

Montague Conservation Commission

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MEETING MINUTES

Thursday June 10, 2021- 6:30pm

Commissioners Present: Anthony Reiber, Mark Fairbrother, Sean Werle, D. Francis
Laurie Reid, Toby Carter (associate)

Commissioners absent: Deb Hensen, Justin Fermann

Staff: Walter Ramsey

6:37pm: Donna Francis, acting chair opened the Meeting until Fairbrother joined (6:40).

6:38pm: Review of final draft Agricultural Preservation Restriction for 35 acres off Greenfield and Ferry Road owned by Karl W. Garbiel. Closing updates.

Agent describes the location of the property. The prime farmland property has a long tobacco barn and will be preserved as agricultural use through this purchase. The State is covering the majority of the expense. The Town of Montague will provide a match. The local contribution is \$57,500. While the Town will be a co-holder the land will be monitored by the State. The Agent requests a MOTION by the Conservation Commission to recommend that the Select Board sign the APR document.

MOTION by S. Werle that the Commission makes a recommend that the Select Board endorse the APR.

Seconded by D. Francis VOTE: A. Reiber (AYE), M. Fairbrother (AYE), S. Werle (AYE), D. Francis, L. Reid (AYE), T. Carter (AYE). MOTION PASSES 6:45pm

Regional Pollinator Plan- overview of proposed pollinator-friendly zoning bylaw amendments

The 35 acres going into protection is recognized pollinator habitat. FRCOG is working on a regional pollinator plan and has made several policy and project suggestions for linkage areas in Montague. Pollinator habitats are near open sources of water; near the Sawmill River and Unity Park, for example. FRCOG is developing plans with with Montague Parks and Rec and the Cemetery Commission to enhance pollinator habitat on their properties. Additionally, FRCOG has recommended changes to the zoning bylaws which would regulate/require the addition of pollinator habitat to development projects. The Conservation Agent described an example for large scale solar array projects which would be required to have native pollinators be planted and maintained without herbicides instead of grass. The development of small subdivisions could also require pollinator habitat, with 5 acres of open space potentially allowing for greater density of housing. Language changes to site plan reviews were also suggested by FRCOG.

D. Francis asks what plants qualify as pollinator friendly. Agent responds that FRCOG has provided a plant list, in conjunction with UMASS clean energy extension.

MOTION by A. Reiber for the Conservation Commission to make a statement of support for pollinator- friendly bylaw changes. Seconded by D. Francis. VOTE: A. Reiber (AYE), M. Fairbrother (AYE), S. Werle (AYE), D. Francis, L. Reid (AYE), T. Carter (AYE). MOTION PASSES 6:52 pm

Progress updates on permitted projects

The Eversource 354 line project is in closeout stages.. The Fairmont line project is well underway and will continue to be monitored. Chestnut Loop project has been bid and will begin work in July. They are getting ready for the stream diversion and demolition of the bridge as the first stage of work. Agent to review erosion control before work begins

A. Reiber asks about the culvert project on Ferry Road. The Agent responds that the Town has submitted an application to MA Dept of Ecological Resources for an engineering and permitting grant. The application is pending.

The July meeting is expected to be in-person. A quorum must be present with a ZOOM option for the public, unless state law or local policy changes.

MOTION by S. Werle to ADJURN the meeting. Seconded by D. Francis VOTE: J. Fermann (AYE), S. Werle (AYE), A. Reiber (AYE), T. Carter (AYE), L. Reid (AYE) M. Fairbrother (AYE). MOTION PASSES 7:05pm