

TOWN OF
STONEHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

Town Hall
35 Central Street

Stoneham Conservation Commission
781-279-2696

STONEHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 5 2024 Virtual 7 PM

Join meeting <https://meet.goto.com/283068317>

Can also phone Access Code: 283-068-317 U.S.: [+1 \(872\) 240-3212](tel:+18722403212)

Jessica Gerke, Alex Rozycki, Megan Day, Norman L'Esperance, Richard Jackson, David Cowell, Ian Gasco-Wiggin, Raymie Parker, Martin Wantman, Ellen McBride, AJ Jamgochian

DISCUSSION

Weiss Farm

Environmental Monitor report review.

David Cowell, Ian Gasco-Wiggin, Rich Kirby and Jill Provencal invited.

David Cowell Environmental Compliance Monitor, once a week field investigations to insure compliance. Erosion sediment controls, staging, sediment tracking, site progressing well. Day to day communications with contractor. Monthly report, 24-48 hours January report will be out. Common examples dewatering in low lying area, brought up to higher area so discharge can be seen as clean. Stockpiles need to be moved from perimeter. Contractor has been responsive within a week.

Jessica Gerke asks about weir dam. Weir removed and reinstalled today, innovative bladders to pump around and get old weir out and install new weir. Erosion control fabric and hydroseed for spring recommended. Small stretch along bank cleared invasive species, 30-40 feet for native plantings to renaturalize stretch of bank.

Jessica Gerke asks about pump station discussions with State. Waiting for utility provider to cut service. Hydrologists and engineers working on it per David Cowell.

Ian Gasco Wiggin temporary disconnect with Eversource, waiting for disconnect to power station. Remove meter and pump station house and raising trough and installing working pump, turned on once DPW has inspected. Alex Rozycki asks Ian Gasco Wiggin who he is, works for Corcoran. Why was conservation not notified work is being done on weir within the bank? Ian Gasco Wiggin's responds jurisdiction is with DEP not Conservation Commission, and permit is with DEP not Conservation Commission.

Alex Rozycki asks about pumping, David Cowell pumping as needed not continually. Dewatering while doing instream work. Allowable limit of sediment in discharge, Alex Rozycki asked how it was measured? Alex Rozycki concerned about dewatering bags breaking and popping and clogging. Common best management practice per David Cowell for 25 years for filtration and dewatering. Alex Rozycki asks if the Conservation

should have signed off on dewatering procedures if stated in conditions, may not be sufficient in wetlands area.

Ian Gasco-Wiggin will speak about conditions of permit, asks about Alex Rozycki as co-chair of Conservation Commission. Alex Rozycki asks for clarification from DEP as to role of Conservation Commission, will review David Cowell's report. Ian Gasco-Wiggin offers to talk to DEP and get information and continue the conversation offline.

Jessica Gerke says Conservation Commission is one of the first stops for the public with questions. Communication would be helpful. Transparency and communication on site welcome per Ian Gasco-Wiggin.

Ellen McBride 30 Butler Ave spoke to Jill Provencal at DEP and we have to follow DEP superseding order of conditions and Conservation Commission does have jurisdiction. Do members of the Commission know if Rich Kirby has been on site when work was done on pump and weir? Ian Gasco-Wiggin does not know if he was on site. Ellen McBride suggests may want to clarify what Rich Kirby's role is. Wetlands have migrated from 2011 and Jill Provencal pointed it out on site walk, does Corcoran agree they have migrated? Ian Gasco-Wiggin is only aware of line drawn from when permit and order of conditions went into affect. Wetlands have spread into locus of project, some mediation seems appropriate per Ellen McBride.

Pump off since 2008 and water has been sitting and spreading. Concern that migration has not been addressed. Ellen McBride asked when you run the pump what is the order of sequence? How do you decide to do that? Who will you notify when you turn the pump on? Zoning board of appeals, Conservation Commission, DPW? Ian Gasco-Wiggin says there isn't specific notification, when water reaches levels over trough its engaged, monitor monthly, annual maintenance, controls will capture how often pump is turned on and off. Willing to involve Conservation Commission. Once improvements are in place, test run can include Conservation Commission and talk through process of how pump operates.

Ellen McBride asks would neighbors be notified when pump is turned on? Ian Gasco-Wiggin says we could, not sure if permit requires abutter notifications but he can check permit. Ian Gasco-Wiggin doesn't foresee an issue with anyone knowing when pump is turned on, Ellen McBride reminding Commission of abutter flooding issues.

Martin Wantman 20 Gerald Rd, abutter to Weiss Farm, 600 feet of abutting property. Watched weir dam, saw invasive species bitter sweet and woody growths removed, lived for 40 years next door, weir displaced away from root and installed larger weir dam that is not leaking. Hoping invasive species next to ditch along with bittersweet will be removed. Pump has been removed, hoping a new pump is going in. The work is inadequate to control the flooding on Gerald Rd. Pump access road unneeded, it's under water and taking away storage capacity. Sal Weiss prior to 2000 cleaned out the ditch across from the pump to Sunset and that helped alleviate flooding and splash over from ditch which now occurs regularly. Water should be draining west to north meeting house drainage easement, storage capacity exists at Doleful Pond. Repeats that Callahan construction manager is excellent.

Whip Hill

Update from Subcommittee- Megan Day presentation of slideshow. Linked to drop box and meeting minutes from 5 previous meetings. Make property successful without damage to wildlife and property. Whip Hill proposal regular activities, outreach, school groups as initial vision. Field guide. Established with \$150,000, annually \$10,000 for expenses. \$1.3 million insurance value, contract with Town for caretakers. Jim Previte has been caretaker. Originally \$18,000 plus fringe benefits of housing. Many roles with Town, caretaker went from full time to part time, always been a weekend watchman involved. AJ Jamgochian hired by Jim Previte, split duties. Jim Previte retired in 2021, both caretakers still part time but no formal agreement. Bob Galvin gives us four steps to take as Conservation Commission.

Visit property to assess habitability, occupancy limits of meeting space, appraisal, scheduled maintenance, document relationship MOU trust and Conservation Commission, contracts with caretakers/CORI to formalize relationship, rules and regulations for access. Keys for police and fire department, Conservation office.

Norman L'Esperance formalize and put into writing and make sure everything is legal.

Jessica Gerke says will be brought to Commission for consensus and approval.

Alex Rozycki thinks the first 3 are jobs for Bob Galvin, Town should post job description for employees. Good outline of a plan. Jessica Gerke mentions draft of job description from Bob Galvin can be circulated to move that piece forward.

Alex Rozycki asks how we move forward, committee will vote on any movement beyond planning level.

Full time caretaker included public outreach piece for tours and field trips as part of original job description per Megan Day. Trust used to fund, neither now receives payment. Money would go towards education and Conservation. Trail and house maintenance took priority. AJ Jamgochian and Jim Previte formalize contracts so public outreach can be added. School groups brought in, respectful of land and have Town feel ownership of it. Programming, outreach and grants available for trails and upgrades to home through MACC resources for major improvements. What is Conservation's vision for property?

Alex Rozycki says decisions will depend on how personnel conversations go, vote from Conservation Commission to have caretakers' contracts. Concern property will be vandalized if someone doesn't live onsite. Megan Day because this is Town property needs to be safe to live there. Alex Rozycki says fire department may only allow 25 people, ADA is a concern. Parking lot, utilities, contract for employees. Alex Rozycki doesn't believe Conservation Commission will write job description.

Jessica Gerke says 2 parts, taking what we have now and making that legal with documentation and process established. Second part solidifying the vision for the property and policies around that vision. Completing steps to make the vision possible. Need to properly document caretakers, have policies in place for how the property can be used.

Megan Day updates from past 5 meetings to look at building for short term and long term needs, contracts for caretakers, make similar to other Town buildings, Memorandum with trust, relationship with caretakers. Alex Rozycki wants to insure we are doing right by everyone involved.

AJ Jamgochian wants to educate himself, have a voice at the table, wants what's in the best interest of the park and community.

Megan Day states through Conservation Commission as annual contract, 30 day notice on either part. Relationship should be formalized per Alex Rozycki, Megan Day believes will stipulates that someone needs to be living there.

Raymie Parker glad to see you're in agreement and moving forward, wants Town to be supportive. Money will be involved so be sure to ask for it.

Ellen McBride the building is ADA compliant, big bathroom, ramp to sunporch. Sign goes in front of garage for event. State inspected with Brett Gonsalves during covid. Ellen McBride and Bob Parsons met with Dennis Sheehan twice from 10/26/20 meeting discussed contract through HR and Town. Jim Previte was summer intern, part time caretaker, replaced Steve McDonough, payed money out of Trust, when Dave Ragucci made Jim Previte Tree Warden 2008 or 2011 DPW employee 2 days at DPW, 3 days at Whip Hill. Full time versus part time needs of property. Brian from Assessing came out to property 8 years ago, so that information may be available.

Raymie Parker confused over who the contract was with originally. 1984 contract between Town Administrator, Jim Previte and Conservation Commission per Megan Day. Ellen McBride honor Angie Crockett's wishes and establish an operations file.

Alex Rozycki asks if deadline or goal in mind, package submission for vote, asking how will process play out. Jessica Gerke answers no schedule for deliverable. Megan Day no push on Town side, Dennis Sheehan does report out at his Town Administrator report.

Raymie Parker said Select Board was brought up because of Arnold House. Ellen McBride asks that a Select Board person said it was tax payer money paying for Whip Hill, but it's from the Trust. Trust goes to Capital Committee if larger amount. Dennis Sheehan has a responsibility to provide financial support from the Town annually. If reasonable financial support is not provided Trust will be revoked. Must be used for Conversation purposes. Town has to provide financial support. Alex Rozycki asks about electric bill. Would like to know how much money is too much money from Trust side. Long term maintenance plan needs to involve Trust. Alex Rozycki states medium between what Town needs to provide and Trust pays. Ellen McBride believes Conservation Commission decides how money is spent.

AJ Jamgochian delineating roles and responsibilities, who is doing what and who is paying for what. Uses better understood, appreciates conversation.

Request from Greater Boston Stage Company interested to potentially uses property, went to All Saints, out of the box theater. Caretaker responsibilities include showing property. Alex Rozycki appreciates heads up if more than just walking around property, this may fall between school and boy scouts. Not sure what Stage Company has to do with Conservation Park. Whip Hill is being talked about more, Megan Day suggested seeing what's there before formal request. Jessica Gerke ok with a handful of people seeing house, hard to know if it fits in without knowing what they'd like to do. Ellen McBride says Angie Crockett's wish that the park should be used for Conservation. Dan Towse hated Santa at Whip Hill. Seasonal open houses, spring when flowers are in bloom, winter wonderland viewing. Use that is not Conservation related is not Angie Crockett's intention. Megan Day said original documents wanted kids invested in property and community at Whip Hill. Vision for property to be used by community with no harm to property. Caretaker job description says property tours will be given per Megan Day. Jessica Gerke says we don't have a current caretaker agreement so a vote is appropriate. Alex Rozycki for profit private business different than public, school groups allowed to tour property per older job description. Alex Rozycki wants to keep for Stoneham residents, tough to facilitate multiple people seeing Whip Hill. Megan Day says it may not be appropriate once official request is made but someone should be able to see the property, not sure if it is Shakespeare in the Park. Motion to allow walk thru for Greater Boston Stage company small group by Jessica Gerke, seconded by Megan Day. Alex Rozycki, Megan Day, Jessica Gerke, Norman L'Esperance yes 4/0 and Richard Jackson no.

Quinn Electric lights for driveway and parking lot – lights hadn't been working, concern about Santa at Whip Hill safety. Megan Day thought request from Garden club, not Santa at Whip Hill. Garden club requested outlets at Whip Hill repaired. Jim Previte took opportunity to fix lights, asked decisions like this be run by Commission, emergency situation while electrician on premise.

Approve Meeting Minutes from December 18, 2023

Motion to approve by Alex Rozycki seconded by Norman L'Esperance Roll call Alex Rozycki, Norman L'Esperance, Richard Jackson, Jessica Gerke yes 4/0/ Megan Day refrains as she wasn't at December meeting

Next Meeting February 26, 2024

Motion to adjourn, Norman L'Esperance, Richard Jackson seconded Roll Call Norman L'Esperance, Megan Day, Jessica Gerke, Richard Jackson and Alex Rozycki yes 5/0