

Wakefield Conservation Commission – Minutes – March 11, 2021

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Attendance: Chairman Jim Luciani, Vice Chairman Bob Romano; Teresa Belmonte; Silvana Bouhlal; Frank Calandra; Ken Alepidis, Peter Miller  
Elaine Vreeland, Rebecca Davis, Judy Green

2/25/21 minutes – Mr. Calandra made a motion to approve the February 25, 2021 minutes.

Mr. Alepidis made a second to the motion. After polling the Commissioners individually, the motion passed unanimously.

DEP#313-599 – 53 Court Street – Town of Wakefield – Public Hearing: Notice of Intent for the installation of a new inlet control structure over existing drain pipe altering 15 linear feet of Inland Bank and 100 square feet of Land Under Waterbodies – Town Engineer Bill Renault was present. The Commission conducted a site visit last week. No issues were noted.

Mr. Romano asked if there had been any discussing regarding changing the inlet to accommodate future changes.

Mr. Renault stated there was not. He noted that this change will provide access for future cleaning and maintenance.

Mr. Miller made a motion to close the public hearing.

Mr. Calandra made a second to the motion. After polling the Commissioners individually, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Calandra made a motion to issue a standard Order of Conditions.

Ms. Belmonte made a second to the motion. After polling the Commissioners individually, the motion passed unanimously.

DEP#313-600 – 100 Hemlock Road – Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational High School – Public Hearing: Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) for 3,181 linear feet of BVW, 193 linear feet of Inland Bank, 921 linear feet of Riverfront and 770 linear feet of isolated vegetated wetland. Andrea Kendall of LEC Environmental and Michelle Callahan of Nitsch Engineering were present for the applicants.

Mr. Romano noted that this hearing was to discuss whether to enlist the consultant services of Oxbow Associates.

Ms. Belmonte asked if the wetland flags had been confirmed.

Ms. Vreeland stated that she had confirmed the flagging.

Bob Brooks – June Circle – stated that he had spoken with the Town Assessors office who informed him that the parcel behind June Circle was owned by the Town of Saugus.

Mr. Calandra reviewed the Assessor's map to confirm that this parcel is owned by Northeast Vocational School.

Ms. Belmonte noted that Registry of Deeds records are used to confirm property ownership, not Assessor's records.

Mr. Brooks asked how the bordering vegetated wetlands were determined.

Ms. Kendall stated that a combination of wetland plant community, soils and hydrology are used to determine a line.

Mr. Brooks asked where the road would be placed.

Mr. Romano noted that this process was only to confirm delineations. No work plan has yet been presented.

Ms. Belmonte noted that a site walk would not be conducted until the consultant reviews the line.

Mr. Brooks noted that clearing of trees had already taken place starting behind June Circle up to the Vocational School. He asked if this was approved.

Ms. Kendall stated that soil test pits had been conducted in upland areas. Those activities are outside the buffer zone and are exempt from the Wetlands Protection Act.

Ms. Vreeland stated she had visited this area and observed preparation for test pits.

Mr. Brooks asked if the digging would affect the wetlands.

Ms. Vreeland stated that she did not observe any digging that would affect the wetlands. The work was approximately 100' away from the wetland.

Mr. Brooks stated that it seems that this area is being tested in preparation for road construction.

Mr. Romano stated that these areas would be reviewed during the site walk.

Mr. Miller asked if suggestions were provided for Oxbow's proposal.

Ms. Davis stated that they were provided with the ANRAD only.

Mr. Miller asked if Ms. Kendall would like to review the proposal prior to the Commission voting to accept.

Ms. Kendall asked if the vernal pool work in the proposal was outside what has been proposed by LEC.

Mr. Miller stated that the contract leaves it open ended.

Mr. Romano stated that the actual certification of vernal pools would need to be agreed to under a separate agreement.

Ms. Kendall stated that she would like to review the proposal.

Ms. Callahan stated that the applicants are aware of the required peer review process. The Commission can vote to approve. She agreed with the scope of the proposal.

Mr. Brooks stated that there are endangered lady slippers on the property that do not come out until June. Some of the areas where they grow have already been bulldozed.

Mr. Romano asked if they were in the non-jurisdictional areas.

Mr. Brooks stated that they were.

Ms. Kendall noted that Natural Heritage does not list the site as containing endangered species. Common lady slippers are not endangered. She will research where endangered lady slippers are located. She requested that Mr. Brooks forward pictures for review.

Mr. Luciani made a motion to accept the Oxbow proposal.

Ms. Bouhlal made a second to the motion. After polling the Commissioners individually, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Miller noted that the proposal states that the applicant would also sign the proposal.

Ms. Kendall noted that the Town would generally place money from the applicant into an escrow account for payment of this bill.

Ms. Davis stated that a copy of the signed agreement and the minutes noting the vote would be required to begin work.

Mr. Calandra requested that the minutes be noted as draft only.

The Commission will conduct a site visit once the consultant reviews the line.

Mr. Miller noted that this is spelled out under the Commission's Consultant Rule wording.

Ms. Kendall stated that they would coordinate with Oxbow for signature and funds deposit.

Mr. Calandra noted that the proposal specifies that at least 95% of wetland flags need to be in place.

Ms. Kendall stated that there were.

Mr. Brooks asked when a site visit would be conducted.

Mr. Luciani noted that the applicant would need to approve public access to the site visit.

Ms. Kendall stated she would ask the property owners.

This matter was continued to 3/25/21.

DEP#313-598 – 41 Church Street – discuss, vote on Order of Conditions.

Ms. Belmonte noted that a special condition was suggested regarding submission of a landscaping plan.

Ms. Davis stated that she had developed a landscaping plan for the invasive removal and bioretention areas. Mr. Renault agreed with her proposed plan. He agreed to the installation of a pollinator garden in the invasive species removal area.

Mr. Calandra asked if any trees would be removed.

Ms. Davis stated that one would be removed and three river birches are proposed to be planted. All of the plants in the basin are native and can tolerate saturation. Some of the plants are fruit bearing and would be beneficial to wildlife. Mr. Renault also discussed the installation of signage in this location noting removal of invasives and replacement with pollinator garden. The Commission would underwrite this cost.

Ms. Belmonte asked the cost of the signage.

Ms. Davis will forward examples to the Commission at the next meeting. She has also spoken with a representative from Offshoots Productive Landscape. This company specializes in bioretention basins and would be available to present their literature to the Commission. There is an associated cost of \$200.

Mr. Romano noted that suggested there were two suggested special conditions related to Ms. Davis's planting plans for the invasive area and bioretention area.

Mr. Calandra asked if there was an operations & maintenance (O&M) plan for the bioretention system.

Ms. Davis stated that a standard O&M plan had been included in the Notice of Intent.

Ms. Vreeland stated that both the two planting plans and the O&M plan could be referenced in the Order of Conditions. Special conditions would not be needed.

Mr. Luciani suggested a condition regarding replanting of the areas in case of die-off.

Mr. Romano asked if this area would be fenced to deter people from entering.

Mr. Miller noted that as these areas are compensatory for the addition of the pickle ball court they should be maintained long term.

Mr. Romano would also like some type of delineation of this area to deter access. He suggested signage noting that this is a sensitive area.

Ms. Vreeland noted that the O&M plan specifies regular inspection and maintenance. If the bioretention area fails it will be excavated and replaced.

Mr. Miller asked if this condition would remain in perpetuity.

Ms. Davis stated that the bioretention area is considered a structure under the storm water management system.

Ms. Vreeland suggested special condition that the O&M plan will remain in perpetuity in the Order of Conditions.

Ms. Davis suggested that prior to issuance of a Certificate of Compliance the Commission could require 80% plant coverage.

Mr. Luciani does not want to see plants changed to non-native in case of failure.

Mr. Romano noted that they would be required to return to the Commission for prior review of any changes.

Special conditions:

1. O&M plan will be referenced.
2. Ms. Davis's landscaping plans for the invasive removal area and bioretention basin will be referenced.
3. The O&M plan will remain in perpetuity.

Ms. Belmonte made a motion to issue a standard Order of Conditions with the above noted three special conditions.

Ms. Bouhlal made a second to the motion. After polling the members individually, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Romano noted that the bioretention talk would be a Commission meeting.

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Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the arrangement of bioretention talk from Offshoots Productive Landscaping. This includes the payment of \$200.

Mr. Calandra made a second to the motion. After polling the members individually, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Belmonte made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Calandra made a second to the motion. After polling the members individually, the motion passed unanimously.