



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

Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2023
via Zoom

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

Members of the public present – John Wallens, P.E., Charles Amos

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.

Request for Determination: 69 Nash Hill Road, Charles Amos:

John Wallen discussed a plan for the location of a leach field on an existing lot with a well and driveway to the north. The Board of Health will have final approval, but the leach field will not be designed until the location is approved by the Conservation Commission. There is a wetland to the west, and another one across the street on the east side. The site has been flagged, and the proposed house and garage are outside of the 100' buffer zone. The septic system is planned for an area between the 50 and 100 foot buffer zones. Commissioner Rogers visited the site and reported that the wetlands are well contained. The only viable spot for the septic is down the hill from the house and away from the well. The Wetlands Protection Act allows leach fields to be 50 feet from a wetland and 100 feet from a stream because the systems are effective filters. The high water level is 36 inches below the ground, so the system will probably not need to be mounded. Though these systems are typically seeded with loam, it would be possible to plant a wildflower mix instead.

A motion was made and approved unanimously to issue a Negative 3 finding, with the following conditions: a conservation seed mix will be sown on the field, erosion controls will be installed, and Commissioners will be able to inspect the site before work begins and a year after completion.

Violation, 1 Ashfield Road, Jason Harder

A letter was sent to Jason Harder asking him to stop work on the site, to hire a consultant to delineate the wetlands on the site, and to submit an application for a permit for any future work. He responded that work has stopped and he has hired someone.

Possible violation causing flooding at 92 Main Street, Martha Arnold

There is a small channelized stream that runs along the east side of the property and empties into the Mill River. Heavy rains are causing increased flooding and collapse of the channel. A large area of forest has been cleared on the hill above the site, and there have been some alterations of drainage patterns, including a water bar across an access road that directs flow toward the stream. Ms. Arnold reported that water used to flow down the access road, but no longer does, and that flooding has been much worse since the logging and placement of water bar.

Without access to the adjacent property, it is difficult to know exactly what is going on. However, it is clear that the stream is too small to handle increased water and increasingly heavy rains. It needs restoration work, as does a small culvert under the driveway. Ms. Arnold will likely have to take care of the problem herself, either through permitting or waiting until an emergency.

Commissioner Caplis will write to the abutter who did the clearing and alterations to explain that the changed water flow is flooding the stream. It appears there may have been unpermitted trenching and dumping of soil which is eroding into the stream. Commissioners will share ideas and reach out to DEP for guidance.

Update on bank erosion, 36 Goshen Road, Magdalenski

There are two issues to address. The first is an emergency tree removal for a tree that is leaning across the river and likely to hit the house, as well as further destabilize the bank. Ms. Magdalenski was going to reach out to Dan Banister, who would then request an emergency certificate from the commission, which would then issue the emergency certification.

As for stabilizing the bank that is eroding and encroaching on the house, that will be a 2 to 5 year plan that is outside of the scope of the commission. Rogers is making some contacts.

Request for information, 78 Ashfield Road bridge:

Josh Steinenger contacted the Commission looking for information about a bridge that accesses 78 Ashfield Road and would be used to access the parcel behind it as well. The bridge was damaged in Hurricane Irene, and work was done without proper permitting.

The bridge was rebuilt and was done well and there are no issues with impact on the wetlands. However, an engineer should be engaged to determine bridge safety.

Scheduling more visits:

- Neither Chris Duval or Jeff Smith have responded to requests to schedule a site visit at Beaver Brook to look at compliance.
- Rogers will inspect erosion controls at the Hodgkins site at 7:45 on Monday, May 22.
- Other commissioners will meet with Adam Christie at 9:15 that Monday to look at and discuss possible options for a wetland replication at the 95 Main Street Pro-Tech solar site.
- The Gazillo restoration work will be ready to visit in June.

Robin Casioppo's contract for inspecting work at 95 Main Street / 5 Hatfield Street:

Commissioners agreed that a final inspection of the bridge replacement work at the solar development site that occurred in the spring/summer of 2022 was not needed, but Casioppo will be asked to keep the contract open until the wetland replication is completed.

Re-appointments:

Commission Co-Chair Caplis is not continuing on the Commission after her term is over in June. She is considering staying on as an alternate.

Minutes from April, 2022 were approved as amended.

Next Meeting: June 15, the third Thursday due to scheduling conflicts.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:42.

Respectfully submitted,
Melinda McCall
Secretary - Williamsburg Conservation Commission