

Montague Conservation Commission

One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376

(413) 863-3200 Ext. 207

Fax: (413) 863-3222

Email: planner@montague-ma.gov

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday February 11, 2021- 6:30pm

Meeting held remotely via ZOOM due to COVID-19

Commissioners Present: M. Fairbrother (Chair), S. Werle, D. Francis, J. Fermann, D. Henson, L. Reid, Anthony Reiber, Tobias Carter (associate)

Staff: Walter Ramsey, Agent.

6:30pm ZOOM meeting opened by Mark Fairbrother, Chair. Chair welcomed Tony Reiber as a full voting member and Tobias Carter as a non-voting associate member. Both were recently appointed by the Selectboard and sworn in by the Town Clerk.

Minutes of January 14 were not approved. To be approved in February

6:31pm: PUBLIC MEETING: AMENDED RDA 2021-01 Request for Determination of Applicability filed by Charles E. Bell to determine whether a planned single family house is subject to the Wetlands or Riverfront Protection Acts. The property is located off Meadow Road and is identified as Assessor's Map 50 Lot 2.

Present: Charles Bell

Agent reports that Charles Bell has submitted an amended site as discussed at last month's meeting, which shows that all of the work is clearly outside of the Riverfront Area (RA). The plan specifically requires the limits of work to be staked during construction and that the Conservation Commission will be notified to inspect the work limit prior to work. The plan as it is presented does not impact the resource area.

Charles Bell reports that the plan now reflects the actual proposed location of the house relative to the boundaries of the parcel. The house has been set-back 40 feet further to the north and 30 feet to the east.

TR asks about proximity to Flood Zones on the parcel. Charles Bell reports that the house is approximately 50-75 feet from the outer limits of the flood zone and this is reflected in the plan.

DH asks if there is an issue that Bell is building on the reserved septic area; if a repair or expansion is needed in the future new pits would need to be dug. This is not a problem for the applicant or the Board of Health.

DH asks about whether the Commission can require the Riverfront Area to be monumented. The Agent does not believe that the Commission has the leverage to require that condition through a negative determination. The commission can request it, but not necessarily require it (because no work is proposed in the RA and thus an OOC is not contemplated). The Commission was satisfied with the fact that there is at least a paper trail to establish the limits if the RA on the property.

Agent recommends a negative determination stating that the work is not within in an area subject to protection under the Act. Therefore said work does not require the filing of a Notice of Intent unless said work alters the Area subject to protection under the Act.

MOTION is made by D. Hanson to issue a Negative Determination for #RDA 2021-01 filed by Charles Bell Seconded by J. Fermann VOTE Fairbrother (AYE), Henson (AYE), Francis (AYE), Fermann (AYE), Werle (AYE), Reiber (AYE), Reid (AYE) MOTION PASSES Unanimously 6:47pm.

6:40pm: Conservation Agent Report

- **Tree removal plans at Lake Pleasant Bridge of Names**
About 4 months ago a tree fell onto the footbridge bridge between the two sections of Lake Pleasant, making it unusable. An arborist recommended removing large trees of a similar age which threaten the bridge they are trying to replace. Turners Falls Water Department (owners) will submit a Request for Determination to the Commission to remove trees for the safety of the infrastructure. They would like to do this work as well as logging a large area downstream known as the ‘Dingle’, which has multiple resource areas. The Water Department will be required to get a forest cutting permit from the State (DCR) for that aspect of the project. The Montague Conservation Commission owns a small area between this area and some residences. Agent met with officials from the Water Department and their forester last week to learn about their plans. This was provided for the Boards information. No action was taken.
- **South Ferry Road culvert engineering updates**
The Town is engineering a culvert replacement near the Sawmill River in Montague Center. The Agent shows a map. 24” concrete pipe- undersized for a stream that is 3 feet wide in parts; area drains a ¾ area and is a priority habitat. The Town is forming a scope of work and initial budget for a new State grant for culvert replacements through the Division of Ecological Resources for the design and bid- ready plans. Engineers are proposing a 5 x 5 foot box culvert will cost about \$145,000 project constructed. \$16,000 engineering costs to apply. No funds have expended to the Sawmill River Restoration fund yet. The intent is that the grant would cover all pre-development costs.
- **Newton Street Millers River Access trail expansion**
The Millers Falls Village Improvement Association wants to expand the trail put in by the Town last year. This trail expansion on the other side of Newton Street potentially has some wetlands. The group will pull-together an RDA filing for impacts to resource area as well as permission from the Town. MFCIA is getting technical assistance from the Planning Department and would like to include native plant education.
- **NOT ANTICIPATED/ CORRESPONDANCE:** Agent received a notification from Eversource that they are upgrading their substation at the end of Depot Street behind the Farren. It is in some resource areas/ river/ bank areas, however they meet the utility exemption. The Utilities Company is currently mobilizing on the corridor to update the power lines across the plains to Leveret. They will be implementing their erosion control over next few weeks. The Agent will inspect.

MOTION TO ADJOURN by D. Francis. Seconded by J. Fermann. VOTE: Fairbrother (AYE), Francis (AYE), Werle (AYE), Fermann (AYE), Reiber (AYE), Reid (AYE), Henson (AYE). MOTION PASSES 7:25pm.

Approved by: _____

Date: _____