by the Great Ponds Advisory Committee (GPAC) resulted in no detections of residual Sonar herbicide in Whitney Pond or in two private wells.

Moving on to CPC Updates, B. Easom reported a vacancy on the CPC. He encouraged recruitment of a conservation-minded volunteer to fill the open seat.

Under Conservation Administrator Updates, T. Tada reported that the erosion control and invasive species consultant for GELD, Steve Eriksen, requested a reduction in the frequency of his inspections now that construction of the new GELD facility is complete. Vegetation monitoring is the only thing left. The Commission agreed to reduce the inspection schedule to Fall (October) and Spring (June) for vegetation monitoring.

On the topic of Sargisson Beach Conservation Area, T. Tada said he received an inquiry from a resident about harvesting a downed tree at Sargisson Beach for firewood. Commissioners agreed it best to leave the tree in place for ecological reasons, as well as to avoid setting a precedent for harvesting of wood from conservation lands for private use. M. Metzger suggested recognizing all of the groups that played a role in enhancing Sargisson Beach as a recreational amenity for the Town. Groups include the Sargisson Beach Committee, Groton Lakes Association, Boy Scouts, and Mountain Lakes Club. Judy Alexander of Whiley Road said there are many individual volunteers who help out at Sargisson Beach.

Upon a motion by B. Easom, seconded by S. Black, it was

VOTED: to prepare a letter of recognition to all of those involved in the success of Sargisson Beach. The letter should be published in *The Groton Herald* and posted on the Town website.

Regarding the Conductor Lab Remediation (MassDEP #169-365), T. Tada presented a letter drafted by Sherrill Gould, the owner of the house lot at 167 Mill Street. Ms. Gould prepared the draft letter for prospective buyers stating that the open OOC for Conductor Lab Remediation imposes no obligation or liability on the owner of 167 Mill Street. There is a monitoring well located on the property that was installed as part of the Conductor Lab Remediation project. The Conductor Lab owner is responsible for decommissioning the monitoring wells upon completion of the project, under approval by MassDEP. Ms. Gould would like the Commission to endorse the draft letter. T. Tada said he would confer with Land Use Director, Michelle Collette, to make sure the information in the letter was accurate.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by S. Black, it was

VOTED: to endorse the draft letter for 167 Mill Street, pending satisfactory review by Michelle Collette. The vote was unanimous.

T. Tada also provided an update on the NESSP Temple project (MassDEP #169-1104). NESSP and its contractors agreed to allow the Groton Turtle Conservation group to conduct a site walk this past weekend and to provide educational materials to the construction staff regarding protection of turtles and other wildlife. The Commissioners asked T. Tada to schedule a routine site walk to review the erosion controls/limit of work boundary.

Lastly, T. Tada recapped the enjoyable site walk to view the North Woodlot Nominee Trust (Robison) parcel. Members who were on the site walk agreed it is a beautiful parcel that feels remote and pristine. The forest understory contains blueberry and other shrubs that appear to provide excellent cover and forage for animals, and the wetland appeared to be relatively free of invasive plants with plenty of emergent marsh vegetation, snags, and forest-wetland edge habitat.

There being no further business, upon a motion by B. Easom, seconded by P. Morrison, it was

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting. The vote was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Notes taken by

Takashi Tada
Conservation Administrator

Exhibits on file at Conservation Commission Office:

1. Meeting Minutes, 7/14/2015
2. RDA, Prescott School Invasive Plants Removal, 145 Main Street
3. NOI, 60 Valley Road, MassDEP #169-1125
4. Conservation Property Inventory (Southwest) – draft, in progress

Approved 9/29/2015