

TOWN OF PRINCETON

BOARD/COMMITTEE: PRINCETON CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

DATE: June 21, 2022

TIME: 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Town Hall Annex

Note: this public meeting and public hearing were conducted in person at the Annex, with a remote teleconferencing option available for public participation. Public participation details were posted with the agenda.

Members in attendance: Brian Keevan, Victoria Taft, Barbara Laughlin, Jenny Sanders, Bryanna Weigel, Bonnie Hirsh

Members in attendance remotely: none

Applicants and others in attendance: Adam Ceredona & Doug Andrysick

Applicants and others in attendance remotely: Rob Matewsky

Votes taken in the following actions are "all in favor unless" noted otherwise.

Brian Keevan called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

Approval of minutes: Minutes from the May 17, 2022 meeting were approved with minor revisions at 7:08 PM.

Item 1: 7:08 PM – 7:18 PM Request for a certificate of Compliance from Hancock Associates for 106 Sterling Road (DEP File#267-0172). In the early 90s, the landowner developed plan for a subdivision that included 6 lots. The road was going to have a cul-de-sac near the wetlands area & the cul-de-sac would be near the wetlands in the 50 ft buffer. Also had common driveway off of the cul-de-sac to feed 4 of the lots. The land sold in 1995, and in 1999 it was sold again to Horgan (current owner). He did not want to build a subdivision; they came up with plan to build 2 lots, they got a variance from zoning board of appeals to do two lots: one 6 ac and one 20 ac. So the road was not built to the additional 4 lots. He just built a driveway to one house. All of the work was done outside of the buffer zone and rerouted outside of wetland area. None of the original work approved by the conservation commission was completed. The original NOI was approved in 1995, expired in March of 1998, and they never refiled or asked for an extension. Brian has not been able to find any information in our files. We have the entire order of conditions and PDFs of the plans. There is a lien sitting out there that needs to be cleared. The Commission voted to issue an invalid order of conditions so that a certificate can be issued.

Item 2: 7:22PM – 8:19 PM Re-open public hearing for DEP File#267-0436, Matewsky, Mountain Road, to consider a request to Amend the Order of Conditions (revised plans received). The owner (present via teleconferencing option) says the new plans meet the setbacks now, they are not going through the wetlands as proposed before. Brian showed and described the previously approved plans. House is moved outside the radius of the well and added more length to the driveway. Now the house is set back farther from the stream as well. The changes are to meet the required setbacks. Leach field is not moving, tank and house are moving. The driveway extension creates more impervious area in the buffer zone. Previous plan also had a stone wall near the house for additional erosion control with straw waddle and silt fence. New plans do not show the stone wall along the same slope.

One abutter present. Open meeting to public for questions. Abutter concerned about not receiving notice about this work originally. Also wants to learn how to express concerns to DEP, and expressed concern to the Commission that he may have missed the opportunity because he did not receive the original notice. He expressed concerns about impacts to the wetlands and how the increased impervious surface/stormwater runoff will impact his property. His property lies immediately south. He is also concerned about erosion impacts on his property. He doesn't want the wetlands to increase on his property. Brian offered to share the wetlands report provided by the professional which was filed with the request for this site. The Commission discussed asking the homeowner to revise plans to address these concerns, for example: a stormwater trench, permeable asphalt, or a raingarden as possible mitigation strategies for the increased stormwater. The Commission asked that the landowner return with amended plans that show the stone wall and erosion control to extend below the patio as it was before. It will also serve as a limit of incursion into the wetland. The Commission also asked for the revised plan to add an infiltration trench or stormwater infiltration basin when resubmitted. The Commission voted to continue the Public Hearing to a meeting on July 12, 2022.

Item 3: 8:28PM – 8:32 PM Public hearing for a Notice of Intent submitted by Lake 20, LLC for single family home and septic systems construction on Ball Hill Road(Map 11 Parcel 42A). No abutters in attendance or online. The wrong public hearing date was sent in the letter to abutters. The applicant sent an email request for a continuance to July. Public hearing notices will be re-sent. Public hearing continued to the next meeting on July 19th.

Item 4: 8:32 PM – 8:48 PM Ratification of Emergency Certification issued to Town Highway Department for repairs/replacement of culvert under Hobbs Road near Route 140. On June 8th Brian was contacted by the Town requesting emergency certification to replace the culvert. Keys Brook comes down and passes through two culverts. MassDOT inspected and flagged it as unsafe. The culverts are squashed, the bottoms are rotted out, and the road has been covered with borrowed steel plates. The town requested to replace them right away. They have until July 8th to get the work done and they have not notified us. They want to replace with two HDPE culverts. We have approved this kind of work before but usually just for actual failures. Brian signed the order right away and discussed the erosion control process, working in the dry, and use of cofferdams with the Town. Long term plan is to put in an open bottom box culvert with full design and engineering. The Commission voted to reach out on a more formal basis and ask that a liaison be assigned to maintain communication about upcoming projects.

Commission Other Business, Mail, Procedures, etc.:

Four corners Farm Plan Review and Discussion: Two commissioners walked the entire property before it was mowed. Three additional commissioners went yesterday after it was mowed. No concerns/questions raised about lease. No livestock were observed pastured there. Kiosk looks great.

Updates on Solar Farm Working Group: Bonnie did not have any updates. Richard Chase has not been successful in contacting DCR. Corey Burnham-Howard came up with a list of items that put the project at risk or issues that might stop it altogether. To be continued.

Forest Cutting Plan(s): None.

Site visit conducted at Houghton Road: all erosion control looked good and limit of work looked good. Contractor mentioned that the sign size specifications on our order of conditions conflicts with DEP's order of conditions. We should probably remove the details from ours and default to DEPs.

Potential illegal fill in a wetland resource area at Sam Cobb Road: Brian drove to the site and texted Ben Metcalf (Town Highway Dept. Chief), Ben says that there was a tree blocking the stream and that it was eroding the road, so they removed the tree and seeded the damage. But the photos show much more work was done. There is no evidence of tree removal, and a large amount of fill in the resource area. Ben says that he was unaware that this work was taking place. The Commission agreed that a letter should be drafted expressing our desire to see this rectified immediately. No work should be conducted without our presence or approval. Brian will draft a letter to Town Highway Dept. and cc the Town Administrator.

Potential illegal dumping of fill/brick in wetland and/or buffer zone at 21 Gregory Hill Road: Bryanna will visit the site to see if she can determine whether illegal dumping is ongoing in the wetland/buffer zone.

The Conservation Commission is now part of the approval process for building permits in town. We have asked them to send up notices (via email) for anything that changes the existing footprint e.g. decks, additions, driveways, etc. Brian gets the email notifications from the Town. This has been helpful because it gives us the opportunity to get notified in advance of approvals from other boards at the planning stages. It is also very time consuming to read through them and do site visits when needed. A suggestion was made that perhaps we can ask about splitting a Conservation Agent position with the Town of Sterling (currently hiring a part-time agent). One day/week in Princeton, 4 days in Sterling. This would require a lot of planning and approval at both Town meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM

Respectfully submitted, Jenny Sanders