

Lincoln Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes - November 18, 2020

Start - 7:00 p.m.

End – 8:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Susan Hall Mygatt, Richard Selden, Jim Henderson, Ari Kurtz, Christine Dugan, Kathleen Shepard, Larry Buell

Staff Present: Stacy Carter, Tom Gumbart, Jennifer Curtin

Attendees: Holly Palmgren, Michelle Barnes, Joe Kolchinsky, Laura Regrut

WETLANDS

7:15 p.m. – Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation: Savage/Diamond Capital. 58 Trapelo Road (140-30-0) – This project is for the confirmation of wetland resource areas delineated on the property.

Continued from October 28, 2020.

The applicant has requested a continuance to the next meeting date.

The Commission moved to continue this hearing to December 9, 2020 at 7:15 p.m.

The Motion was seconded.

Susan Hall Mygatt – Aye; Richard Selden – Aye; Jim Henderson - Aye; Ari Kurtz - Aye; Christine Dugan – Aye; Kathleen Shepard – Aye; Larry Buell - Aye

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Operating budget is being worked on by conservation staff. It will be completed on November 19, 2020 and submitted to Town administration.

Ms. Carter gave an update on COVID expenses. Eight sandwich board sign holders were purchased by Conservation to allow for additional signage about COVID on the trails. That was paid out of the Town's COVID expense account.

Jim Meadors was concerned about clearing at 79 Lincoln Road. Mr. Gumbart will meet with the homeowner November 19, 2020.

The Commissioners were asked approve two conservation restrictions (CRs), one for the Kaplans and one for the Grubers.

A. Paul and Anne Kaplan purchased the lot at 17 and 19 South Great Road subject to a CR on a portion of the property. The purchase was at full market value, and the Commission permitted the Kaplans, through a Determination of Applicability, to tear down the house on the property and let the site return to natural land. This will be an amended CR because the LLCT already holds a CR on part of the property. The amended CR will bring the entire parcel into permanent protection. The public access on the lot will be maintained and relocated to allow for more of a buffer between the Kaplan's home and the trail.

B. The Gruber CR is to protect a lot from future development that is being created through an Approval Not Required (ANR) plan at 160 Old County Road. Mr. Buell asked why the CR allows for use for commercial recreation on the land. Mr. Gumbart said that that could potentially be horseback riding or cross-country skiing.

Motorized vehicles will be prohibited. He added that most of the language is boiler plate and is present in most CRs.

Ms. Mygatt said that since a number of Commissioners have not had a chance to review the CRs that she would not be comfortable approving it without reviewing it. Both of the Conservation Restrictions (CR) will go to the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust (LLCT). Mr. Gumbart will write a memo to the Selectmen expressing the Commission's general support that they be adopted. Mr. Gumbart said that Selectmen look to the Commission for their approval but that the Commission will not be signing the CRs so it will not be a formal vote. Mr. Buell said that, since they have been vetted through the State and the LLCT, these CRs being approved could only be a net gain for Conservation. Mr. Selden said that assuming the CRs will not have major changes from the State that the Selectmen can use their judgment in approving them.

A number of Commissioners will conduct a site visit at the Orgel property at 237 Old Concord Road on Friday November 20, 2020 and will bring their findings to the next meeting on December 9, 2020.

Ms. Carter gave an update on field activity. The mowing season is being finished. The perimeter walls of the Codman fields have been mowed for the first time in years because the drought has firmed up the soil in the area adjacent to the stone walls. There was an area about 15-feet from the stone walls that was full of invasive plants and downed wood. Ms. Carter said that now that this large project has been done, clearing the perimeter of the Codman fields can be a part of the mowing schedule in future years.

Ms. Regrut introduced herself and described her background and her interest in joining the Commission.

SLIPAC Liaison

Ms. Shephard has volunteered to fill in as Conservation Commission liaison to SLIPAC. The Committee is looking into the challenges of development in South Lincoln and how septic improvements could be done.

Sub-Committee & Liaison Reports

The Community Preservation Act Committee is meeting. Ms. Mygatt will be attending those meetings as liaison.

The Capital Budget request will be presented to the Capital Planning Committee at its December 8, 2020 meeting. The budget request was put together by Mr. Henderson, Ms. Carter and Emma Coates. This request is for a variety of equipment including electric power tools, another gas chainsaw, and a new canoe for water chestnut pulling work.

The American Chestnut Commission Foundation is looking to license the land above Flint's field on what was previously licensed to Turtle Creek Winery. Last meeting the Commission discussed concerns about permitting GMO trees to be planted on Town land and wanted to look at more data before coming to a decision. On November 9, 2020 Mr. Kurtz sent out an email to Mr. Miel, the head of the American Chestnut Foundation, but has not heard back. Mr. Kurtz will try reaching out again to gather more information to bring back to the Commission. Mr. Selden said that GMO trees are very controversial, and he has read that the American chestnut is at the heart of the controversy. He added that a number of conservationists believe that the use of GMO trees can cause unintended consequences and suggested that the Commission should take a look at the data closely before deciding. Mr. Kurtz reached out to another farmer who has planted some chestnut trees in Petersham, and she told him that the GMO version of this tree has not yet been released by the EPA for approved planting.

There has been a request from the Library to work on replacement for the twisted Catalpa tree in front of the building, as the tree is nearing the end of its life. A number of sprouts were taken to the Arnold Arboretum. They are ready to be planted, and Ms. Carter, Mr. Kurtz and Mr. Henderson met and developed a number of

possibilities for a location to plant 10 sprouts on Conservation Land. The group decided that the Umbrello Farm land would be the best site, with the plantings to be located near the well. The Garden Club volunteers would be watering the young trees, so that location is very good because of the proximity to the water source and the ease of use of the well. The project would run for 10 years to see if a twist naturally developed. Mr. Carter reported that the Arboretum does not believe that this is a genetic twist and that it was the product environment factors. They will take 5 trees and Jonathan Bransfield, who cares for the tree at the library, will take some saplings and try to force a twist with bonsai techniques.

The Agricultural Subcommittee will conduct annual farm visits with the farmers who license land from the Town later in December.

The search for Mr. Gumbart's replacement is underway. The first of two rounds of interviews will take place between November 23, 2020 and December 4, 2020.

ACTION ITEMS

- Issue Certificate of Compliance for MBTA

An updated as built plan was provided that showed a signal house had been partially constructed on Town land. Part of the license agreement seeks to address this issue going forward and to allow the building to stay in that location. The original Notice of Intent for the additional work that was done was filed in 2011. This was required after the applicant was issued a Positive Determination of Applicability. The majority of the work that was done took place along the tracks.

The Commission moved issue the Certificate of Compliance for the MBTA.
The Motion was seconded.

Susan Hall Mygatt – Aye; Richard Selden – Aye; Jim Henderson - Aye; Ari Kurtz - Aye; Christine Dugan – Aye; Kathleen Shepard – Aye; Larry Buell - Aye

- Issue Certificate of Compliance for 82 Conant Road - Stephen Edsall

Ms. Carter and Mr. Gumbart conducted a site visit on November 18, 2020 and were satisfied with the work that was done.

The Commission moved issue the Certificate of Compliance for the 82 Conant Road.
The Motion was seconded.

Susan Hall Mygatt – Aye; Richard Selden – Aye; Jim Henderson - Aye; Ari Kurtz - Aye; Christine Dugan – Aye; Kathleen Shepard – Aye; Larry Buell - Aye

- The CR for the Gruber property was reviewed and supported by the Commission
- The CR for the Kaplan property was reviewed and supported by the Commission

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Curtin
Conservation Assistant