

MINUTES OF JANUARY 27th, 2021 MEETING

Access via phone (646) 558 8656 or via web at www.zoom.us with Meeting ID 956 1615 8513 / Password 395396

A meeting of the Longmeadow Conservation Commission was called to order at 7:02 P.M. on January 27th, 2021 and was again conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth related to the Covid19 pandemic.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Al Laakso, David Dumais, Andrea Chasen, John Bresnahan, Kiernan Mulcahy. **Absent:** Stephen Gazillo, Roman Berman, Christopher Nolan.

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Engineer Tim Keane, James Rivers from DPC Engineering.

MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING: Mr. Laakso made a motion, and was seconded by Ms. Chasen, to accept the minutes of November 11th, 2020 as presented. Roll call vote: Ms. Chasen, yes; Mr. Laakso: yes; Mr. Dumais: yes; Mr. Bresnahan: yes; Mr. Mulcahy: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion passed, minutes were accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Salary \$4,045.13, Maintenance \$774.80, Office Supplies \$100, Miscellaneous \$-21.00, Wetlands Protection Fund \$7,690.65, ConCom Trust Fund \$9,589.56.

LEAF RECYCLING PROGRAM AT GASEK FARMS - FIELD MEASUREMENTS: The annual measurements continue to prove that the tilling of leaves on the farm's soil have minimally impacted the elevation levels over time. The commission is confident that the program is not reducing the compensatory storage of the fields and accepts the report.

NOI – DEP NUMBER PENDING – PONDSIDE ROAD RESURFACING PROJECT: Mr. Rivers then explained that the Town of Longmeadow was awarded a \$226,000 Federal Lands Access Program grant to resurface portions of Pondside Road, Old Birnie Road and Old Tina Lane that will allow vehicular access further into the floodplain lands that are federally owned; additional funds were allocated to this project at the 2020 Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Rivers provided the following project highlights:

1. Pondside Road will be resurfaced with bituminous material from Bark Haul Road to Old Tina Lane, continuing the new pavement on Old Tina Lane and Old Birnie Road from Pondside Road to West Road; road widths will remain intact but grading will be improved.
2. The existing 48" CMP culvert under Pondside Road at the Longmeadow Brook stream crossing will be replaced with a 48" RCP culvert. Additionally, a second existing 36" CMP culvert under Pondside Road near the intersection with Old Tina Lane will be replaced with a 36" RCP culvert.
3. Throughout construction, vehicular access will be maintained and temporary bypass pumping or diversion of the Longmeadow Brook will be executed.
4. A small and ADA-compliant parking area will be created at the intersection of Birnie and West Roads.

Prior to this hearing, MassDEP's Mark Stinson provided guidance for the project and required the use of a Replacement Stream Crossing Evaluation worksheet by the applicant; in addition, MA's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has been notified because they have a conservation restriction on the Conservation Land known as the Gasek Farms where the parking area will be installed. Subsequent to the meeting the DCR approved the bituminous parking area. While the work will be mostly confined to previously disturbed areas, some bank restoration is expected, thus raising concerns on some commissioners over the potential cropping of invasive species. Due to the lack of a DEP file

number as typically assigned by Mass DEP prior to hearings, the commission and the applicant agreed to extend the hearing until February 10th, 2021, at which time deliberations will be made.

Documents presented: Figure 1 Map dated November 2020.

DISCUSSION – MASSTRAILS APP, GRANT OPPORTUNITY: The PVPC has invited communities in the region to join in the effort of a MassTrails grant request for the development of an online regional trails application; currently, only the Fannie Stebbins Wildlife Refuge trails are available online as part of the Longmeadow trails. The commission is encouraged by the idea of mapping additional trails found in the floodplains as well as town parks, a scope of work that is aligned with one of the goals stated in the 2020 Open Space and Recreation Plan, but concerns were raised over meeting the funding requirements. Chair Al Laakso will contact Town Manager Lyn Simmons to discuss any available alternatives.

DISCUSSION – 2020 OPEN SPACE PLAN GOALS REVIEW: The goals in which the Conservation Commission is a responsible party were identified and the following is an example of items discussed:

1. To better determine the best course of action on proper signage, a database of the existing signs on conservation land will be established.
2. Brainstorm ideas related to educational outreach that can tap on resources such as the town's students and their technology programs, online platforms (i.e., Town's Facebook page) for important updates or webinars thru Storrs Library.
3. Explore the possibility of applying for a CPC grant that will help improve the Riverfront Conservation Area.

Documents presented: 2020-2027 Longmeadow Open Space & Recreation Plan Update

OTHER BUSINESS – The following items were discussed:

1. Chair Al Laakso will be submitting an article for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting to address the language pertaining to enforcement of the Wetlands Bylaw and the fees associated with fines; last year this portion of the bylaw was removed by the MA Attorney General's office due to its ambiguity and lack of a specific value assigned to the fine.
2. Mr. Bresnahan has been mentoring LHS Student and Girl Scout Amelia Wray regarding a project at the Community Gardens of Blue Bird boxes to be installed along the perimeter of the property in order to enhance nesting habitats and, potentially, decrease insect pest population; a butterfly garden is also under consideration.
3. Ms. Chasen will meet with Town Manager Lyn Simmons to discuss ideas for a town-wide, socially-distant cleanup event in honor of Earth Day.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano