

MINUTES OF MAY 22nd, 2019 MEETING

A meeting of the Longmeadow Conservation Commission was called to order at 7:00 P.M. on May 22nd, 2019 in the conference room at the Longmeadow Police Station.

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Engineer Andrew Krar, Patrick and Kristen Carnahan, Elizabeth Port, Fran Cress, David Martel, Jennifer Mulvaney, Mike Gallagher.

MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING: Chair Al Laakso made a motion to accept the minutes of April 10th, 2019 as presented and Peter Bouvier seconded the motion. All in favor, minutes were accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Salary Account \$5,025.98; Maintenance \$205; Office Supplies \$47.39; Misc. \$709.58; Con Com Trust Fund \$9,270.23; Con Com Wetland Protection Fund \$7,360.65.

RDA – BLISS PARK ADA IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – Mr. Krar presented the following project characteristics:

1. 5'-wide bituminous concrete ring path at grade that will connect ADA accessible parking spaces at the three parking locations within the park. The ring path will also connect to the sidewalks on both Bliss Rd. and Laurel St. The existing gravel parking lot drains easterly and erodes the bank.
2. Installation of new bituminous concrete pavement on top of existing compacted gravel parking lot (accessed from Laurel Street), entrance width to be expanded to 24'. The remaining parking lots, accessed from Bliss Rd. are existing to remain with the exception of the ADA-accessible parking spaces in each, which will be paved with the same bituminous concrete material.
3. A portion of the proposed ring path just north of the ball fields is within 100' of Cooley Brook; also, the entire project is being proposed on a previously disturbed area and land disturbance area is estimated at 0.6 acres.
4. An open drainage system (raingarden/level spreader) will be located between the northeast corner of the paved parking lot and the pool's entrance to reduce erosion from stormwater runoff.
5. Preliminary calculations based on 2, 10, 50 and 100-year flood scenarios for the newly paved parking area indicate that the runoff's peak rate will be less than current runoff. The area's soil seems to have high hydraulic conductivity, therefore it may be capable of handling the path's runoff.
6. Project must be completed by June 30.
7. The alternative of using pervious materials for both the path and the parking spaces was eliminated due to their rigorous maintenance and low performance in climates where the ground freezes; also there were concerns over the material's effectiveness in providing proper mobility for items such as wheelchairs.

Residents who were present at the meeting provided the following comments:

- Patrick Carnahan (311 Farmington Rd) is concerned over the project's timeline and its review by the Town's various public bodies in a timely manner. He expressed frustration at the lack of proper communication of such project to the public.
- Betsy Port (212 Farmington Rd) acknowledged that she posted the LPRD's press release at the park's bulletin board upon receipt and also expressed frustration at communication issues.
- Fran Cress (99 Oxford Rd) indicated that a group of residents has been actively working in recent years to develop sustainable landscape scenarios for the town's parks with guidelines aimed at open communication and inclusion of professionals from many trades. She was also concerned at the construction activity on site without proper permitting and whether funds were being used wisely. She has walked thru the area, especially Cooley Brook's genesis, with an ecologist and has found evidence of erosion which may stem from the stormwater drainage in this particular area.
- Kristen Carnahan (311 Farmington Rd) questioned the ADA standards used on the proposed design and whether proper research into sustainable surface materials was carried out. She pointed out to language in the contract presented to project bidders that indicated the need for permits prior to construction commencement.

The Conservation Commission provided the following clarifications:

1. The DPW had been advised to avoid any construction activity within the jurisdictional area; based on information presented it appeared that the project was in compliance of this request.
2. This commission lacks the authority to regulate construction activity outside the jurisdictional area; it also lacks the authority to review and analyze the legitimacy of the ADA design standards.
3. An application review earlier this year would have lessened the concerns raised by residents.
4. The paved parking lot on the northwest corner of the project, an area that poses concerns over stormwater runoff management, is outside the resource area. In addition, the land disturbance calculations currently at 0.6 acres do not invoke the Town's stormwater management bylaw.
5. From a hydrological standpoint, Cooley Brook's genesis receives water from five storm drains, which is why the brook is categorized by the state as a "general quality" (it is upgraded to "high quality" as it approaches the Connecticut River).

Commissioner John Bresnahan made a motion to issue a DOA with Negative Determination #2 and #6 with the requirement that a silt fence be installed and approved by this commission prior to construction of the portion of the ring path that lies within the WPA's jurisdictional area (a silt fence is recommended over straw bales due to their efficiency as well as the potential such bales have of transporting traces of invasive species); Peter Bouvier seconded the motion, all in favor 6-0, the motion passed.

Chair Al Laakso thanked the public for their comments.

Commissioner Andrea Chasen left the meeting at 8:30pm.

DISCUSSION – PERENNIAL COMMUNITY GARDENS – Mr. Martel (15 Durham Rd) presented a plan for a proposed perennial garden area (approximately 20' x 50' with a fence 4'-high or similar) within the Conservation's Community Gardens. The plan is modeled after

researching the practices at the Northampton Community Garden as well as current town regulations. There are stipulations in place for requesting a \$50 deposit to handle administrative costs and for exclusion of specific perennial plants that may be detrimental to the area and its maintenance efforts. Soil conditions as well as irrigation practice would not be affected by the implementation of a perennial garden.

Commissioner John Bresnahan made a motion to accept a proposal for perennial garden with the condition that Items #2 and #6 be excluded pending further review by this commission and the project be reviewed within the next year but before June 1, 2020. Commissioner Wayne Ottani seconded the motion, all in favor 5-0, the motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS – The following items were discussed:

1. Severe erosion has been reported on ravine behind new DPW facility, immediate action of fallen trees removal will fall within the OOC's parameters.
2. Bark Haul gate locks were recently vandalized.
3. Eagle Scouts have reached out to this commission for potential work in Laurel Park; should the projects materialize they will require permits.
4. Japanese Knotweed has been spotted on Bill Barnard's Woods. Area will be inspected and, depending on the extent of invasion, remediation tactics will be reviewed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano
Secretary