



Williamsburg Conservation Commission
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Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2024
via Zoom

Commissioners present – Joe Rogers, Mary Dudek, Melinda McCall

Members of the public present – Michael Schafer

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Continuation of NOI: 92 Ashfield Road, Michael Schafer, Huntley Associates, representative for Carolyn duBois

Mr. Schafer explained the changes made to the original plans for phase 1, removing boulders to open up stream flow, as requested by the Conservation Commission at the March 14 meeting.

- Extra mats to protect the steepest bank.
- Tree protection details for trees along the disturbed area.
- A calculation of the volume of stone removed that will allow the second part of the project to get credit for the improvements in river flow.
- A more robust planting plan for the riverfront. This includes 14 saplings of various species that are adapted to survival in a flood plain. These were calculated based on spacing of 15 foot on center rather than the more common 20 foot on center. These replace the dense hemlock regrowth that would have thinned itself out anyway. This planting is scheduled for after phase 2 of the project is completed unless phase 2 is dropped, in which case, the planting will be done as soon as possible.

The work is expected to take two days. Swamp mats will be removed at completion, and the disturbed soil will be seeded with a conservation mix. Any erosion controls within the flood zone will be removed to prevent them from being washed downstream. These will be placed across the gap left by the access path to create an enclosed protected zone.

Mr. Scafer has met with Doug McClusky of E. J Prescott to look at different back stabilization options for phase 2. Gabions were dropped from consideration due to the risk of failure from rusting. A combination of boulders and timbers, with vegetation on the upper slope seem plausible as do rock bags. Ms. DuBois is looking for a contractor and Mr. Shafer will work with her to review bids.

A motion was made and approved unanimously to approve the plan with special conditions.

Enforcements:

Discussions:

- Update on by-law: Patty Gambarini, the PVPC person working with the MVP grant-funded watershed study, told JR that they have the ability to help the Conservation Commission polish a by-law. They are currently working on a stormwater ordinance for the town and would make sure the two sync with each other. MM will send PG the most recent draft. The commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the great flood could be a good opportunity to get information out to the public and build support for a by-law.
- Update on the shared Conservation agent: The grant was received to fund the first year of the shared agent. Funding for the next two years needs to be figured out, either through seeking funding from the town or from submitting a grant request through MVP.
- Concern about increased stormwater flow downhill from the Village Hill cemetery. Cheryl Cranston, one of the people who live below the cemetery and get flooded when the old canal overflows, posted a video on the All Things Williamsburg facebook page showing a steady stream flowing from the cemetery during a recent rain. MM will check the OOC from the recent work to see if there is anything we can do.

Other business:

- Aquadro Trust land on Ashfield Road: Mass Fish and Wildlife has purchased the 110 acre parcel. MM will ask if an updated plan could be shared and ask if there was an agreement about use of the bridge owned by Larry O'Connell to access the land.
- A notice that the Forest Management plans for some of the properties the Commission is responsible for are expiring. MM will reach out to Lincoln Fish to see if he is interested in taking on the renewal.

Minutes: Minutes from February 8 and March 14 were approved unanimously.

Next Meeting: April 11, 2024.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:19.

Respectfully submitted,
Melinda McCall
Secretary - Williamsburg Conservation Commission