

**SOUTH HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 1, 2022**

**Present:** Neva Tolopko, Chair; Bill DeLuca, Vice-Chair; Garth Schwellenbach, 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 6:00 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 #2 --- Public Hearing to consider a Notice of Intent filed by Val Shvetz to secure an Order of Conditions permitting the applicant to install an elevated walkway extending to a floating dock on a cove of the CT River at 80 River Road**

The applicant's representative, Mike Mocko, was present at the hearing. He explained that Holyoke Gas & Electric, the land owner, had given approval for dock installation and a botanist had been retained to do an ecological assessment per requirements of the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP).

Commissioner Doroski inquired about the status of the Chapter 91 License. Mike Mocko replied that the license could not be retained until after the Commission granted Orders of Conditions to the project.

Vice-Chair DeLuca asked what areas on site the botanist would survey. Mike Mocko replied that the botanist would specifically survey the area below the proposed walkway.

Vice-Chair DeLuca asked if spacing between the walkway slots would allow for adequate light penetration. Mike Mocko stated that best management practices considered the ratio between height and width of walkway as the best way to achieve light penetration.

Mike Mocko explained that a formal re-design of the walkway and dock had yet to be completed. The botanist also needed to complete their assessment following which NHESP would review and comment. As this would take a number of months, the Commission needed to continue the hearing to September.

**Motion:** Vice-Chair DeLuca moved to continue the hearing to September 7, 2022 at 6:00 PM. Commissioner Schwellenbach seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

**Agenda Item #3 --- Minutes**

No minutes were prepared for the Commission's review.

#### **Agenda Item #4 --- Range View Meadow Conservation Area Land Management Plan**

Vice-Chair DeLuca prepared a slide show (attached) to review management options for the Commission's newly acquired Conservation Area. The land was currently a meadow and was harvested for hay by local farmers.

The Commission could decide to manage the property in one of the following ways: 1) continue the existing agricultural use and allow the property to be harvest for hay; 2) alter the mowing schedule to increase the site's ecological value and allow the site to be harvest for decreased quality hay; or 3) discontinue the site's agricultural use as a hay field and maintain the site as a grassland with high ecological value with mowing once a year during the late summer/early fall.

Administrator Cornell was working to have a temporary sign installed on site and would coordinate an appropriate location with MassDOT as they owned the right-of-way. A work party would be held at a future date for general site work.

After the Commission decided on a director for management, Administrator Cornell would draft a management plan for the Commission's consideration

**Motion:** Vice-Chair DeLuca moved to select option #3 for management of the Range View Meadow Conservation Area as grassland for ecological value with mowing only once a year during the late summer/early fall. Commissioner Schwellenbach seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

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

Administrator Cornell detailed the following items:

- 311 River Road – The Commission could expect to consider issuing an Enforcement Order to the property for not complying with the conditions of a previously issued permit.
- 11 San Souci – The public hearing to consider development of a single family home was continued to June 15, 2022
- Summer Meeting Dates – The Commission decided to host one meeting during the months of July and August. Meetings would be held on July 20 and August 17.
- Ethan Circle – A request for a certificate of compliance was received to release a lot from Orders of Condition over the entire subdivision. The Board could anticipate reviewing the request at the next meeting.
- 13 Waite Ave and 513 Newton St – Letters were sent out to property owners regarding unpermitted clearing in Resource Areas.
- Buttery Brook Mural – Mount Holyoke College students partnered with the Town to create a mural display at Buttery Brook Park.
- Master Plan – The Commission would meet with the Master Plan Implementation Committee to discuss the Commission's actions items as identified in the Master Plan
- MVP Action Grant – A grant funded mural display in South Hadley Falls would be installed soon.

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

Commissioner Doroski inquired about the status of virtual meetings. Administrator Cornell stated that the current orders were set to expire on July 15. However, provisions to extend allowance for remote meetings were being considered by the State.

**Adjournment**

**Motion:** Vice-Chair DeLuca moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Schoendorf seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

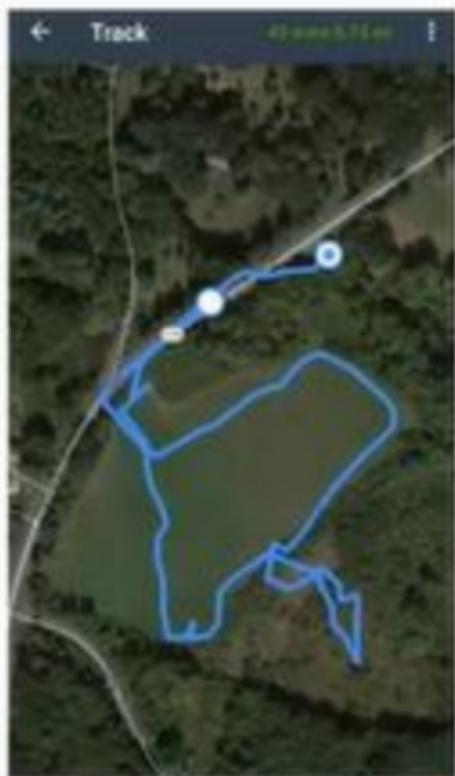
**As Approved**

Colleen Canning, Planning/Conservation Coordinator

**Appendix**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
Rangeview Meadow Maintenance slideshow	Attached

May 14, 2022 – 40 species



# Grassland Birds

720

MILLION

GRASSLAND BIRDS  
LOST SINCE 1970



-53%

POPULATION LOSS  
IN GRASSLAND  
BIRDS SINCE 1970



3 IN 4

EASTERN MEADOWLARKS  
LOST SINCE 1970



~10 acres of grasslands



### Management options

1. Continue mowing
2. Alter schedule
  - Postpone to July
  - 1 cut early, the one later
3. Just cut in Sept/Aug
  - Manage as grassland
  - Good for birds and turtles
  - Can always go back to
  - Kestral cost is \$900 for 20 acres



## Nest boxes



## Early successional habitat



- Maintain
- Volunteer based cutting of emergent trees

## Signs



Gate?



## Other town managed grasslands

