

MINUTES OF AUGUST 22, 2018 MEETING

A meeting of the Longmeadow Conservation Commission was called to order at 7:00 P.M. on August 22, 2018 in the conference room at the Longmeadow Police Station.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Al Laakso, John Bresnahan, Andrea Chasen, Wayne Ottani.
Absent: David Dumais, Peter Bouvier.

OTHERS PRESENT: Peter Levesque from Wetlands Consultants Inc., Andrew Robertson from Robertson Outdoor Living, Vladislav Beznos.

MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING: The minutes of July 11, 2018 were accepted as presented. All in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT: No report submitted at this meeting.

Chair Al Laakso welcomes Christopher Nolan to the Conservation Commission as an Associate.

SHED ON 25 KNOLLWOOD CIRCLE – Mr. Beznos appeared in front of the Commission as requested in a recent letter to discuss the shed recently built in his property within the 100-foot buffer zone of a wetland and without prior review by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Beznos said that he discussed his project with the Building Commissioner and was compliant with the required setbacks for an accessory building but he was unaware that the back of his property was subject to review by the Commission; however Chair Laakso pointed out that, while the Town's GIS software shows the presence of water in the neighboring property, the deed available at the county's Registry of Deeds for 25 Knollwood Circle specifically mentions the existence of a brook and, considering that the brook is highly visible, as a property owner he should have been aware of the implications. Chair Laakso mentioned the various ways the Commission can enforce by-laws but, considering the evidence at hand, the Commission will only provide a stern warning to Mr. Beznos since the shed's construction has not caused an impact that would require ecological restoration. He strongly encourages Mr. Beznos to look into all the information provided by the Commission so future projects, if any, are handled properly. The meeting has been considered constructive and educational and no further information or action will be required.

NOI 45 DRUID CIRCLE, RETAINING WALL – Mr. Peter Levesque proceeded to describe the project:

1. Replacement of a 50-foot long, 3-foot high failing wood retaining wall located in the rear of the on-site dwelling's garage, where the topography drops in elevation steeply (clay soil, 33-degree slope) to an intermittent stream and associated bordering vegetated wetland (BVW).
2. Removal of (10) Eastern Hemlock trees (including stumps) that, according to a Certified Arborist, are outgrowing the site location and may damage the new wall in the near future.
3. Installation of a new 60-foot Versa-Lok wall system with drainage right behind existing wall over the course of three days; final location of the wall will be approximately a foot further away from the wetland and slope will be 18 degrees. Top of the terrace will be covered in pea stone per existing conditions.

4. Work is proposed within 10 feet of the wetland and the limit of work (erosion control line) is proposed 1-foot down-gradient of the existing wall.
5. No issues with floodplain or endangered species and abutters were notified.
6. Mini excavator will likely be required and there is room behind the garage for equipment handling without stepping into the wetland.

Due to familiarity with the site and thoroughness of the application, the Conservation Commission considered a site inspection is not mandatory. The applicant was praised for the construction sequence. Chair Al Laakso made a motion to issue an Order of Conditions for the application received on August 8, 2018 with the construction sequence noted therein. Chair Ottani seconded the motion, all in favor and the motion passed. The applicant was advised that, once received, one must follow the instructions provided in the Conservation Commission's cover letter attached to a signed Order of Conditions.

CULVERT REMOVAL ON OLD WEST RD - Chair Al Laakso proceeded to inform the Commissioners on the following:

1. Tennessee Gas Pipeline has offered, in an effort to maintain access to the gas shut-off valves in Bark Haul Rd. without disruption by occasional floods cause by beaver dams in nearby Longmeadow Brook, to pay to remove the culvert. The contribution is due to the fact that TGP cannot perform any work outside their right-of-way
2. The idea is to allow the brook to continue its natural course into the Connecticut River and remove the constraint that seems to keep attracting the beavers; this would be considered an ecological restoration project.
3. Culvert is on conservation land, has already been partially destroyed and it's no longer required in the area ever since the old West Road was abandoned.
4. This work provides the opportunity to install a foot bridge in the near future as part of a community preservation project; in the near future, formal plans can be developed to reflect this intent.

Chair Laakso made a motion to approve plan to remove culvert and restore the stream to pristine conditions, with the intent to develop in a second phase, details and specifications for a community preservation project. All in favor, motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS – Columbia Gas recently contacted the Conservation Commission as notification of upcoming work to be performed under Benton Drive's pavement that will close a gap in the existing gas main utility line between Longmeadow and East Longmeadow. The work, while within the 100-foot buffer zone of nearby wetlands, is not subject to review by the Conservation Commission as it falls within the permitting exemptions provided in the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act 310 CMR 10.02 (2)(b) for utility work performed on an existing paved street.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano
Secretary