

## GROTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

### Minutes

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

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

#### 7:00 p.m. – Public Meeting: RDA, Four Corners Sewer Project (Town of Groton)

Owner/Applicant: Town of Groton

Representatives: Tom Orcutt (Water Dept.) & Ryan Allgrove (Environmental Partners Group)

Site Walk: 9/12/2015

Tom Orcutt and Ryan Allgrove presented the plan to connect the Four Corners business district to the Town of Ayer municipal sewer system. The sewer main would be installed in Sandy Pond Road starting from the Four Corners, Groton and connecting at Nemco Way, Ayer. A lateral main would be installed in Robin Hill Road, Groton, to serve the senior housing (age 55+) units. The inclusion of the senior residential units is intended to boost the project's rating for state grant consideration. The system will consist of grinder pumps with force mains. Sewer mains would be installed via directional drilling and require 10' x 20' entrance/exit pits. All of the work would occur in the paved right-of-way, with a short section passing through the Buffer Zone of an isolated wetland. Test borings indicate suitable soils with no evidence of groundwater.

R. Swezey asked if the installation method would be similar to the one used on Boston Road. Mr. Orcutt said yes. M. Metzger asked how the project relates to the Shaw's Market, and also how they would handle dewatering, if needed, during construction. Mr. Orcutt explained that the project was approved at Town Meeting and was contingent upon a successful grant application. It will serve the Four Corners commercial district, which includes Shaw's Market, as well as the senior housing units on Robin Hill Road. There will be a vacuum truck onsite to contain any slurry material as it is generated. M. Giguere asked how far up Robin Hill Road the sewer main will go. The senior housing units will be located on the north side of Robin Hill Road in the open area that has been used to stockpile soils. Chairman Smigelski asked when the test borings were done. They were conducted in the spring.

Resident Darcy Donald of Groton Turtle Conservation & Rescue asked about the construction timetable. Mr. Orcutt said the grant funding schedule is likely to result in a springtime schedule (April – June). He said they could add breaks in the straw wattle erosion controls to allow turtle passage, but the work area is entirely within the existing roadway. Resident Judy Anderson asked if the senior housing component was approved by Town Meeting. Mr. Orcutt said it was not included; therefore they would present an amended Warrant Article at Fall Town Meeting to include the senior housing.

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

VOTED: to issue a negative determination for Four Corners Sewer Project, subject to the following conditions:

1. No discharge to the wetlands from dewatering.
2. Slurry to be vacuumed onsite in real-time and disposed of properly.
3. Work to be conducted at a dry time of year.
4. Erosion/sedimentation controls installed per the plans.

The vote was unanimous (5-0).

7:15 p.m. – Discussion: Lost Lake Dam, Four Corners Sewer Project

Tom Orcutt and Ryan Allgrove mentioned that the Inter-Basin Transfer Agreement identifies the need for better control of water levels at Lost Lake Dam. Currently there are boards that are inserted to block the flow of water over the spillway in the springtime, thereby raising the level of Lost Lake/Knops Pond) to its seasonal high water. The boards are then removed in the fall to lower the water level during the winter. Mr. Orcutt said the Town would like to install a new gate valve and sluiceway in the dam to achieve better control of flows.

Chairman Smigelski asked how much work on the dam would be needed, and who would monitor the gate. Mr. Allgrove said the new gate valve would be customized to fit in the existing space. It has not been designed yet. Mr. Orcutt said it would most likely open up at the middle, and would have key-controlled access. R. Swezey said she thought the dam was in good condition. T. Tada said the permitting process for any work on the dam would involve multiple agencies including the Commission, MassDEP, Army Corps of Engineers, NHESP. S. Black asked if beaver activity was a problem at the dam. Mr. Orcutt said beavers were not a major problem at the dam. Mr. Allgrove said they were preparing a dam management plan.

7:25 p.m. – Discussion: NRWA Riparian Forest Buffers, Al Futterman

Al Futterman, Land Programs and Outreach Director at the Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) gave a slide presentation on the NRWA's Riparian Forest Buffers project. The project aims to identify and support the protection and/or restoration of vegetated areas within 300 feet of rivers and streams. This grant-funded project is managed by the Merrimack River Watershed Council. The NRWA is implementing the project within two focus areas: the Squannacook River and Catacoonamaug Brook. Al conducted a GIS analysis of land use along the Squannacook River and identified a portion of the H&V facility in Groton as a priority target for revegetation. He is working with H&V on a potential tree planting project along the riverbank and wanted to know if they should file an RDA for it. For the land protection component, NRWA will focus on educating property owners about Forest Stewardship Plans and other resources, and he asked the Commission for assistance in this regard. Outright land purchases are beyond the realistic scope of this grant. NRWA will also be encouraging towns to review and enhance their local bylaws pertaining to land use within riparian zones.

Members of the Commission indicated broad support for the initiative and recommended filing an RDA. Darcy Donald, of Friends of the Trees, said her organization might be willing to help NRWA. S. Black asked if NRWA is considering invasive plant control as part of their project

goals. Al said they would prioritize native plantings and, if possible, the removal of invasives. Resident Marion Stoddart welcomed this initiative as a good idea and an opportunity to further protect the river.

7:40 – Discussion: 366 West Main Street, Decilio Parcel

Robert Collins, attorney for the owners of 366 West Main Street (Robert & Patricia Decilio) introduced a conceptual proposal to dispose of the approximately 14-acre property (Assessors Parcel 211-2) along the Nashua River. The Decilios would like to sell the existing house on a conforming lot with roughly 2 acres and 250 feet of road frontage. The remaining 12 acres would be split into two parcels and sold to private entities who would then donate the land to the Conservation Commission as mitigation for separate, offsite development proposals involving work within jurisdictional areas. One such entity is the Groton School, who would offer to donate approximately 7 acres of the land as mitigation for a proposed driveway to serve the school's athletic center. The driveway would require crossing multiple wet areas on the former Gunderson hay field, which the school now owns. Mr. Collins said the second entity was not ready to disclose the details of its proposal at this time, but it would involve donation of the remaining 5 acres of the Decilio property.

Chairman Smigelski said he has the Gunderson field and is concerned about any loss of agricultural area. M. Metzger asked if the Decilio land fits into the NRWA's Riparian Buffer initiative. Al Futterman said protection of this land along the Nashua River is a priority of the NRWA; however it is not located within the Squannacook River focus area of the Riparian Buffer initiative. S. Black asked how the 2-acre house lot would be configured. Mr. Collins said it would include 250 feet of frontage on West Main Street and would surround the existing house. Michelle Collette, Town Planner, said the Decilio parcel is the key missing link in Nashua River greenway protection, and this was a can't miss opportunity to protect it at no cost to the Town.

7:55 p.m. – Public Meeting: RDA, Cow Pond Brook Road, Lot 1 (Kanniard)

Owner/Applicant: Roger Kanniard, R.D. Kanniard Homes

Representative: Stan Dillis, Ducharme & Dillis Civil Design Group

Site Walk: 9/12/2015

Stan Dillis presented the RDA proposal to modify the grading on Lot 1 by spreading out the steep gravel mound. The gentler slopes would extend onto Lots 2 & 3. Benefits of the regrading include enhanced turtle habitat and safer yards for future homeowners. Portions of the grading work are located within the 100' wetland buffer zone, but outside of the 50' no-disturb zone.

M. Metzger asked about turtle protection during construction. Mr. Dillis said they have an NHESP-approved turtle protection plan for the original grading design. They have had email communication with Misty-Ann Marold of NHESP about the modified grading plan, but they are waiting for written approval of the changes. M. Metzger also asked about vegetation within the regraded areas. Mr. Dillis said they have an approved planting plan, but are open to further guidance.

M. Giguere asked about permanent signage. Mr. Dillis said they would install permanent signs per NHESP requirements.

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

VOTED: to issue a Negative #3 Determination of Applicability for Lot 1, Cow Pond Brook Road, subject to the following conditions:

1. Provide a copy of NHESP's approval letter.
2. Install signage per NHESP requirements.
3. Implement turtle protection plan per NHESP requirements.

The vote was unanimous (5-0).

8:05 p.m. – Public Hearing: NOI, 65 & 65A Island Pond Road (Masiello), MassDEP # not issued

Owner/applicant: John & Laurie Masiello

Representative: Kevin Ritchie, Civil Solutions

Site Walk: 9/12/2015

Kevin Ritchie presented the NOI for septic replacements at 65 and 65A Island Pond Road, both of which are owned by the Masiellos. The NOI plans have been revised to include the 50' No-Disturb Zone line and the legend. They are in process with the Board of Health, but Mr. Ritchie said both system designs are fully compliant.

For #65A (Assessors Parcel 246-32.1) the proposed leachfield is located outside the 100' buffer zone, while the proposed septic tank is approximately 25' from Massapoag Pond. They need to maintain setbacks from the proposed water line and the proposed new private well. For #65 (Assessors Parcel 246-32) the proposed septic tank is located in front of the existing house, while the proposed leachfield is outside the 100' buffer zone at the top of the hill.

R. Swezey said she was glad to see the existing, substandard systems being replaced. S. Black agreed that the proposed work would be a big improvement. M. Metzger asked about the time of work and provided the invasive plants informational sheets to the applicants. M. Giguere asked about the locations of existing septic system components. Mr. Ritchie said the locations shown on the plan represent his best guesses, based on existing plumbing and topography features. They will decommission any existing septic components that they find. The existing system at #65 is not functional. M. Giguere also asked about the routing of the proposed pipes from the septic tank at #65. Mr. Ritchie responded that the best route is through the existing steps in the retaining wall.

M. Collette commended the Masiellos for cleaning up the mess that was left by the previous owner, and for going about it through the proper channels. T. Tada noted that they are awaiting a determination from NHESP for work in rare species habitat, as well as the issuance of a file number and comments from MassDEP. Therefore the hearing should be continued. Mr. Ritchie concurred.

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

VOTED: to continue the public hearing for 65 & 65A Island Pond Road to 9/29/2015.  
The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Moving on to General Business, S. Black provided an update on the Invasive Species Control Committee, which met for the first time yesterday. She said it was a good group of people, with the potential to get some things done.

On a related Invasive Species note, M. Metzger said she met with Groton-Dunstable Regional High School student Jacob Llodra and gave him a tour of several sites with small-scale invasive species issues. They visited Ames Meadow, Crosswinds, and Flat Pond. She said the Town's insurance carrier already has a Release Form and a Parental Consent Form for volunteers working on Town land. She will talk to the school about invasives in the spring.

Continuing the invasive plants theme, T. Tada provided an update on Baddacook Field. Jeff Taylor, the consultant with Vegetation Control Service (VCS), advised that it would be a waste of money to spray herbicides this late in the season to control invasive Black Swallow-wort. Mr. Taylor's recommendation is to put the money toward an aggressive, full season approach next year beginning in the late spring/early summer, depending on seasonal conditions. The plan could involve an early mowing to stimulate the Black Swallow-wort, followed by a whole-field application of Capstone (triclopyr & aminopyralid combination). Capstone selectively targets broadleaf plants, which would preserve the native grasses in the field. According to Mr. Taylor's experience, a late season follow-up treatment with glyphosate is typically recommended (and often very effective) at knocking back the Black Swallow-wort. The Commission agreed to prepare for a full, aggressive herbicide regime in 2016, and directed T. Tada to book a spot on the VCS calendar.

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

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Notes taken by

Takashi Tada  
Conservation Administrator

**Exhibits on file at Conservation Commission Office:**

1. RDA, Four Corners Sewer Project
2. RDA, Cow Pond Brook Road, Lot 1
3. NOI, 65 & 65A Island Pond Road

**Approved 11/24/2015**