

**SOUTH HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 17, 2018**

**PRESENT:** William (Bill) DeLuca, Chair; William (Bill) Bacis, Member; Jim Canning, Member; Neva Tolopko, Member; Alex Krofta, Associate Member; Anne Capra, Conservation Administrator/Planner

The meeting for January 17, 2018 was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Commission Chair DeLuca.

1. **Discuss and Consider** Draft Black Stevens Baseline Document Report – Conservation Agent stated that she e-mailed the Commission a revised section that included updated stormwater information. The Commission then discussed various sections of the Baseline Report and discussed the addition of subsections in the “Recommendations” section for future projects. Commission Chair DeLuca suggested that each action be prioritized. The Conservation Agent stated that a plan should be produced and reviewed by the Commission. She added at the meeting next month the Commission could hold a public hearing with direct notice to all the abutters to Bachelor Brook. The Conservation Agent suggested then the Commissioners and the abutters could talk about the problem, view a couple of slides, and ask for comments and feedback. She added that perhaps a couple of the abutters would volunteer for work crews and that annual or at least twice a year work parties could be held. The Conservation Agent also stated that this process must come prior to sending letters to the abutters about dumping in the Conservation area, and added this would be the process for all the properties. The Conservation Agent stated that of the 36 corners there were 16 bounds located, and no recorded survey was found. She added there was no monumentation near the residential properties. Utilizing a map/picture the Conservation Agent indicated a property that their driveway, turnaround, patio, and lawn area were encroaching. She added that she would talk with the Town Administrator and explore how to proceed. Chairman DeLuca brought up mapping the natural communities, including more information in the Habitat Section, and prioritizing the rankings in the “Recommendation” section. The Commission then discussed the timeframe to finalize the Baseline Report. The Conservation Agent stated that the Commission should first hold a Public Hearing within the next month. She added that her primary objectives to doing the Baseline was to familiarize herself with the properties, develop an action plan, and engage the public and the Commission. The Conservation Agent explained that her position is different than what the former Conservation Administrator did and that the administration did not want her out trimming trails or doing field work, but developing volunteer groups that will perform land management.
  
2. **Discuss and Consider** Town Meeting Approval of Wetlands Bylaw Amendments – The Conservation Agent stated that the Bylaw amendments were approved at Town Meeting without a single question or comment beyond the introduction of the changes provided by John Hines. She added that she’s been working with the Town Planner to submit to Attorney General’s Office for approval. Once approval is received then the changes can be made to the Town’s e-Code.

3. **Discuss and Consider** Master Plan Implementation Committee Update – The Conservation Agent stated that Anne Eaton came in to discuss what the status was of the projects that were assigned to the Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee. She explained that the Open Space Committee has been disbanded, so those actions assigned to that Committee were not advancing. The Conservation Agent stated that the Planning and Conservation Department would be updating the Open Space and Recreational Plan in 2018. She explained that a Request for Proposal will be going out for a consultant. The Commission then discussed what the consultant would do. The Conservation Agent stated that a new Open Space Committee will be appointed by the Selectboard.
4. **Discuss and Consider** Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 28, 2017, July 5, 2017, and December 20, 2017 – The Conservation Agent explained that she amended the minutes to clean them up and then sent the minutes of June 28, 2017 and July 5, 2017 to Vice Chair Fleming. He had one minor edit to the 6/28/17 minutes (a name correction) and said the minutes were fine. The Conservation Agent stated that approval of the minutes would need a motion. **Motion:** Commissioner Canning moved and Commissioner Bacis seconded the motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of June 28, 2017, July 5, 2017, and December 20, 2017. The Commission voted **Four (4)** out of **Four (4)** members present in favor of the motion.
5. **Administrator's Report** including updates on projects, violations, next meeting dates, and correspondence log –

**Project Update:**

*River to Range Trail Construction* – The Conservation Agent stated that MassWest Construction is waiting for a break in the weather. She added that Eversource is planning pole replacement along their ROW at Bachelor Brook, and she met on site with John Welch and Eversource representatives and discussed the utility work relative to the trail layout. During the pole replacement Eversource will put down swamp mats, and if there is any trail damage they will pay to have it fixed.

**New Projects:**

*FLAP Grant and DCR Phase II* – Conservation Agent explained the matching funds to these two grants were approved at Town Meeting, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission will be the Project Administrator.

*River Road NOI* – The Conservation Agent has scheduled a Public Hearing for 6:00 p.m. on February 7, 2018. She added that there is only 68' of road frontage and the lot is grandfathered, as confirmed by the Town Planner.

*River Road RDA* – The Commission has received an RDA for another property on River Road.

*64 Canal Street* – The property owner would like to build a second single-family house at this location. The Conservation Agent explained that this lot was subdivided into two lots this past Fall. She added that one lot has an existing house and the other lot is forested with the 100' of frontage. The Conservation Agent explained that most of the lot is in the

Riverfront Area and according to Mark Stinson at DEP the house would need to be outside the Riverfront Area, and the lot cannot be claimed as a hardship. Due to the 20' zoning setback requirement, that would leave a very tiny space to build a house, if possible at all.

*440 Amherst Road* – The Conservation Agent stated that she received a telephone call from Attorney Boudreau inquiring what was needed to continue. She received a letter from the attorney stating that his client would not be able to submit the NOI or Restoration Plan by December 31<sup>st</sup>. The letter did not give any dates of when this paperwork would be submitted. The Conservation Agent stated that she would send him a letter requesting the info to be submitted.

*Eversource Line 1447/1327/1428* – The Conservation Agent stated that she met with representatives from Eversource to review their preliminary plans for pole replacement along this line. There are some serious potential impacts due to pole replacement. She explained that the work will be from Bachelor Brook through Stonybrook to Pineshed. She added that Eversource was discussing plans of gravel paths in and around their poles and for a permanent access area. Abutters in the Alvord Place neighborhood will likely be very concerned due to the addition of large gravel pads being proposed. The Conservation Agent stated that the Commission should minimize what they're doing, have access as temporary as possible, and discuss what the mitigation will be. She added that they will be starting construction this summer, and we can expect a filing soon. A site visit will be scheduled as weather permits.

6. **Other New Business** (topics which the Chair could not reasonably expect to be discussed/considered as of the date of this notice) –

*MACC* – The annual conference will be held March 3, 2018.

*Turley Publications, Letters to the Editor* – A guy from Chicopee wrote into the Town Reminder and said that the Black Stevens Conservation area is an absolute skiers dream.

*Bachelor Brook* – Received a telephone call from Annie Sobel. She stated that she rides her horse in Bachelor Brook and asked if it was prohibited. The Conservation Agent stated that horse riding in Bachelor Brook is not prohibited, and Commission Chair DeLuca added only motorized vehicles are prohibited.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Commission Chair DeLuca adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Doris Leclair, Senior Clerk  
Planning & Conservation

Attachment A

List of Documents Reviewed in January 17, 2018 Conservation Commission Meeting

<b><u>Document</u></b>	<b><u>Record Location</u></b>
Conservation Meeting Agenda	Conservation Agenda & Minutes Binder
Administrator Notes	Conservation Agenda & Minutes Binder Individual Project Files
Black Stevens Baseline Report	Town of South Hadley Website
Minutes	Conservation Agenda & Minutes Book Individual Project Files
Sign In Sheet	Conservation Agenda & Minutes Binder