

Topsfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of Wednesday, December 12, 2012
 Topsfield Library Meeting Room

Present: Commissioners Mark Erickson (Chair), Jennie Merrill (Vice-Chair), Holger Luther, Jim MacDougall, Cheryl Jolley, Jim Carroll, and Rick Muka; Administrator Lana Spillman; Minutes Secretary Debbie Rogers; Selectman Liaison Dick Gandt.

Absent: None

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM with a quorum present.

PROPOSED CONSERVATION RESTRICTION AMENDMENT

Nutter Farm, Ipswich Road, Proposed Amendment to Conservation Restriction, Essex County Greenbelt

Present: David Santomena of Essex County Greenbelt Assoc.

MacDougall recused himself from the presentation and left the room. Santomena presented a proposed amendment to an existing Conservation Restriction on property owned by the Nutter family. Several maps of the Nutter Farm area were brought to the meeting and copies were given to the TCC. Included was a map from Plan Book 435, Plan 56, prepared by Donohoe and Parkhurst, Inc., dated May 17, 2012 and revised October 25, 2012; and a map of Exhibit A identifying Restricted Area A on Lot 5, and a map of Exhibit B identifying restricted Area B on Lot 5, both dated December 3, 2012. The proposal includes the addition of two small areas of land to the restricted area, in total approximately 40,000 square feet; and to modify language relative to the storage of farm equipment. The original division of parcels did not maximize the use of the property for a farm lot. The restriction includes agricultural and related use. Approval is needed by the state and the local municipality. The TCC supports the proposed amendment and a recommendation from the TCC will be directed to the Selectmen.

Luther made a motion for the TCC to recommend to the BoS that they approve the amended Conservation Restriction as it applies to the Nutter land. The motion was seconded by Jolley and passed unanimously.

HEARING:

RD#2012-11: 488 Boston Street, (Map 08, Lot 001), Iovanella

Present: Jim MacDowell

A Public Hearing was scheduled for RDA#2012-11: 488 Boston Street, to consider the proposed project of a well installation for a SFH in Buffer Zone of BVW. It was learned at the meeting that Ivonella did not notify abutters and MacDowell requested a delay of the hearing. The hearing was not opened and will be held on the next meeting on January 9, 2013.

REQUESTS:

CoC #307-0689: 64 Central Street, (Map 41, Lot 115), Low

This request is for a recently sold home at 64 Central Street that needed a septic system replacement. Spillman visited the site on December 11, 2012 and found the septic system and Conservation posts installed appropriately. The new owner has been working toward compliance and agreed to clean the property of yard waste and tires in the BVW.

Luther made a motion to issue a CoC for 64 Central Street with the usual Continuing Conditions, and the added condition of the tires and debris in the wetlands and Riverfront Area being removed. Merrill seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Amended Enforcement Order 9/15/08, 270 Boston Street, (Map 41, Lot 087) – review of most recent request from Albrights

MacDougall recused himself from the discussion and left the room. There was discussion on the need for clarification of the expected survival rate of the proposed plantings if an Amended Order is issued. The Albrights sent a letter stating they plan to plant five trees this weekend. The original Order includes a total of 105 upland plants, including 30 trees. A new proposal discussed is a plan for minimal restoration of the area. This would include planting 10 trees with a 75% survival rate in addition to a written report, site visits, Conservation posts, and a surveyed as-built plan. Of the thirty trees initially planted, only seven survived (although some of those were not healthy) as of June 2012 and it was a dry summer. None of the shrubs survived. The original EO agreed to by the Albrights requires 75% of the 105 plantings surviving. The forest canopy and understory layers are gone. The lost layers of plantings that did not survive affect the functions and values of the wetlands and associated buffer zone. The TCC needs clarification of the Albrights' proposed 25% survival rate. Six to eight sizable trees such as white or red pines, planted in specific areas would encourage replenishing of the area naturally. The TCC would need to check back in a year to make sure the new trees survive and are healthy. Merrill will help compose a letter about tree plantings and survival rate. Included will be a requirement for a written report, a one year site visit, and an as-built plan with the six Conservation posts identified. The proposed tree plantings scheduled for the coming weekend were acceptable, with the suggestion that they be planted in the locus of the plan so that they would count toward the restoration. Spillman will circulate the letter to the TCC for input prior to sending it to the Albrights.

OTHER:

OoC 307-0583: Off Coppermine Road/Ferncroft Country Club Pond Restoration, (Map 80, Lots 1 & 3) – update

The restoration plantings on the hill were installed last week. Also, efforts have been made to slow down the amount of water going into the Intermittent Stream and to establish a vegetated swale. A report on plant survival is to be submitted in a few months.

DoA 2011-05: High Street/South Route 1 Slope Stabilization, MA DoT – update

Spillman received an email notifying her of plans to loam and seed the area this Thursday, including the placement of jute mats. U-shaped pins will secure the jute mats and protect the area for the winter.

Approval of Conservation Commission 2013 Meeting/Deadline Dates

Luther made a motion to remove the meeting dates of August 14th and August 28th in 2013 from the proposed schedule, and to schedule a meeting on August 21, 2013; and to approve the TCC 2013 Meeting/Deadline Dates, including the revised meeting dates of July 17th and August 21st, and approve the remaining scheduled meeting dates as listed. Merrill seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

MEETING MINUTES:

Luther made a motion to accept the minutes from **November 28, 2012** as amended. Merrill seconded and the motion passed by a majority vote; MacDougall and Carroll abstained from voting.

MEETING CANCELLATION:

Luther made a motion to cancel the next scheduled meeting on December 26, 2012. MacDougall seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

The TCC office has been busy with site visits.

Meredith Farm – on Cross Street

The farm is doing very well and the Resource Areas have been greatly restored. One hundred Sugar Maple Trees were transplanted along the perimeter of the property. They plan to harvest the syrup in a few years. Future considerations include raising grass fed cattle and building a cattle feeding shed in an area near Intermittent Streams and BVW. The owners were advised to talk to a wetland scientist who is familiar with farm plans and to contact Dan Lenthall of the NRCS.

Permitting Software

There will be an all-day training session on Tuesday. The company has requested input from each department regarding the applications they would like to achieve from the software.

Conflict of Interest Training Online

The new Conflict of Interest training program for local government and municipality employees is now available online. Merrill has completed the training and explained how there are now videos included with the training. Overall, the program takes about an hour to complete and a certificate is printed upon completion. This certificate is submitted to the Town Clerk. The training program is new and is still being worked on, so it was recommended to wait until after December 17 to complete the training.

Wenham-Sleepy Hollow Road

The leaves and brush on Town Conservation land were cleaned up. The Highway Department posted the no dumping sign provided by TCC at the site.

Questionnaire Ideas

There was discussion on feedback questionnaire ideas to gather input from those who interact with the TCC, including those seeking permits. These suggestions could help improve the permit process.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Luther at 8:48 PM to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Jolley and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Rogers
Minutes Secretary

Accepted at the TCC meeting on January 23, 2013

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law,' G.L. 39, § 23B, the approval of these minutes by the Commission constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Commission as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.