



TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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Meeting Minutes July 21, 2021

Justine Carroll, Rich Chiras, Steve Gniadek, Chloe Mawn and Barbara McNamee were present. Justin Arbuckle and Cindee Cummiskey were absent. Barbara Kinney, Conservation Commission (NCC) Administrative Assistant and David Pickart, NCC Agent, were also present.

B. McNamee opened the meeting at 7:10PM (technical difficulties).

Attendees: Christine Johnson (via ZOOM).

Citizen's Forum

None

Joseph Gauthier – Eagle Scout Project

J. Gauthier was not present at this meeting. This has been tabled to a later date.

Continued Public Hearing – NOI – (248-684) 0 Glen Drive (Map 9, Parcel 56)

Proposed construction of a single family home and associated activities within a buffer zone. The applicant is Eastland Partners represented by Turning Point Engineering, PO Box 757, Sutton, MA 01590.

The applicant has requested a continuance to the second meeting in August 2021.

Motion made by S. Gniadek and seconded by R. Chiras. The NCC voted 5-0 to continue the Public Hearing to August 18, 2021 at 7:05PM.

Watson Farm – Discussion

Christine Johnson and Christopher Allen have provided information regarding Watson Farm. The NCC reviewed this information. Watson Farm is for sale and they are looking to have the town acquire the property through the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). They are looking for support from the NCC. The Playground and Recreation Committee has already provided their support. This property has historical, recreational and open space qualities. It is a town accepted road but it is not paved. At the end of the road is a clearing with several buildings that sit on +/-170 acres total. The clearing is about five (5) acres. The idea is to have nature trails and a museum of sorts. C. Allen and C. Johnson are hopeful that they can schedule a site visit soon. The Watson descendants are from the Whitin and Lasell families. The building could date back to 1728. Their research has taken them back to around 1850 so far.

The open space property owned by the NCC (Carpenter Estates) is separated only by a paper street. The state rates open space according to a ranking system with ten (10) being the highest. The open space at Carpenter Estates is a seven (7). The open space at Moon Hill Estates is the only open space that is higher in Northbridge. Most open space ranks between one (1) and three (3). Foppema's Farm is also an abutter.

With this high ranking value, there is a potential to carve out part of the property to sell and generate taxes to help pay for the purchase of the whole property because the sales price is much higher than the funds we have at this time in the Community Preservation Fund. There may be a possibility to generate a bond to borrow the funds necessary through the CPC to purchase the property. C. Allen and C. Johnson will also look into any grant funding that may be available. There may be pieces of grants that they can apply for to help with the funding. We may be able to get others involved too such as Metacomet Land Trust, etc.

The Town is seeking support to modify the causeway to increase water circulation. The north end of the reservoir is eutrophic. This whole area will be connected and improve the ecosystem. There are four (4) potential vernal pools and there is a rare species habitat on the east side, west side and through the middle of Watson Farm.

Motion made by J. Carroll and seconded by R. Chiras. The NCC voted 5-0 to issue a letter for support to the CPC.

Public Meeting – RDA – (04-RDA-2021) 495 Sutton Street (Map 18, Parcel 24)

Proposed installation of an above ground swimming pool. The applicant is Brad & Melissa Cormier, 49 Sutton Street, Northbridge, MA 01534.

The legal requirements have been satisfied including the publication of the legal ad in the Worcester Telegram and Gazette.

D. Pickart summarized what the applicant wishes to do since they are not present and he informed them that it was not necessary for them to attend. There is a straight narrow swale along the back of the property that connects two (2) wetlands. One (1) is upslope and one (1) is downslope. The above ground swimming pool will be installed in the lawn area. Even though it is only 30 feet away from the resource area, he recommends issuing a negative #3 (in the buffer zone with no adverse impact) and negative #6 (not subject to the town bylaw). Straw wattles will be installed in the area closest to the swale.

Motion made by R. Chiras and seconded by J. Carroll. The NCC voted 5-0 to issue a negative determination citing the numbers listed above.

Old / New Business

Reorganization – Chair, Vice Chair & Clerk

Motion made by R. Chiras and seconded by S. Gniadek. The NCC voted 5-0 to appoint J. Carroll as Chair.

Motion made by R. Chiras and seconded by S. Gniadek. The NCC voted 5-0 to appoint B. McNamee as Vice Chair.

Motion made by R. Chiras and seconded by J. Carroll. The NCC voted 5-0 to appoint S. Gniadek as Clerk.

Community Preservation Committee – Appoint representative from NCC.

Motion made by B. McNamee and seconded by R. Chiras. The NCC voted 5-0 to table this to the next meeting.

Minutes

June 16, 2021

Motion made by R. Chiras and seconded by J. Carroll. The NCC voted 4-0-1 (C. Mawn abstained) to accept the minutes of June 16, 2021 as written.

Other

Shining Rock – There was a presentation made to the Board of Selectmen (BOS). The parking lot should be accessible. A plan and conditions are needed before it can be opened. The Police and Fire departments need access in an emergency. A working street light is needed too. D. Pickart will make a mock-up of the sign(s) and draft instructions to remove the barrier, put in plantings, and arrows starting 300 feet in. Along the abutter's properties no trespassing signs will be installed. It will cost \$500 for the street light for the parking area and that does not include the pole. The NCC will pay for the sign(s) and the Department of Public Works (DPW) will handle the light and install a trash can. D. Pickart will also include in the correspondence the reasons why the other access is not appropriate. There is some land next to that access for a parking area but it is all ledge and blasting would need to be done. When it rains, a stream runs down the trail which is a dangerous slope. Researching of deeds, etc. is being done. The BOS is in favor of opening the Shining Rock parking area but one (1) member is not in favor of how the process is being done. The parking area could be opened for six (6) months and then it could be reassessed. About ten (10) signs will be bought to start with. Signs stating "no overflow parking on street" or the BOS could post "no parking" signs along the street.

Meetings – The NCC discussed whether to continue the NCC meetings in person, remotely via ZOOM or a hybrid. They decided to hold the NCC meetings remotely using ZOOM for the foreseeable future.

Riley Pond – D. Pickart was going to address this matter at the next meeting, but will do so tonight instead. Several big trees have been felled onto the dam. It is a mess up there from the beavers. The NCC discussed the situation and will request the Board of Health (BOH) with a cc to the BOS to request a trapping permit as it is not in season to trap beavers. It will be an ongoing process so there may need to be several trappings. We will also request BOH's support. The DPW will chop up the trees.

Motion made by C. Mawn and seconded by S. Gniadek. The NCC voted 5-0 to request the BOH's support and request a trapping permit. D. Pickart will handle the notifications.

Leland Road – J. Luchini confirmed that they will start next week weather permitting to flush out/repair the drainage system behind Leland Road.

Linwood Avenue – L & M Landscaping has negotiated with D. Pickart a reasonable effort to address the items in violation. They said it would not happen again. D. Pickart will forward the NCC the information once it has been finalized.

The NCC members present performed administrative tasks (signed Orders, etc.) that were needed.

Adjournment

Motion made by R. Chiras and seconded by J. Carroll. The NCC voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting about 8:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,

DATE APPROVED:



Barbara A. Kinney
Conservation Administrative Assistant



July 21, 2021

CONSERVATION MAIL LIST

FROM	DATE	SUBJECT
Beth Trifero	06/17/2021	Email regarding School Street Concerns
Conservation Agent	06/15/2021	Conservation Agent Report
Planning Office	06/25/2021	Winston Woods Definitive Subdivision Review Report Form
MA Audubon	06/11/2021	Forest Carbon Market Solutions
Planning Board	06/28/2021	Presidential Farms Performance Surety Reduction
Planning Board	06/28/2021	Hemlock Estates Performance Surety Call In Bond
TEC Associates	06/26/2021	P & W Railroad 2021-2025 Vegetation Management Plan
Gary Vecchione	07/02/2021	Email–Wetland Scientist Resumes for School St/Church Ave
Planning Board	Rec'd 6/28/21	Public Hearing Notice for Winston Woods
Community Planning & Dev	06/23/2021	Winston Woods Engineering Consulting Services
Planning Office	07/06/2021	Endorsed Plans for Mike's Way
Brad & Melissa Cormier	Rec'd 6/17/21	RDA – 495 Sutton Street
Conservation Agent	06/22/2021	Email – Glen Drive Residents Questions
Conservation Agent	06/24/2021	Email – School Street Clearing & Planting Pumpkins
CMRPC	7/13/2021	Email – Blackstone River Watershed Restoration Grant
Chris Allen & Chris Johnson	07/18/2021	Email – Watson Farm Proposal
Planning Office	07/16/2021	Syncarpha Solar Puddon & Quaker Sts
Graves Engineering	07/01/2021	Syncarpha Northbridge I and II Completeness Review
Graves Engineering	06/29/2021	Puddon I and Puddon II Solar Completeness Review
Planning Office	07/19/2021	Syncarpha I and II Solar Recommend No Close-Out

WEEKLY REPORTS

- June 13, 2021 to June 19, 2021
- June 20, 2021 to June 26, 2021
- June 27, 2021 to July 03, 2021
- July 04, 2021 to July 10, 2021
- July 11, 2021 to July 17, 2021

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT MEETING