



## TOWN OF NORTHBRIDGE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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NORTHBRIDGE TOWN CLERK  
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### Meeting Minutes February 15, 2023

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

J. Carroll opened the meeting at 7:00PM.

#### Citizen's Forum

None

#### **(248-XXX) 172 Linwood Avenue (Map 5, Parcels 58 & 59)**

Proposed construction of a garage & driveway with associated grading and site work. The applicant is Timothy & Jane Labrie represented by H S & T Group, Inc., 75 Hammond Street, Worcester, MA 01610.

The applicant/engineer has requested a continuance.

*Motion made by R. Chiras and seconded by B. McNamee. The NCC voted 5-0 to continue the Public Hearing to March 01, 2023 per the applicant/engineer's request.*

#### **Old/New Business**

(248-695) Quaker St Landfill – Request for Certificate of Compliance (COC)

D. Pickart visited the site and reviewed the request with documentation submitted and everything appears to be in order.

*Motion made by B. McNamee and seconded by R. Chiras. The NCC voted 5-0 to issue the COC.*

Castle Hill Farm – Finalize list of allowable uses/improvements and prohibited uses and conceptual master plan (for inclusion in the Conservation Restriction [CR]) that will be subsequently shared with stakeholders.

The property consists of four (4) parcels but are only two (lots) on Map 3, Parcels 1 & 4/Map 4, Parcels 29 & 33. When added to the other abutting open space, the total open space is +/-250 acres. The culvert crossing to the south will need a guard rail because it is +/-30 feet above the ground. This will add +/- three (3) miles of trails.

D. Pickart has reviewed the property in the field and has found some interesting things. There are some woods, scrub-shrub land (not usually found in MA), and a meadow. The

wooded area is considered prime forest which by definition is one that is unaffected by humans and contains large live trees, large dead trees, and/or large logs. D. Pickart identified some large specimen trees of 36 inches or greater and in good shape.

The lower pond has an elaborate dam and is not in the best shape. If the dam fails, it probably will not flood the storage units on the abutting property according to the calculations done by D. Pickart. The Riley Pond dam has a safety permit, and the lower pond dam does not.

There is debris along Castle Hill Road and the owner(s) will be asked to remove this debris when they remove the other debris. There are some old vehicles and what looks like a concrete truck chute that is part of this debris.

The NCC reviewed the suggested allowed uses and suggested prohibited uses. Other uses/prohibited uses can be added at a later date to the CR. The next step is to have the appropriate municipal departments review the CR once it has been drafted. A public meeting will then be held and the abutters will be notified.

*Motion made by R. Chiras and seconded by S. Gniadek. The NCC voted 5-0 to have D. Pickart advance the document to the appropriate outside parties.*

Benson Road (Map 17, Parcels 6 & 28) – Review and vote to formally request that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) designate the land (aside from a +/- 42,665 feet future buildable lot along Benson Road) as being under the management of the NCC for conservation purposes only.

D. Pickart provided a draft memo for the NCC to review and explained that during research for the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) it was discovered that one (1) (southern lot) of these parcels on Benson Road was privately owned and taken by the town for non-payment of taxes. The other parcel (northern lot) is owned by the town. There is an article on the next Spring Annual Town Meeting (SATM) where the town is considering selling off these lots. These two (2) lots are specifically identified as being of conservation interest and have been targeted for preservation in the 2023 OSRP Update. These parcels will connect to other open space parcels.

The properties have a variety of important ecological resources including a certified vernal pool (currently only two (2) in town), at least three (3) areas that potentially provide vernal pool breeding habitat, approximately 35 acres of Vernal Pool Core Habitat (as designated in the BioMap of Northbridge produced by the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), large areas that have been identified as Prime Forest by the Agricultural Research Station of UMass Amherst, and multiple pristine wooded swamps and intermittent stream systems.

D. Pickart has met informally with Adam Gaudette, Town Manager, requesting that the parcels not be sold. A portion of the property that has frontage on Benson Road could be carved out and sold as a buildable lot. The NCC should vote on their recommendation on these properties and issue a memorandum. They may also need to attend a future BOS meeting to discuss this matter.

*Motion made by R. Chiras and seconded by C. Mawn. The NCC voted 5-0 to issue their recommendation to retain the land for conservation and passive recreational uses. D. Pickart will provide the memo to the Town Manager.*

**Minutes**January 18, 2023

*Motion made by S. Gniadek and seconded by R. Chiras. The NCC voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of January 18, 2023 as written.*

December 07, 2022

*Motion made by S. Gniadek and seconded by R. Chiras. The NCC voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of December 07, 2022 as written.*

November 16, 2022

*Motion made by S. Gniadek and seconded by R. Chiras. The NCC voted 5-0 to approve the minutes of November 16, 2022 as written.*

**Other**

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

**Adjournment**

*Motion made by C. Mawn and seconded by S. Gniadek. The NCC voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at about 8:11PM.*

Respectfully submitted,

DATE APPROVED:

  
Barbara A. Kinney  
Conservation Administrative Assistant

*March 01, 2023*

February 15, 2023

## CONSERVATION MAIL LIST

FROM	DATE	SUBJECT
Planning Board	01/24/2023	Special Permit Aquifer Protection for 1096 & 1110 Main Street
Planning Board	01/24/2023	Special Permit Route 146 Overlay for 1096 & 1110 Main Street
Planning Board	01/24/2023	Special Permit Recreational Marijuana for 1096 & 1110 Main St
Planning Board	01/24/2023	Certificate of Approval for 1096 & 1110 Main Street

### ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT MEETING