

**SOUTH HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 7, 2020**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D37s9TxoDX4Q7sF9s47F1F UEp2cFd v/view>

As Approved

Present: Bill DeLuca, Chair; Jim Canning, Vice-Chair; Bill Bacis, Member; Steph Clymer, Member; Garth Schwellenbach, Member; Tom Dennis, Member; Mary Zawatski, Associate Member; Anne Capra, Conservation Administrator/Planner; Colleen Canning, Senior Clerk Planning and Conservation Department

Chair DeLuca called the virtual meeting to order at 6:00PM and reviewed the protocols for virtual meetings. Five (5) out of seven (7) Commissioners and the one (1) Associate Commissioner were present at the virtual meeting. Vice-Chair Canning was having technical difficulties and would join the meeting after troubleshooting the issue. The Commission welcomed the new Associate Member to the Commission.

Agenda Item #1 --- Public Meeting for Request for Determination filed by CB Trust Realty, LLC for construction of a single-family residence which includes an indoor pool and “multi-use” room at 40 Woodbridge Street (Map 52, Parcel 263)

The applicant’s consultant, Jeff Squire of Berkshire Design, was present at the public meeting.

Chair DeLuca called the public meeting to order at 6:09 PM.

Jeff Squire described the proposed project. His client subdivided their lot which had an existing single family home. A new single family home was proposed to be built on the newly formed lot. The new lot had two small isolated wetlands that would be within proximity of the building envelope of the newly proposed home. Clearing was proposed within the Buffer Zone as trees and other vegetation could create a hazard for the new construction. Limited earth work would be performed in the outer Buffer Zone to construct the building foundation and driveway. New plantings were proposed as mitigation for the work. Trees, understory shrubs, and a conservation seed mix would be used to restore the area. The plantings were anticipated to improve the condition of the Buffer Zone.

Vice-Chair Canning joined the meeting at 6:14 PM.

The Conservation Administrator performed a site visit with the project consultant the previous day. She explained that the applicant’s concern for the condition of the existing trees was understandable as several large diameter trees were snapped off approximately 15-20’ up.

Commissioner Schwellenbach inquired what the Commission’s jurisdiction was. The Conservation Administrator explained that isolated wetlands were given a 100 foot Buffer Zone with a 50 foot Conservation Zone under the South Hadley Wetlands Bylaw, and are not regulated under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act

Vice-Chair Canning asked about the grade of the slope at the location proposed for tree removal. Jeff Squire explained that the grade was gentle. No tree stumps were proposed for removal to limit soil disturbance.

Vice-Chair Canning expressed concern for the alterations to the wetlands if the proposed trees were removed, and requested to see the site to get a better understanding of existing conditions. Jeff Squire responded that the trees were proposed for removal because of the liability it created for the new construction. Chair DeLuca added that the restoration plantings would improve the condition of the Buffer Zone. Commissioner Bacis recommended having a site visit to allow interested members of the Commission to see the site. The Conservation Administrator said she would schedule a site visit for the Commission.

Motion: Vice-Chair Canning moved to continue the Public Meeting to October 28, 2020 at 6:00 PM. Commissioner Dennis seconded the motion. Six (6) out of six (6) Commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Agenda Item #2 --- Discuss and Consider Request for Amendment to Determination of Applicability for 21 North Sycamore Knolls for sewer line repairs and relocation (Map 53, Parcel 39)

The applicant's consultant, Dan Luis of Luis Builders, was present at the meeting.

Dan Luis described the amendment before the Commission. The Commission had previously acted on a request to construct an addition at the existing single-family home.. During site work to lay the foundation, a sewer line was uncovered. The line needed to be relocated and tied into the municipal sewer main along a new alignment. Based on the site assessment by the Department of Public Works, the placement of the new sewer line should require trenching through the property and tying into the sewer main accessible via a man hole on the abutting property.

Chair DeLuca asked what equipment would be used to create the new trench. Dan Luis explained that a mini excavator would be used to create a trench four feet deep and two feet wide.

Commissioner Dennis asked about the location of the manhole. Dan Luis explained the man hole was on a neighboring property and was accessible through utility easements.

Associate Member Zawatski asked if a Notice of Intent (NOI) was required. The Conservation Administrator stated that work within a resource area requires a Notice of Intent. Chair DeLuca commented that the scope of the work did appear to warrant a NOI. Conditioning could be issued along with the amendment which required best management practices to be maintained and allowed the Conservation Administrator to perform periodic site visits.

Selene and Carl Weber, 17 North Sycamore Knolls, addressed the Commission. They live at the abutting property where the sewer manhole was located. They inquired about what clearing would take place on their property. Dan Luis responded that, as the location was a utility right-of-way, it was required to be cleared for access. He explained that he would use the clearest route as he wanted to minimize clearing and removal. The Conservation Administrator advised

that the legal framework of utility easements was not within the Commission's purview and that DPW should be consulted

Motion: Commissioner Schewellenbach moved to amend the previously issued Determination of Applicability to allow for sewer lines repair and relocation at 21 North Sycamore Knolls with conditions to include allowance for site visits by the Conservation Administrator. Commissioner Bacis seconded the motion. Five (5) out of Six (6) Commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call. Commissioner Dennis abstained from the vote.

Agenda Item #3 --- 440 Amherst Road Conservation Restriction Signatures

The Conservation Administrator explained that the Conservation Restriction associated with the property at 440 Amherst Road was drafted by the property owner's lawyer and received approval from the state. To secure the restriction, the document needed to be signed by the Conservation Commission. The Commission could authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the Commission and authorize the Conservation Administrator to sign on the Chair's behalf.

Motion: Commissioner Bacis moved to authorize the chair to sign the Conservation Restriction for 2.6 acres at 440 Amherst Road on behalf of the Commission *and* to allow the Conservation Administrator to sign on behalf of the Chair. Commissioner Clymer seconded the motion. Six (6) out of six (6) Commissioners voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Agenda Item #4 --- Land Management Plan Activities

The Conservation Administrator explained that there were a number of upgrades the Commission could consider to fund on Conservation Land. As was discussed at a number of meetings, the Conservation Administrator would authorize a contractor to install boulders at the trailhead to curb the use of motorized vehicles at Bynan Conservation Area. The Commission could consider installing trail kiosks to reinforce the area's intended use. Pedestrian bridges at Black-Stevens and Bagg-Pierce Conservation Areas needed to be replaced. Installation of a trailhead kiosk and vegetation management at Black-Stevens Conservation Area was also advised. The Tree Committee was working with local private companies to help fund supplies and labor to install kiosks at the Hahn-Warner Arboretum. The Conservation Administrator stated that she would develop RFPs for the improvements suggested and seek price quotes for the Commission to consider. Work would likely occur in the Spring 2021.

Chair DeLuca left the meeting at 7:34 PM.

Agenda Item #5 --- Minutes

Draft minutes of the September 16, 2020 Conservation Commission were previously transmitted to the Commission for review.

Motion: Commissioner Bacis moved to approve the draft minutes of the September 16, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Canning seconded the motion. Five (5) out of five (5) commissioners present voted in favor of the motion through roll call.

Agenda Item #6 --- Administrators Report

MVP Grant

The Conservation Administrator explained that the Town was awarded funding through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant Program. The grant would provide funding to assess culverts town-wide, update the stormwater management bylaw, and fund a tree planting campaign. The Conservation Administrator was working on developing materials for the tree planting program which was anticipated to be launched soon.

Chair DeLuca joined the meeting at 7:44 PM

315 Amherst Road

The Conservation Administrator explained that she was working on drafting the final application to receive funding from the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game's In-Lieu Fee Grant program to acquire the property at 315 Amherst Road. The application would be submitted before the Commission's next meeting.

Zoom Meeting Platform

The Conservation Administrator explained that the Town purchased licenses to allow for Zoom meetings and webinars. The next Conservation Commission Meeting was anticipated to be held on the Zoom platform. The Conservation Administrator would organize a test Zoom meeting prior to the next Conservation Commission Meeting.

Meeting Dates

The Commission reviewed the meeting dates as follows:

October 28, 2020
November 18, 2020
December 9, 2020
January 6, 2021

Agenda Item #7 --- Other New Business

Commissioner Dennis noted that an article in the Daily Hampshire Gazette chronicled the acquisition of hundreds of acres of land for conservation along the Mount Holyoke Range. Kestrel Land Trust secured the restriction and the Town was a co-holder of the restriction.

Chair DeLuca stated that he drafted a letter regarding environmental justice and asked the Commissioners to review the draft so it could be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Chair DeLuca adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
As Approved
Colleen Canning, Senior Clerk, Planning and Conservation

Appendix

Document	Document Location
40 Woodbridge Street RDA for construction of new single family home	Conservation Files
21 North Sycamore Knolls proposed sewer connection map	Conservation Files