

**SOUTH HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 18, 2023**

Present: Neva Tolopko, Chair; April Doroksi, Vice-Chair; Bill DeLuca, Member; Garth Schwellenbach, Member; Tom Dennis, Member; Kathy Davis, Member; Jess Schoendorf, Member; Terry Rosenfeld, Associate Member; Rebekah Cornell, Conservation Administrator; and Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

Chair Tolopko called the meeting to order at 6:01 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 Commission's previous meeting were sent for review. Edits had been proposed but had not been incorporated into revised drafts. Therefore, the Commission deferred review and approval to the next meeting.

Agenda Item #3 --- Order of Conditions Extension - Mount Holyoke College (288-396)

Vice-Chair Doroski and Commissioner Schwellenbach abstained from discussion as they had a professional relationship with the applicant.

Chris Domina, Mount Holyoke College, was present at the meeting.

Administrator Cornell explained that Mount Holyoke College was seeking to extend their Order of Conditions for general operations and maintenance. They were also seeking to amend language within the special conditions which required submission of engineered plans for removal and replacement of existing impaired culverts. This process was expensive and time consuming. The college wanted to propose a standardized process for repair. A map and narrative of proposed work would still be provided but the construction plans would not be drafted by an engineer. Administrator Cornell added that this change would only relate to existing culverts with outfall at Stony Brook.

Chair Tolopko asked if the requested changes for culvert maintenance included replacement of entire culvert pipes or only failed segments. She also asked if culverts would be resized when necessary. Chris Domina responded that replacement of full culvert pipes may be performed. Culverts would be resized dependent upon their reason for failure. He added that much of the repair would be performed by the college's ground crew who would be familiar with the site and necessary requirements.

Associate Commissioner Rosenfeld asked if Administrator Cornell performed site visits after notification of work. Chris Domina replied that Administrator Cornell typically visited the site following notification of work.

Commissioner Schoendorf asked if endangered species were present on site. She added that mapping had been updated to update locations of estimated priority habit. Chris Domina replied that the lower lake dam likely had priority habitat. Administrator Cornell confirmed that maps for estimated priority habitat had been updated and would work with the college to ensure they had updated information.

Commissioner DeLuca asked for clarity on what change in the approval process was being proposed for culvert work. He wanted to clarify if Commission approval would still be required. Administrator Cornell explained that the college requested to notify the commission prior to culvert repair, rather than receive approval before commencement. Commissioner Deluca supported lessening the submittal requirements but still wanted the Commission to review and approve the work before commencement.

Chair Tolopko stated that the Commission needed to consider issuing an extension OOC with amended special conditions to no longer require fully engineered construction plans for repair and replacement of existing failed culverts. Language should also be added to reflect that updated Natural Heritage and Endangered Species mapping.

Motion: Vice-Chair DeLuca moved to extend the Order of Condition OOC #288-0396 issued to Mount Holyoke College for general operation and maintenance with amended special conditions as discussed. Commissioner Schoendorf seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) voting commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call vote.

Agenda Item #4 --- Administrator's Report

Administrator Cornell detail the following items:

- *Community Outreach* – Department staff created a step-by-step guide to help illustrate how to use the Town website to sign up for alerts from local Boards and Commissions.
- *Ethics Trainings* – Commissioners were asked to complete an on-line ethics training as was required by state law. Associate Commissioner Rosenfeld shared that he experienced technical issues with the training software.
- *Property Maintenance Bylaw* – The Conservation Commission and Board of Health had been engaged in discussion regarding amending the bylaw which limited grass length. The Board of Health was scheduled to meet next on November 14.
- *Site Visits* – Commissioners recently visited Orchards Golf Course. Commissioner Deluca shared that drainage issues were present on site and Commissioner Schwellenbach shared photos over time showing the reduction in the size of the existing retention pond. A future site visit would be held at the other golf course in Town, Ledges Golf Course.
- *Subcommittees* – Prior to the regular meeting, the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee met and discussed outreach. The Growing Wild Subcommittee was scheduled to meet on October 24.

- *Know Your Town* – The ‘Know Your Town’ community group invited the Commission to speak at an upcoming meeting to review Fall and Winter conservation-related activities. Commissioner Davis volunteered to speak at an upcoming meeting.

Agenda Item #5 --- Other New Business

Commissioner DeLuca observed that Rangeview Meadow had been recently hayed. Administrator Cornell shared that she communicated with the farmer prior to the hay.

Adjournment

Motion: Commissioner Davis moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dennis seconded the motion. Seven (7) out seven (7) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

Appendix

Document	Document Location
OOO Extension Request – 288-0396	Planning Files