

**SOUTH HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 15, 2023**

**Present:** Neva Tolopko, Chair; April Doroski, Vice-Chair; Bill DeLuca, Member, Garth Schwellenbach, Member; Tom Dennis, 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 6:00 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 March 1, 2023 meeting were sent to the Commission for review.

**Motion:** Commissioner Schwellenbach moved to approve the March 1 meeting minutes. Vice-Chair Doroski seconded the motion. Four (4) out of six (6) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call. Commissioner Schoendorf and Commissioner DeLuca abstained from the vote.

**Agenda Item #3 --- Request for Extension Orchards Golf Club of Conditions #288-0463**

Brandon Coe, Orchards Golf Club Superintendent, and Keith Cunningham, Orchards Golf Club General Manager, were both present at the meeting to represent the request.

Since issuance of the Orders of Condition (OOC), the Golf Club underwent staffing changes. Chair Tolopko asked if the current staff were appropriately onboarded to understand the requirements of the OOC. Brandon Coe replied that he had been onboarded and his predecessor continued to be available to answer questions.

Commissioner DeLuca recalled how thoroughly the Commission and DEP reviewed the NOI application prior to issuance of the OOC. He asked if any items in the management plans were not working well for the Club's operations. Brandon Coe replied that he had not encountered issues but would contact Administrator Cornell if he had any questions.

Commissioner Schwellenbach asked if any significant trees had died or had been cleared. Brandon Coe replied that the work under their Forest Cutting Plan had been completed. The only other tree work would have included removal of fallen trees on the property.

Chair Tolopko asked for an update on the required mitigation project which sought to restore an area on the property. Brandon Coe replied that the mitigation work had been completed around

the time he began working for the golf club. The Commission could see the mitigation area as part of a future site visit.

**Motion:** Vice-Chair Doroski moved to extend OOC #288-0463 issued to Orchards Golf Club for general operations and maintenance for three years. Commissioner Schwellenbach seconded the motion. Six (6) out of six (6) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

#### **Agenda Item #4 --- Social Justice Trailhead Statement**

At a previous meeting, the Commission discussed language and branding for a social justice statement to be placed at trailhead kiosks. Administrator Cornell prepared a revised symbol to correspond with the written statement.

Commissioner DeLuca felt the original social justice statement had strong language and questioned if language in the trailhead statement could be stronger. Commissioner Dennis and Associate Commissioner Croll both liked the balanced language in the current draft. Commissioner Schoendorf recommended that the most important items be represented in bold lettering. Commissioner DeLuca found that the first two sentences were repetitive and recommended that one be deleted.

Commissioner DeLuca stated that the last sentence indicated that the Commission was ‘actively’ working to increase diversity. He felt the Commission was not doing enough to qualify the sentence. Commissioners felt it was important to keep the language as it would require the Commission to take action. It was recommended that consideration for such diversity initiatives should be placed on a future agenda.

Following discussion, there was consensus on the following edits: 1) deletion of the second sentence; and 2) bold front to identify the most important items.

**Motion:** Commissioner DeLuca moved to approve the social justice trailhead statement as revised during the meeting. Commissioner Dennis seconded the motion. Six (6) out of six (6) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

#### **Agenda Item #5 --- Administrator’s Report**

Administrator Cornell detailed the following items:

- *Beachgrounds Park* – The DPW Parks Department would be performing some maintenance work at Beachgrounds Park. The work would be performed under DPW’s existing general maintenance OOC.
- *Wetlands Bylaw* – The State Attorney General’s Office approved the most recent revision to the local Wetlands Bylaw as adopted by Town Meeting in Fall 2022.
- *120 River Road* – An attorney had been retained to perform a deed search of the property which was being offered to the Commission as a donation.
- *Growing Wild South Hadley* – The subcommittee was seeking to hold a meeting with a master gardener. Due to scheduling conflicts, it was recommended that the subcommittee refrain from scheduling a meeting at this time.

- *Newsletter* – The March 2023 conservation newsletter was live on the Town’s website.
- *7 Sister Trail Race* – Interested parties were encouraged to sign-up for volunteer opportunities for a trail race to be held on May 7.
- *E Ink* – The Commission could anticipate reviewing a request for an amended OOC for development of an Industrial Building on Gaylord Street.
- *Future meetings* – Administrator Cornell was optimistic that legislation would pass to allow virtual meetings to continue. The existing order was set to expire on March 31.

**Agenda Item #6 --- Other New Business**

Chair Tolopko recommended that the Commission consider initiatives to increase diversity at Conservation Areas at a future meeting.

Vice-Chair Doroski stated that MassDEP updated their Bordering Vegetated Wetland manual. A copy could be provided via e-mail.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** Vice-Chair Doroski moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Schwellenbach seconded the motion. Six (6) out of six (6) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

The meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

**Appendix**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
Orchards Golf Club – OOC Extension Request	Conservation Files
Draft Social Justice Trailhead statement	Conservation Files