

Lincoln Conservation Commission (LCC) - Public Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2023

Approved: April 12, 2023

Members Present: Ari Kurtz (Chair), Becca Fasciano, Richard Selden (arrived at 7:19 p.m.), and Kathleen Shepard

Members Absent: Susan Hall Mygatt and Laura Regrut

Conservation Staff: Michele Grzenda, Conservation Director and Stacy Carter, Conservation Planner

This meeting was held virtually, pursuant to Senate Bill #2985, Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law

7:15 p.m. 150 Lincoln Road Enforcement Order; R. Kirby and T. Teabo – Proposed Restoration Plan

On 1/11/23 the LCC discussed a 1986 Enforcement order at 150 Lincoln Road with which the owner had never properly complied. At the January 11th meeting, the Commission agreed that if staff recommended that the current owner hire a wetland scientist and provide the Commission with a restoration plan, that the Commission will ratify staff's recommendation. Staff performed a site visit with the current owner, Tim Teabo, on January 1/20/23. At the site visit, staff observed a steep and unstable slope that exists along the wetland edge – it was apparent that recent landscaping waste has been deposited along the embankment within 10-feet of the wetland edge. Staff recommended that Mr. Teabo hire a wetland scientist to develop a restoration plan to achieve a 3:1 slope and prepared a memo summarizing the staff's recommendations. After the meeting, Mr. Teabo hired LEC Environmental Consultants (LEC) who prepared a proposed restoration plan. Rich Kirby from LEC gave an overview of the plan for the Commission, and it was the Commission's opinion that the plan will satisfy the requirements of the EO and bring the property back into compliance. Staff will send Mr. Teabo and Mr. Kirby a memo confirming that they shall proceed with the restoration plan and sequence as written with the following conditions: (1) Mr. Teabo shall give staff permission to access the site during restoration activities, (2) Erosion controls shall be installed as shown on the plan prior to work; and (3) A pre-restoration site visit shall be scheduled with staff, the equipment operator, and a wetlands scientist. At the site visit, staff will inspect the erosion controls and the owner shall review the timeline and sequence for work along with the critical times when a wetland scientist shall be present.

7:32 p.m. Land Protection 101; G. McGean, Executive Director of LLCT

Geoff McGean of the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust and Rural Land Foundation gave a presentation about the history of land protection in Lincoln.

8:00 p.m. Lincoln Climate Action Plan; J. Curtin, Assistant Director of Planning & Land Use.

Jennifer Curtin gave a brief overview of Climate Action Plan planning process and asked for the Commission's thoughts about various climate impacts (i.e. severe storm events; flooding, and droughts). It was mentioned that climate change has had an impact on Lincoln's farmers as well as exacerbating the spread of invasive plants. Ms. Shepard expressed concern about the amount of plastic waste and hopes waste reduction can be a goal of the plan. Dr. Selden believes that the town should commit to significant solar projects. Ms. Curtin will send the slide deck and additional links to surveys and upcoming workshops and encouraged the Commission to provide any feedback they have.

8:24 p.m. – Discussion Items

- Approve Meeting Minutes from February 22, 2023 - Mr. Kurtz made one modification. Motion by Ms. Shepard to approve the minutes as amended; seconded by Ms. Fasciano; roll call vote: each member responded Aye.

- Discussion – Revocable trail license at 208 Old Concord Road – Motion by Dr. Selden to sign the revocable trail license as presented; seconded by Ms. Shepard; roll call vote: each member responded Aye.
- Water Commission Speaker Series – Request for Sponsorship
The Water Commission is planning a sequence of three speakers who can speak to local hydrology and private well impacts. The three speakers are: Dr. Max Rome, hydrologist at the Charles River Watershed Association; Dr. Martin Briggs, a hydrologist with the USGS; and Dr. Chi Ho Sham, a hydrologist who has done research on conservation issues and who is a past president of the American Water Works Association. The Water Commission hopes that this speaker series will help educate residents about the hydrological principles of Lincoln’s watersheds. These events would be held in April, September and early December. The Water Commission asked if the Conservation Commission would be willing to co-sponsor the series. The Commission expressed their support for the speaker series.
- Farm Relicensing
The Conservation Commission licenses Lincoln conservation land to farmers. Farmers receive a 5-year license that must be renewed at the end of the cycle. The current cycle ended in 2022 and therefore the Commission and staff have been reviewing the license renewal applications. All thirteen of the LCC’s current farms have applied to relicense their fields. Farmers submitted a farm plan, field maps, insurance documentation, and soil tests. The Commission reviewed the major changes proposed by farmers. Motion by Dr. Selden to electronically sign the farm licenses, contingent upon Ms. Mygatt’s final review of the licenses and final receipt of outstanding materials from certain farms; seconded by Ms. Fasciano; roll call vote: each member responded Aye.
- Eversource Request to Cut Trees – Eversource proposes cutting or pruning approximately 200 trees within wetland buffer zones and/or wetland resource areas along Lincoln’s roadsides in order to help maintain power lines (Eversource will be pruning or cutting many more trees that are outside of the LCC’s jurisdiction). Eversource’s proposed maintenance is exempt from the Wetlands Protection Act, but not from Lincoln Wetlands Protection Bylaw. Eversource has marked trees in the field that are dead or dying, or trees that may present a future problem to the lines. A detailed spreadsheet was provided to the Conservation Department which identified the location and size of the tree, the reasoning for proposed removal; and whether the tree was on private land or within the public Right-of-Way. Eversource has received property owner permission for all the privately owned trees and therefore would like to move forward with obtaining approval by the Commission for said removals. This grouping amounts to approximately 150 trees.

Conservation staff conducted a site visit with Eversource arborist Matthew Mitchell on 3-8-23 to review approximately 13 trees that Eversource is proposing for pruning/removal on Weston Road, Silver Hill Road and Codman Road. Staff feel that the removal or pruning of all of these trees is appropriate because they are all in poor states of health and present a hazard to the power lines and road.

Discussion ensued. The Commission asked if there is any kind of mitigation and remediation Eversource provides for towns where they cut trees. Staff will inquire with Eversource. Motion by Mr. Kurtz to authorize staff to administratively approve these tree removals contingent upon staff reviewing the trees and confirming that said trees appear to be a safety threat to the power lines; seconded by Ms. Shepard; roll call vote: each member responded Aye.

- Land Acknowledgement - Ms. Fasciano has been working on a draft land acknowledgement, which the Commission could state at the beginning of its meetings. She shared the following draft with the

Commission to review: “ The LCC acknowledges and is grateful for the stewards of the lands we now are responsible for who came before us, including the Agawam, Massa-adchu-es-et (Massachusetts), and Pawtucket. We acknowledge that these lands were stolen from these original inhabitants. We hope to channel their wisdom and reverence for the land. We also hope to do our part to take care of the land in thoughtful and responsible ways so that our grandchildren and their grandchildren and all living beings can continue to benefit from and take care of this invaluable resource.” Discussion ensued. Mr. Kurtz and Ms. Fasciano will revise the draft and send it to Conservation staff to distribute before the next LCC meeting.

- Route 126 Bridge Trail Connection to Old Concord Road – The LCC co-chairs and some board members at LLCT are interested in the LCC submitting a comment letter to the Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding the proposed reconstruction of the Route 126 Bridge (currently DOT is at the 25% design phase). Specifically, there is a path at the end of Old Concord Road that provides an important local access from the Route 126 bridge to Old Concord Road and nearby conservation land. It is likely that DOT is not aware of this path, and it was suggested that the letter should acknowledge this path with the hopes that it will still be accessible after construction. It will also be requested that DOT try to make improvements to the path if possible. The Commission was amenable to staff drafting a letter to DOT.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.