



Williamsburg Conservation Commission
147 Main Street, P.O. Box 447
Haydenville, Massachusetts 01039-0447
Phone: 413-268-8416 Fax: 413-268-8409
conservation@burgy.org

Meeting Minutes – November 12, 2020

Meeting via Zoom

Commissioners present – Marci Caplis, Mary Dudek, Andrew MacLachlan, and Joe Rogers

Members of the public present – Members of the OPM Committee: Jim Ayres, Kevin Chrobak, Jeffrey D. Squire, Rob Todisco, Paul Wetzel: Charlene Nardi, Rob Stinson, Leiana Hennessey

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

Discussion with the OPM Committee about permitting issues related to proposed Public Safety Complex: After 12 years of research, the Committee has found just one viable site for a new Public Safety Complex, and is now looking at the environmental impact of that proposed site. The site is the old Helen E. James school, which is located in the riverfront area of the Mill River, as well as in floodplain. They are looking at three scenarios: build a standalone structure on the grounds of the school building; build a smaller structure and put offices in the old school building; take down the school building and build a new structure.

Test pits were dug that found a high-water table, with water just 18 to 36 inches below the surface except for a sandier pocket near Main Street. It is likely that fill was brought in to raise the land when the school was built.

Points made were:

- Keeping the old building would double the impervious area. Therefore, building on the old footprint would minimize impact to the wetlands.
- Under the WPA, it is better to build on previously degraded area rather than undisturbed land.

Marcianna Caplis C. Todd Lynch Joseph Rogers Mary Dudek Andrew MacLachlan
Williamsburg Conservation Commissioners
Melinda McCall, Commission Secretary

- Section 10.58(5)(a) of the WPA requires activity in wetlands to be an improvement over previous conditions, such as: re-vegetating the inner 100 feet of the riverfront, excavating down to the water table, adding trees, leave the area unmowed.
- Wetland restoration and riverfront restoration (constructed wetland for storm water management) are options for permitting under the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA)
- When a new area is degraded, permitting requires a 1:1 ratio of removing other degraded areas, or a 2:1 mitigation of degraded areas.
- The farther the new building can be moved from the Mill River, the less mitigation will have to be done.
- The basketball court on the site can be removed to increase permeability, but if it was not permitted originally, it is an on-going violation and would not count as improvement.
- Mitigation can be done off-site as long as it is done in Williamsburg. Perhaps there is another site in town that could use improvement.
- If a restored wetland is primarily for storm water collection, it does not count as BVW in terms of improvement.

Unpermitted concrete pad at 50 Ashfield Road: A cease and desist letter was sent to Ron Hodges, the landowner. He called and the NOI and RDA processes were explained to him. Meanwhile, framing trusses have been delivered to the site. The building inspector was contacted. No building permit has been issued either. The Building inspector will not permit until all proper wetlands permitting has been done.

Town Culvert on Depot Road: Follow up on last month's question for DEP about a replacement that is an improvement but won't meet stream crossing standards: Mark Stinson and Ms. Caplis will meet to look at the site.

COC for 12 Goshen Road, Leiana and Brian Hennessy: The Order of Conditions was for an expansion of the house back towards the river. The owners did a good job staying away from the river, controlling erosion, and revegetating. The COC was approved.

COC for Goat Trail, Greenway Committee: The Order of Conditions was for construction of a bike path connector. A steep slope along the path has started eroding due to foot traffic. The Highway Department regraded the slope, a fence was erected to channel people to and armored gravel path, and the hillside was planted with native grasses and asters. The COC was

approved.

COC for BSC group/National Grid for Utility Poles on Goshen Road: The Commission received updated pictures as requested. The COC was approved.

Permission requested for geocaching: Bryan Thackeray requested permission to place caches on Briar Hill conservation, Hall/O'Neil conservation, and Horse Mountain, which are all Conservation Commission properties. Permission was granted except for Horse Mountain because it is a new site and has species of concern. This can be reconsidered sometime in the future. Ms. Caplis will request information as to location and size of caches.

Discussion about RDA for water removing water from the Mill River: John Henderson Adams submitted an RDA, but it is incomplete. A letter will be sent to him recommending that he withdraw the RDA and resubmit a new one with more complete information.

Horse Mountain: The Williamsburg Trails Committee gave the Conservation Commission the opportunity to comment on their signage regarding dogs on the trail. The opportunity was appreciated, as was the informative sign.

Hall Property invasives: M. Rogers checked the site and there does not appear to be a need for a third round of treatment at this time.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:19

Respectfully submitted,
Melinda McCall
Secretary - Williamsburg Conservation Commission