

**SOUTH HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 1, 2023**

**Present:** Neva Tolopko, Chair; Bill DeLuca, Member, Garth Schwellenbach, Member; Tom Dennis, Member; Kathy Davis, Member; Louise Croll, Associate Member; Rebekah Cornell, Conservation Administrator; and Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

Chair Tolopko called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and reviewed the virtual meeting protocols.

**Agenda Item #1 --- Open Public Forum**

No members of the public spoke during the open forum.

**Agenda Item #3 --- Minutes**

Draft minutes of the December 21, 2022 and January 18, 2023 meetings were sent to the Commission for review.

**Motion:** Commissioner DeLuca moved to approve the December 21, 2022 meeting minutes. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Three (3) out of five (5) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call. Commissioners DeLuca and Schwellenbach abstained from the vote as they were not in attendance at the meeting.

**Motion:** Commissioner Davis moved to approve the January 18, 2023 meeting minutes. Commissioner DeLuca seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

**Agenda Item #3 --- Lauzier Farm: adding the Town as a co-holder to APR acquisition**

Anne Capra, Director of Planning and Conservation, was present at the meeting.

As the Commission was aware, local and state funding had been secured for the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) for the Lazier Farm. The *Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources* (MDAR) would be the primary holder of the restriction and had asked the Town to be a co-holder. MDAR was seeking to finalize the acquisition by the end of the fiscal year which required a number of administrative items to be completed including identifying a co-holder. It was unclear if the co-holdership was required or optional but commissioners indicated support for accepting the designation. MDAR would be responsible for APR monitoring and the Town would be the APR co-holder in name.

**Motion:** Commissioner Dennis moved to add the Town of South Hadley as a co-holder onto the federal agreement as it relates to the acquisition of an Agricultural Preservation Restriction with the Lauzier farm property. Commissioner Schwellenbach seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

**Agenda Item #4 --- Land Acquisition: 120 River Road**

Mariann and Gary Ingram, owners of 120 River Road, were present at the meeting. They inherited the undeveloped property along the cove of the Connecticut River and were interested in donating it to the Conservation Commission. The property satisfied seven of the 16 characteristics for acquisition as identified in the *Criteria for Land Acquisition and Acceptance*. Only one characteristic was required to be considered for acceptance. Commissioners indicated support to further consider accepting the donation. The Commission needed to release funds to conduct a title search and property survey. Administrator Cornell had been quoted \$2,000 for the land survey.

**Motion:** Commissioner Dennis moved to authorize expending the funds needed from the Land Conservation Account for a title search and land survey of 120 River Road as the initial steps in accepting the land donation. Commissioner Schwellenbach seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

**Agenda Item #5 --- Administrative Review - Mount Holyoke College Upper Lake Outfall Maintenance under Existing Order of Conditions #288-0396 General Maintenance**

Chris Domina, Mount Holyoke College, was present at the meeting along with project consultant Sara Lawler of Fuss & O'Neill.

The college was seeking to repair an existing outfall at the campus' upper lake. As such, they submitted a request for administrative approval to complete the work under their existing maintenance Order of Conditions. Excavation would be required to remove and replace part of a impaired buried culvert leading to the outfall. During excavation, removal of one shade tree was proposed. In its place, four native trees and shrubs would be planted in addition to seed mix. The mitigation plants would ideally improve the site's overall ecology.

Commissioner DeLuca asked how that outfall interfaced with the lake. Sara Lawler responded that the bank was steep and the outfall pipe was raised above the water. The limit of work would be demarcated with a silt fence.

Commissioner Dennis asked where the point source was for that water being led to the outfall pipe. Chris Dimina responded that the drains were on lawned area.

**Motion:** Commissioner DeLuca moved to approve the Administrative Review of Mount Holyoke College Upper Lake outfall maintenance as presented in the January 12, 2023 submitted plans. Commissioner Dennis seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

**Agenda Item #6 --- Conservation Lands Management Plan FY24**

Administrator Cornell detailed a working draft budget for the upcoming fiscal year. A number of projects were scheduled to be completed during the current fiscal year including new signage, hazard tree removal, and repair of existing steps and bridges.

### **Agenda Item #7 --- Administrator's Report**

The Commission reviewed the following items:

- **Carver Newton Jones Conservation Area**

The Commission discussed renaming the Conservation Area. Commissioners were supportive of a name that celebrated the tradition of native and indigenous groups which occupy the region. However, it was acknowledged that representatives of these groups needed to be consulted before any name formal adoption.

Commissioners were also supportive of a name that tied the location to existing conservation areas such as creating a 'Connecticut River corridor' or 'greenway'. Support was also indicated for a name that related to existing ecological features such as the 'riverside'.

Renaming the Carver Newton Jones Conservation area would be part of an ongoing conversation

- **Social Justice Statement**

The Commission discussed the drafted social justice statement and logo that would be placed at trailhead kiosks. Commissioner Dennis recommended that the logo be altered to not isolate people who had poor associations with the 'peace sign'. Commissioner Davis recommended that the last sentence be used as the first sentence. She also recommended that the assurance for safety be removed because it couldn't be guaranteed. Associate Member Croll recommended that the word 'despite' be removed.

Administrator Cornell would incorporate the revisions and provide the commission with a revised draft.

- **Growing Wild South Hadley** - The website for the program recently launched. Associate Member Croll had a master gardener contact who could be a helpful resource when developing programming.
- **Woodworking Class**- South Hadley High School students built bird boxes which would be placed at the Rangeview Meadow and Bachelor Brook/ Stony Brook Conservation Areas.

### **Agenda Item #8 --- Other New Business**

There was no new business to discuss.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** Commissioner Davis moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Schwellenbach seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

**Appendix**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
Criteria for Land Acquisition - 120 River Road	Conservation Files
Administrative Review - Mount Holyoke College	Conservation Files
Draft FY24 Budget	Conservation Files
Social Justice Statement Trail Head	Conservation Files