

# Princeton, Mass. CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES for MEETING on July 18, 2017

Attendance: Chairman Brian Keevan, Susan Mitchell, John Vieira, Ron Thompson, and Brett Trowbridge, members; Marie Auger, administrative assistant

Brian Keevan called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

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

Item 1: Continuation of Route 140 NOI 276-0391. Revised plans and planting specifications were submitted to the Commission and received at Town Hall on 7/14/2017. Chris Murphy from Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. presented. Within jurisdictional areas cultivars were removed from the specs, and language was added based on Commission comments. No additional discussion. Commission voted unanimously at 7:11 p.m. to issue an Order of Conditions with Special Conditions to be added.

Item 2: The matter of a Certificate of Compliance for file 267-0386, Judith Tyler formerly of 129 Gleason Road was moved forward. Scott Peoples attended to present. Jeff Senechal is the new owner. Site visit was held on July 17, 2017; in attendance were Brian Keevan, Susan Mitchell, Scott Peoples, and Jeff Senechal. Site was stabilized, and construction work was complete. Commissioners on site noted a serious infestation of Japanese knotweed on the property.

**7:16 p.m.** Commission voted to issue a Complete Certificate of Compliance for 129 Gleason Rd.

Item 3: Members of the Princeton Fire Department attended the meeting but had not request an agenda item in advance. A brief discussion ensued. The PFD came seeking guidance on the best way to move forward with repairs to existing fire ponds. Hickory Drive needs cleaning out and a clay liner. Echo Lake could be turned into a pressurized hydrant system with 1,800 feet of underground piping down to Mountain Road. A list of all the fire hydrant resources in town was presented to the members, showing current status, condition, and maintenance needs. John V. explained the permitting and issues and potential engineering needs. The category of Limited Project under the Wetlands Protection Act may fit these projects, but there will likely be other permits needed from Army Corps of Engineers. The PFD has researched standing tanks that would hold 35,000 gallons which could be used to create local pressurized hydrant areas in town, but the idea has not been warmly received. Clearings Way has a pressurized hydrant system fed by a pond on Bryn Coryn which provides 100 lbs. of pressure. Echo Lake situation and the deficiencies of laying hose and pipe in an emergency or in winter were discussed at length. The PFD was encouraged to start with the top of the list and start looking at them in the field with Conservation Commissioners.

**7:38 p.m.** Thanks were briefly offered on the occasion of the retirement of Marsha Dowdy after 20 years of service to the Commission.

Item 4: Continuation of discussion regarding a Request for Determination by John Mirick of 160 Mirick Road for work to maintain existing water levels and flow in an area in Chapter 61 Forest Management. A document was distributed summarizing regulations involved. Copies of the current Chapter 61 plans were discussed with Mr. Mirick. The land meets the definition of Agricultural Use. Beaver dam removal requires a permit from the Division of Fish and Wildlife under an Emergency Certification from the Board of Health. Brett has confirmed this with the DFW fur-bearer biologist; there are no exceptions. John V. expressed that this activity cannot be an exempt activity, because there is a process involved and permits required. John M. said he looked into commercial water control devices and they were not applicable to his situation, they wouldn't work based on the water levels needed. He was encouraged to consult the fur-bearer biologist for advice.

The topic of timber cutting and removal for personal use was discussed, including salvage of trees damaged by storms. Conditions for the personal use exemption were explained, including the prohibition of cutting within 25 feet of the bank of the

stream. John V. discussed the importance of standing dead trees as wildlife habitat. There was further discussion of salvage activities and how they fit in with the Forest Cutting Practices Act.

The Commission discussed issuing a split determination; a Positive 3 for the beaver dam removals and a Negative 5 for the exempted personal use timber cutting, with a narrative page that describes the reasons for the two determinations. Any future work would need to be permitted under an Emergency Certification and the Commission would issue conditions pertaining to how the work was conducted, including a Notice of Intent where impacts to resource areas were involved.

**9:00 p.m.** The Commission voted to issue a Positive Determination #3 that the work was in an area subject to the Act and would alter said area. Specifically, this is referring to the breaching and dismantling of the beaver dams in a manner that voided the conditions that would make such activities exempt under the Act. Discussion resumed regarding the salvage of dead and dying wood. The Commission voted to issue a Negative Determination #5 for the salvaging of dead trees for family firewood.

In other business, Sue was thanked for attending the B.O.S. meeting and speaking for the Commission regarding the donation of 10 acres of conservation land from Mass Audubon adjacent to the Calamint Hill Conservation Area. Brett volunteered to compile the complete set of all the beaver related documentation the Commission has amassed, and the webpage needs to be updated with links to all these online documents. The Commission voted to approve Minutes as amended for the May 16, 2017 and June 20, 2017 meetings.

Also, the subject of the culvert replacement by the P&W railroad was raised, and the chair said that the consultant had been reached out to but no response came back. The chair also reached out to the Boy Scout who had met last month at the Town Pound and was putting together an Eagle project to clean out the trees, but no response had come back yet. John V. volunteered to take the lead on the Fire Department's fire pond permitting needs. One approved Forest Cutting Plan was received in the mail for DCR property on Gregory and Mirick Roads.

**9:35 p.m.** Meeting adjourned

*Respectfully Submitted: Brian Keevan, chair*

**Referenced Documents:** Route 140 NOI 276-0391. Revised plans and planting specifications; List from P.F.D. of fire hydrant resources; Document summarizing beaver control regulations; Mirick's Chapter 61 Forestry plans

**Upcoming meetings:** Aug. 15; Sept. 19