



Williamsburg Conservation Commission  
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Meeting Minutes  
September 14, 2023  
via Zoom

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

Members of the public present – Dan Banister, Iva Liebert, Margaret Leonard, Todd Lynch, Jeff Smith, Patty and Roger Tetrault, Atty. Christine Tetrault

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Consideration of NOI, 15 Main Street, Iva Liebert represented by Margaret Leonard:

Ms. Liebert explained that the drain in the parking lot between her building and the Mill River has failed, causing water to stand all year round. Her proposal is to remove the drain and a section of pavement, replacing it with pervious material and creating a natural habitat that makes a swath of green contiguous to her neighbors. A portion of the site is under the jurisdiction of NHESP, and the Ms. Liebert received approval from Natural Heritage based on the MESA (Massachusetts Endangered Species Act) review. The project is an improvement over existing condition of the riverfront and a restoration of habitat.

The Commission's primary concern for the project is protecting the river from storm runoff until plantings are established. Water flows from the northwest to the southeast, in the direction of river flow due to the slope of the land. In addition, the work area is a low spot, so water will only run off of it in times of heavy rain. Work will not be done if bad weather is predicted. A fast germinating seed mix will be planted, with more native seeds and plugs being added in the spring.

Commissioners approved the project unanimously, with the following conditions: staked straw waddles will remain in place until the area is 75% vegetated; all excavated materials will be removed from the site; the Commission will be notified when work begins; the site will be planted with native grasses, forbs, and shrubs.

Continuation of NOI, 92 Main Street, Martha Arnold represented by Jeff Smith, bank stabilization and widening:

Jeff Smith submitted updated plans based on comments received from DEP. A file number was issued. As discussed at the previous meeting, the channelized stream is too narrow to hold flow from increasingly intense rain events, and the problem is exacerbated by further narrowing caused by the collapse of some of the vertical walls. The plan addresses these issues by clearing out the stone walls, widening the banks by scraping out slumped soil, and resetting the stones to form a trapezoidal stream bed. The stream substrate will not be disturbed. Excess soil will be spread on the lawn to fill in low spots which will then be reseeded and further stabilized with landscape fabric such as jute on steeper areas. No extra stones will be brought in. In addition, a small bridge across the driveway also impedes flow. The bridge will be raised about one foot with longer stringers set above the bank and ramped on either end. No trees will be cut other than some sumac behind the shed.

About 75 feet of stream will be affected; upstream to the end of the stone lined channel, and then downstream to the edge of the house, stopping before it reaches land under the jurisdiction of NEHSP (Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program.) The contractor will have to work from just one side of the stream. This is considered a limited project, because the project itself is an ecological restoration and an improvement over current conditions, increasing flow capacity. Some seeding and planting should be done this fall, and some shrubs could be planted to discourage mowing too close to the stream edge.

Commissioners approved the project unanimously, with the following conditions: the Commission will be notified when work begins; a native seed mix will be introduced to soil between the rocks; native shrubs will be planted to improve the riverbank.

RDA, repairs on Adams Road, Williamsburg Highway Department:

The highway department is planning to continue paving on Adams Road. The road will be repaved in anticipation of increased traffic when work begins on Mountain Street. The current road has a sharp crown which makes clearing snow difficult. The road will be milled and flattened out, while drainage issues will be addressed, reducing flow directly into the adjacent wetlands. All milled material will be incorporated into the new road. The road will not be widened, and no materials will be stockpiled. Joe Rogers made a site visit to the area and created a plan showing where erosion controls (staked waddle) will be needed.

A motion was made and approved unanimously to issue a Negative 2 determination.

### Continuation of RDA for tree removal, Meekins Library:

The site is under the jurisdiction of NHESP, and the town received approval from Natural Heritage based on the MESA (Massachusetts Endangered Species Act) review. Todd Lynch, a library trustee, presented a RDA for the removal of four trees along the river at the library.

- Large Ash near the parking lot that is in bad condition with a two-foot wide cavity: It is being held up by a cable, and an arborist declared it to be a danger.
- Large Sugar Maple with substantial die-off. There is a risk of it falling and damaging the retaining wall along the river.
- A box elder and an elm growing out of the retaining wall: There is a risk of debris jamming into these trees during high flow, creating blockages in the river and destabilizing the retaining wall.

Some of the tree material will need to be removed with a crane. There are plans to replant along the river wall, with an emphasis on mid-canopy trees that will provide shade but won't create issues in the future. Mary Dudek suggested planting a tree to commemorate the town's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary and will bring that up with the Library trustees.

A motion was made and approved unanimously to issue a Negative 2 determination with the understanding that there will be replacement plantings of native trees.

### Follow up on Enforcement Order, 94 Ashfield Road, Patricia and Roger Tetrault:

The Tetraults live on the far side of the river on Ashfield Road, with access via a pedestrian bridge. Their old bridge was destroyed in the July flood. They were able to put in a temporary crossing and hired a company to build a new bridge. They responded quickly to the enforcement order, stopping work and adding erosion controls. Commissioners visited the site, allowed continued work on railings and securing the deck of the new bridge, and building a temporary staircase.

The Tetraults are requesting to install a ramp from the bridge to ground level. This ramp will be built on 12-inch high metal I-beams and will be secured on a metal plate on a concrete pad. Other work may involve moving an existing ramp that accesses the house so that it aligns better with the bridge. Commissioners requested a clear drawing of the proposed ramp with a materials list, and an explanation of how the concrete pad will be poured. They suggested that moving the concrete pad as far from the river as possible, and to keep the ramp as high off the ground as possible to allow flood water to flow under it.

The new bridge abutments are close to meeting the stream crossing standards. Increasing flood plain storage would be beneficial.

Commissioners expressed appreciation for the care that the Tetraalts have shown in protecting the river and the trees along the river. Work can continue on the project, and the Enforcement Order will be revised.

Violation, 66 Nash Hill Road:

The Commission received a notice of work done in a resource area without a permit. Joe Rogers sent a letter. Andrew MacLachlan looked at the site and reported that there was weed whacking in the BVW and buffer zone. An informational letter will be sent, along with the Wetlands Protection brochure.

Follow-up on erosion controls at 74 Village Hill Road:

Andrew MacLachlan and Mary Dudek visited the site to inspect erosion controls put in place for removal of contaminated soil. Suggestions were given to the contractor to find turn-around spots further away from the stream, to stake some of the waddles down more tightly to the ground, and to move the waddles from the completed oil spill area to the new area as extra protection on the steep bank. In addition, there is a pile of logs upstream from the bridge that could be removed in order to open space up in case of flooding. The logs could be chipped and spread as extra erosion protection on the steep bank, but not so thickly that they would prevent the establishment of plants. The best solution would be to excavate, plant seed, and lay jute to keep the seeds in place.

Follow-up on 78 Ashfield Road bridge washout:

The Commission sent a letter to Shawn Hodges stating that we are aware of problems with the bridge, that work needs to be permitted through the Commission, and that the Commission can support the process. A drive-by revealed that an excavator was parked next to the river. A certified letter will be sent to Mr. Hodges.

Follow-up on 92 Ashfield Road bridge erosion, Carolyn du Bois:

Joe Rogers gave the owner a referral for a wetlands consultant. Ms. Du Bois responded that she had set up a meeting with an engineer and will be in touch.

Follow up on 36 Goshen Road, Bethany Magdalenski:

Ms. McCall will reach out to see if anything changed on the bank due to recent flooding. Some recommendations may come from the newly funded MVP watershed grant, but this would not pay for the work. Possible resources are the Pioneer Valley Planning

Association, FRCOG, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Connecticut River Conservancy, American Rivers, and the Federal Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Next Meeting: September 27.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:28

Respectfully submitted,  
Melinda McCall  
Secretary - Williamsburg Conservation Commission