



Williamsburg Conservation Commission
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Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2022
via Zoom

Commissioners present – Marci Caplis, Andrew MacLachlan, Melinda McCall, Joe Rogers

Members of the public present – Podge Thomas, Courteney Morehouse, Matt Verson, Emily Stockman

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

RDA, 18 Williams Street, Courteney Morehouse and Podge Thomas:

The applicants submitted a plan for clearing invasive plants from their property. Different areas were highlighted, each with a different plan of action.

- Near the house, large shrubs and vines will be cut and stump treated with herbicide.
- Along the slope to the river, one section is fairly clear and covered in White Oak. This section will be maintained, and some of the oak thinned with hopes of saving smaller ones for planting in other spots.
- Another section is overrun with porcelain berry, bittersweet, and knotweed. The plan is to cut these repeatedly by hand or with a weed whacker to weaken them, and possibly bring in goats. Any bare patches will be seeded with a riparian mix. Native shrubs such as dogwood will be planted to stabilize the bank.

Commissioners issued a Negative 2, area subject to wetlands regulations but will not alter that area.

RDA, 50 Chesterfield Road, Town of Williamsburg

Matt Verson, vegetation manager, spoke about his plan for clearing invasive plants from the town-owned lot. The slope between the road and Meekins Brook is overrun with bittersweet and porcelain berry. These have created a green wall and killed many large

trees. There are also some invasive shrubs in the understory. This site used to be a dumping ground, and there is a lot of old trash on the slope as well. The clearing will likely take a few years, and native trees and shrubs will be planted as progress allows. The edge along the road is filled with poison ivy, a native plant. This will remain despite the difficulty working around it in order to not encourage garlic mustard to seed in.

Commissioners issued a Negative 2, with four conditions.

- Before the planting phase, commissioners will be notified as to which plants are being used.
- The Commission will be given a yearly update.
- The Commission will be notified before each phase of work.
- The highway department will be asked to place orange cones when needed.

Violation, 18 Old Goshen Road, Emily Stockman representing Stephen St, Clair

Mr. St. Clair had hired someone with a brush hog to widen an existing path down to a pond. The clearing encroached into wetlands and the buffer zone. The brush hog chewed up vegetation, left viable roots, and created some minimal ruts. There is no need for erosion control and no danger of erosion. Four trees were cut: two unhealthy ones and two healthy pines. Unfortunately, the site is overrun with invasive plants such as bittersweet, porcelain berry, and privet. These plants will quickly revegetate the area.

Commissioners agreed to release the violation due to Mr. St. Clair's cooperation and the lack of damage done. Ms. Stockman reported that Mr. St. Clair understands the regulations now, and is eager to resolve the issue. He stopped work in the area as soon as he received the Cease and Desist letter. A letter will be sent explaining this and stating that any future work would require a delineation.

RDA, Reshaping and repaving Adams Road, Williamsburg Highway Department

Dan Banister, Highway Department chief submitted a minimal RDA for re-shaping and re-paving Adams Road with the understanding that the project was exempt. Commissioners reviewed the regulations and determined that it is exempt only if it meets the requirements that resource areas are protected. This road work is tricky because it runs through multiple wetlands, crosses three perennial streams, and abuts an Audubon sanctuary.

Commissioners want to see a clear explanation, including a map of the entire project work area showing roadway width, of how the work will meet the exemption requirements. Information is needed on:

- location of stream crossings
- places where the road shoulder abuts the stream, and how work there will proceed
- places where the road shoulder abuts wetlands, and how work there will proceed
- types and placement of erosion controls
- plans that allow for no staging or stockpiling of materials
- how disturbed road shoulders will be stabilized within 72 hours of completion of resurfacing or reclamation
- description of the minimal adjustments or repairs to drainage structures within the roadway

Once this information is received, the Commission will do a site visit and review the RDA. The Commission will recommend to the Town Administrator that the town hire a consultant for capital improvement projects to provide basic support and to ensure RDAs are done correctly.

Discussion of Commission projects:

Boundary marking at the Gere Hill and Briar Hill Conservation Areas: Woodsmith Forestry has agreed to do the work, and will start on Briar Hill. The billing will be done separately for each parcel.

Discussion of NOI and OOC checklists:

Commissioners reviewed the proposed lists and made some changes to make it more relevant to small town projects. All agreed the lists will be very helpful to applicants.

Updates:

Jack McGill was told that his project was not permissible. However, Commissioner MacLachlan proposed a simpler solution for creating a play area on Sunset Avenue, a private dead-end road owned by McGill.

Minutes from July 14 were approved as amended.

Next Meeting: August 25 to hear the NOI for hazardous waste clean up at 74 Village Hill.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda McCall
Secretary - Williamsburg Conservation Commission