



Conservation Commission Meeting

Tuesday, August 27, 2024 at 6:30 PM

Groton Electric Light Department 23 Station Ave, Street Groton, MA

OPTION TO JOIN REMOTELY

Present: Bruce Easom, Chair; Larry Hurley, Vice Chair; Kim Kuliesis, Clerk; Olin Lathrop, Peter Morrison, John Smigelski, Alison Hamilton

Others Present: Charlotte Steeves, Conservation Administrator

B. Easom called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

1. APPOINTMENTS AND HEARINGS

6:30 PM- Continued Public Hearing Notice of Intent- 282 Farmers Row, DEP# 169-1270

Applicant: Groton School; Representative: Attorney Robert Collins

John Smigelski recused himself.

Attorney Roberts Collins attended on behalf of his client and informed the Commission that Dillis & Roy Civil Design Group would be submitting a revised plan later this week including additional flagging. He requested a continuance.

O. Lathrop observed that there had been mowing around cattails. B. Collins assured that any mowing would be stopped in that vicinity.

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to continue the public hearing to the next scheduled meeting on September 10, 2024. The motion passed unanimously. **6-0**

7:20 PM- Request for Certificate of Compliance- Squannacook Greenways Project, DEP# 169-1180

Representative: Peter Cunningham

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by J. Smigelski, it was:

Voted to issue a Certificate of Compliance for the Squannacook Greenways Project.

The motion passed unanimously. 6-0

Approve Order of Conditions- 28 Ridgewood Ave, DEP# 169-1272

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to issue the Order of Conditions for 28 Ridgewood Ave, MassDEP#169-1272.

The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: KK, JS, LH/ NO: OL, BE) 3-2

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by L. Hurley, it was:

Voted to issue the Orders of Conditions under the Groton Wetlands Protection Bylaw for 28 Ridgewood Ave, MassDEP#169-1272.

The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: LH, JS, KK/ NO: OL, BE) 3-2

2. GENERAL BUSINESS

General Discussions/Announcements

Discussion: Conservation property at Quail Ridge Road

C. Steeves mentioned that the homeowner was initially expected to attend tonight's meeting but informed her that he would be unavailable until the second meeting in September. B. Collins emphasized that the deed should clearly define the property bounds. C. Steeves also noted that the swing set was removed; however, the applicant is still argumentative in regards to stopping all mowing. P. Morrison added that this situation highlights the importance of installing granite bounds throughout all conservation areas.

Discussion: 19 Pepperell Road

Robert Margolious was present for the discussion regarding a homeowner's proposal to add an extension to an existing dwelling, aiming to convert it into a two-family home. The property in question lies within the 200-foot riverfront area.

O. Lathrop confirmed that the dwelling is located within the 200-foot riverfront zone, where development is restricted to a maximum of 5,000 square feet and a specified percentage of the lot.

P. Morrison requested that the applicant submit an RDA.

L. Hurley asked for the existing and proposed dimensions of the dwelling, while J. Smigelski inquired whether the resource area is classified as part of the pond or the river.

Discussion: Placement of granite boundary markers at Florence Roche

C. Steeves reported that P. Funch requested the relocation of the granite conservation markers currently placed within the cross-country area of the track. P. Funch expressed concerns that the markers, as currently positioned, could pose a tripping hazard and suggested making them taller. The Commission agreed to conduct a site walk to assess the situation.

General Updates from Administrator

Spraying for black swallowwort on Nipmuc Meadows parcel

C. Steeves said that the company has been contacted and Nipmuc Meadows would be added to their roster. She is currently awaiting a return call.

186 West Main Street update

C. Steeves reported on a wetland violation that occurred in March involving debris and stockpiling. After contacting the homeowners several months ago and following up last week, they have now complied with the requirements. She said that she would be returning to the site later this week to ensure that an organic pile was moved out of the buffer zone. Once completed a compliance letter would be sent.

Island Road Bridge Update

C. Steeves stated that the discussion would need to be postponed until Ron Hersch can attend the next meeting.

Committee Updates

Ames Meadow mowing

B. Easom reported that he mowed Ames Meadow last week and was able to cover a larger area than last year. He mentioned that Whistle Post Road would be mowed later this week, while Priest Family Conservation Area would be mowed in late October. He said that Nipmuc Meadows would need mowing three weeks after the spraying of the Black Swallow-Wort, J. Smigelski offered his assistance.

Land Management & Acquisition

None

Other Business

Groton Wetlands Protection By-law review

B. Easom informed the Commission that the Groton Wetland Bylaws (Chapter 215) are readily available on the Town's website. He provided a brief overview of the Purpose, Jurisdiction, Exceptions, Permits and Conditions, Fees, and Presumptions section. B. Collins pointed out that a relevant case law should be considered and suggested revising the language in section 215.3. J. Smigelski stressed that moving forward; the Commission should consider avoiding requests for mitigation that might not be approved under different circumstances. L. Hurley recalled a previous case where a pool installation resulted in only minimal lawn restoration, affecting both the 50- and 100-foot buffer zones. The Commission acknowledged that some decisions can be particularly difficult.

Meeting Minutes

There were no meeting minutes available for the Conservation Commission to review.

Invoices

None

3. Open Session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

4. Executive Session pursuant to MGL Ch. 30A, Sec. 21(6): * "To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body."

Bruce Easom, Chair; declared that there was business that required the Commission to move to executive session.

5. Adjournment

8:02 PM

Upon a motion by P. Morrison, seconded by J. Smigelski, it was:
Voted to move to Executive Session and not to return to the open session for the purpose of considering the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real estate, as the chair had declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Commission.

The motion passed by a roll call vote. (Yes: AH, OL, KK, PM, LH, JS, BE) 7-0

APPROVED 9/10/2024