

**SOUTH HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 7, 2022**

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

Chair Tolopko called the meeting to order at 6:02 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 #2 ----Minutes

Draft minutes of the August 17, 2022 meeting were sent to the Commission for review.

Motion: Commissioner Schwellenbach moved to approve the August 17, 2022 meeting minutes. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Seven (7) out of seven (7) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Agenda Item #3 --- Public Hearing to consider an Order of Conditions submitted under the Limited Project provisions of 310 CMR 10.53(3)(i). The project includes maintenance and repair of a dam and appurtenant works at Lithia Springs Reservoir Dam (Map 62 Parcel 13) accessible through a gravel access road from Lithia Springs Rd.

The applicant's representatives, Lauren Gluck and Allen Orsi of PARE Corporation, were present at the hearing.

Lauren Gluck presented an overview of the proposed project. The application was filed on behalf of the Department of Conservation and Recreation for the following: 1) removal and of the existing gatehouse and installation of a concrete pad in its place; 2) dam improvements to include regrading for a vehicle turnaround and improvements to the low level outlet area by exposing the outlet pipe and installing a headwall; and 3) installation of a pedestrian bridge to improve recreational access. The site was within the jurisdiction of the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP). A meeting had been set up between the applicant and NHESP to discuss the project.

As the project location was within proximity of endangered species landscapes, the Commission recommended utilizing fencing and signs to identify locations of endangered plants so pedestrians did not knowingly walk in those areas.

The Commission recommended rolling out the project at a time resulting in lesser impact. For example, salamanders were known to seasonally migrate near the project location. Summer was recommended as the ideal time to complete the work.

The application identified that downed trees in the waterway were proposed for removal. However, downed trees offered habitat and were recommended to remain in place. The applicant's representative identified that downed trees within 10 feet of the headwall would need to be removed for dam safety reasons.

The hearing would need to be continued to allow the applicant to discuss the project further with NHESP.

Motion: Vice-Chair DeLuca moved to continue the hearing to September 21, 2022 at 6:00 PM. Commissioner Schwellenbach seconded the motion. Seven (7) out of seven (7) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Agenda Item #4 --- Exempt Activity within Buffer Zone (22 Hillcrest Park)

Richard Harris, 22 Hillcrest Park, was present at the meeting. He was seeking to construct a wooden deck over an existing patio behind his condominium unit. The impact would be no greater than any other backyard area attributed to any other unit. The location was within the Buffer Zone of a Resource Area but the proposed activity appeared to be exempt under the Wetlands Protection Act and the South Hadley Wetlands Bylaw as it was accessory to a residential structure on previously degraded area.

Motion: Vice-Chair DeLuca moved to affirm that the construction of a deck over an existing patio at 22 Hillcrest Park was an exempt activity under the Wetlands Protection Act and would require no further permitting from the Conservation Commission. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Seven (7) out of seven (7) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Agenda Item #5 --- Homegrown National Parks in South Hadley

This item was placed on the agenda at Commissioner Dennis's request. "Homegrown National Parks" is an initiative spearheaded by Entomologist and Wildlife Ecologist Doug Tallamy and seeks to educate people on the benefits of restoring lawned areas to more naturalistic landscapes with greater ecological benefits. The Commission discussed how ideas from the Homegrown National Parks initiative could be brought to South Hadley. A Subcommittee could be developed to further actualize the concepts discussed. Considerations would be ongoing.

Agenda Item #6 --- Administrator's Report

Administrator Cornell detailed the following items:

- *APR Fundraising* - A meeting would be held between staff and Kestrel Land Trust to discuss the fundraising campaign to secure the Lauzer APR.
- *Mass Trails Grant* - Funding was awarded to re-establish the Robert Frost Trail through portions of Town.

- *Volunteer Events* - A successful event was held at Black Stevens Conservation Area. The yearly Source-to-Sea cleanup would be held in late September to clear waste from the Connecticut River.
- *Conservation Land Management* - Request for quotes had been advertised for improvements at various conservation areas. Administrator Cornell was in the process of reviewing proposals before contractor selection.
- *Master Plan* - A member of the Master Plan Implementation Committee would attend a future meeting to discuss implementation.
- *Range View Meadow* - Administrator Cornell was waiting for a response from MassDOT for approval of location for the Conservation Area sign.

Agenda Item #7 --- Other New Business

Commissioner Doroski invited members to attend an upcoming Wetland Scientist conference in New Hampshire. Additional information would be provided by email.

As all Commissioners were present, Department Coordinator Canning asked the Commission to take a vote to re-endorse authorization of Administrator Cornell to sign permits and and determinations on the Commission's behalf due to the COVID-19 state-of-emergency.

Motion: Commissioner Davis moved to authorize Administrator Cornell to sign permits and determinations on the Commission's behalf due to the COVID-19 state-of-emergency. Commissioner Doroski seconded the motion. Seven (7) out of seven (7) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through call.

Adjournment

Motion: Vice-Chair DeLuca moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dennis seconded the motion. Seven (7) out of seven (7) members voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

DRAFT

Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Department

Appendix

Document	Document Location
NOI Application - 288-0480	Conservation Files