

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2018 MEETING

A meeting of the Longmeadow Conservation Commission was called to order at 7:00 P.M. on September 26th, 2018 in the conference room at the Longmeadow Police Station.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Al Laakso, John Bresnahan, Andrea Chasen, David Dumais, Peter Bouvier, Wayne Ottani, Christopher Nolan. **Absent:** Stephen Gazillo

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Gold, Jesse Moreno, Michele Marantz.

MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING: The minutes of August 22, 2018 were accepted as presented. All in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Salary Account \$7,858.87; Maintenance \$300; Office Supplies \$47.39; Misc. \$709.58; Con Com Trust Fund \$9,129.77; Con Com Wetland Protection Fund \$6,823.15.

Chair Al Laakso welcomed Selectman Mark Gold to our meeting.

Mr. Mark Gold (129 Avondale Rd.) was at the meeting speaking as a resident and expressed his deep concerns over what he sees as poor management and quality controls on the part of Columbia Gas on the various projects they've been working on statewide. He pointed out to the unfortunate disaster that recently occurred in the towns of Andover, North Andover and Lawrence as prime example of Columbia Gas' flawed system of operations and encouraged the Conservation Commission to analyze and prevent Columbia Gas from performing any additional work until the company can demonstrate that they have an understanding on the recent disaster and that they have implemented safety procedures that will ensure such disaster is prevented in the future.

Commissioner John Bresnahan expressed his sympathy toward Mr. Gold's concerns but kindly reminded him that, unfortunately, in this case, the Conservation Commission only has jurisdiction over a project's impact on protected land and that they lack the latitude to evaluate technical aspects of the project pertaining to equipment and engineering.

RDA – NATURAL GAS SERVICE FOR 33 MILL RD – Mr. Jesse Moreno, consultant for Columbia Gas, proceeded to explain that the aforementioned property currently lacks gas service, and therefore the project would bring such service by means of the following:

1. Installation of approximately 80' of 1-¼ plastic gas service and a meter between Mill Rd and said residence. Approximately 10' is located under the paved street, with the remainder in the lawn area between the road and the house.
2. The new line will run from the existing 6" gas main under Mill Rd and run in a straight plastic line until it reaches the meter to be located above ground on the northwest corner of the dwelling unit.
3. The trench would be around 24" wide and 48" deep at most with incorporated erosion and sedimentation controls; it is expected that the trench will be open/closed on the same workday.
4. The project will occur 100' away from perennial Mill Brook and its associated bordering vegetated wetlands. There is a sheet pile wall as well as a defined bank along the east side of property.

5. A catch basin located further down the street near the property will have in place a silt sack to catch any runoff water and its sediments.

Mr. Moreno was asked by both residents and Commissioners some questions regarding the qualifications of Columbia Gas workers as well as the capacity of gas mains. Unfortunately, Mr. Jesse Moreno reiterated to all present that he is unable to answer such questions due to his professional background being limited to environmental engineering and he lacks the technical knowledge required to respond adequately.

Commissioner John Bresnahan congratulated Mr. Moreno on this detailed presentation and acknowledged that the residents have legitimate concerns over any new work being performed by Columbia Gas in light of the recent events that unfolded in Eastern MA; he called for the Town's public bodies who would have the proper jurisdiction to evaluate the quality control process that may ease residents' concerns. However, as Mr. Moreno pointed out, such desired controls may not exist at the municipal level due to the deregulated nature of the market.

Chair Al Laakso understood that, from an environmental standpoint, Columbia Gas has developed a plan that would address all potential ecological impacts for the project in question and made a motion to issue Negative Determination #2 and #6 with the following conditions:

1. Work must not begin until the applicant receives a valid trench permit from the Town (due to the recent disaster in Eastern MA, Town of Longmeadow has established a moratorium on trench permits until further notice).
2. Conservation Commission must be notified when the proper erosion and control devices are in place so an inspection prior to work commencement can be performed.
3. Should the project be extended into a second day, the nearby catch basin must be opened during the night to allow for any potential overnight rainwater to properly flow into the basin.

Commissioner John Bresnahan seconded the motion, all in favor. Negative Determinations #2 and #6 approved.

DISCUSSION WITH ANDREA CHASEN: FEASIBILITY OF DATABASE FOR TOWN PROPERTIES IMPACTED BY WETLANDS – Following up on a topic raised recently, Commissioner Andrea Chasen suggested the creation of a database that enlists all properties in town that may be affected by the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) and that, once identified, the current property owners should be notified, while also taking advantage of the opportunity to spread the word on the Conservation Commission's existence and mission. While the idea was warmly received, several Commissioners pointed out to the changing nature of the ecosystems and how portions of land that were once subject to evaluation under the WPA, may not have the same status nowadays. In the past, both previous Chairs as well as Building Commissioners have been very knowledgeable and accurate in identifying properties since maps may be unreliable in the long term. Chair Al Laakso pointed out that the Commission's record of imposed fines is very low, which may be an indication that the current system may yield better results than perceived. That said, Commissioner Chasen was encouraged to look into affordable ideas that would aid in her vision of a property database.

OTHER BUSINESS – The following items were discussed:

1. Commissioner Wayne Ottani will look into a potential firewood chopping operation occurring on Conservation Land in Dunn Rd.

2. The town received DEP approval for the municipal stormwater discharge license application which is a new requirement.
3. Tennessee Gas Pipeline (TGP) has prepared a draft RFP as they move forward with supporting the removal of the deteriorated culvert on Old West Rd., which has been the subject of nearby floods due to beaver activity. A meeting between TPG, the Town's DPW and the Conservation Commission has been established for next week.
4. As the Town prepares for its Leaf Program, a meeting between the Conservation and the DPW will take place to review annual plans and procedures per the Order of Conditions issued in the past for this project. Commissioner Wayne Ottani indicated that, from a conservation standpoint, the leaf site's handlings work well. However, there seems to be an ongoing issue with vehicular speed in the area which has not been successfully addressed.
5. Markers delineating the land in the meadows near Old Birnie Rd. have been set in place, with one of them being in the location David Sagan (Silvio O. Conte Fish & Wildlife Refuge) had recently proposed for a viewing platform, for which he is preparing an RDA. Due to the floating characteristics of the structure, any new location may require additional engineering that would modify the scope of work and, potentially, generate unwanted disturbance of the ecosystem, which would require a complete re-evaluation of the proposal.
6. A site visit was performed for 152 Crestview Circle to inquire about the requirements a potential addition would need. The house, which offers a unique topography and site design, has what appears to be a dry dingle in between the dwelling unit and the pool area, which are connected via a small bridge. Since it appears that the dingle is dry year-round, the new addition would not need to be evaluated by the Conservation Commission.
7. Mr. Mark Gold proceeded to inform the Commission of the current handling of asbestos material recently found on the new DPW site. He explained the three alternatives being evaluated (transportation of the material to Minerva OH, deep excavation onsite to bury and cap the material or material relocation to the Town's old landfill site in Tina Lane) and explained that the third option may be the most suitable in terms of public safety and cost, in part because it would also allow for the landfill to be legally closed once the asbestos material is buried; the site would be prepared to allow for a future solar farm project. The Commission asked if there was any potential for groundwater contamination, to which Mr. Gold indicated that it was highly unlikely since the buried asbestos material is not dissolvable and would be capped above and below.

Chair Al Laakso thanked the residents who were present and voiced their concerns.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano
Secretary