



**TOWN OF  
STONEHAM**  
MASSACHUSETTS 02180

Conservation Commission  
(781) 279-2696  
jdecourcy@stoneham-ma.gov

**STONEHAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
July 8 2024 Virtual 7 PM**

**Please join meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**

<https://meet.goto.com/504653837>

Phone Access Code: 504-653-837 United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3412](tel:+18722403412)

**Jessica Gerke, Domenic Cimina, Megan Day, Richard Jackson, Jeremy Zasowski, Martin Wantman, Stephen Rotondi, Matt and Jen Rodriguez, Aleksandr Zenkov, Jeanne Craigie, Dolly Wilson, Adam Craigie, George Seibold**

**Motion to open meeting by Megan Day seconded by Norman L'Esperance Roll call yes 6/0 Domenick Cimina, Jessica Gerke, Norman L'Esperance, Richard Jackson, Megan Day and Jeremy Zasowski**

**DISCUSSION**

**11 Aspen Lane**

Jen & Matt Rodriguez

Proposed changes from approved May 2022 plan

Addition on home renovation, changes are staying within footprint and wetland boundaries. Design is not final but they plan to rebuild. On screen shows existing dwelling and yellow highlight is proposed changes. 8A closest wetland flags. Rebuilding so 32 feet away instead of 25 feet, fence boundary is the same.

Norman L'Esperance asks about wetlands changing, Commission walked property in 2022 and talked about fence line and disruption, wetlands receded. Fence was considered an existing structure, drainage ditch off cul de sac.

Megan Day says substantially different plan and should require new filing. First markers were 2009, current markers are from 2022. Jessica Gerke comments markers haven't moved from renovation plan.

Domenick Cimina asks if Benchmark did survey, O'Brien was land surveyor, wetland flags separate company. 2009 Benchmark did flagging. Asks if there is a proposed retaining wall, already in. Thinks this is a new filing as it's a completely different plan.

Jessica Gerke says within footprint and distance from resource area is similar. Storm water and building department should be in updated plan.

Megan Day mentions you can appeal to DEP if you disagree with Conservation's request for new notice.

Norman L'Esperance suggests keeping it clean with separate filing to avoid encumbrance.

Matt Rodriguez believes Smitty's Way subdivision may have caused wetlands to recede.

New notice of intent info will be sent to Rodriguez. DPW will involve drainage requirements.

Site visit July 22, 2024 5pm

**41 Ellen Rd**

Aleksandr Zenkov

Review of property landscaping

Jessica Gerke clearing of vegetation and bringing in soil, wetland area may be impacted.



**TOWN OF  
STONEHAM**  
MASSACHUSETTS 02180

**Conservation Commission**  
**(781) 279-2696**  
**jdecourcy@stoneham-ma.gov**

Aleksandr Zenkov original area unkept; leaves, poison ivy, vines, bushes, weeds removed and added soil and grass. Jessica Gerke asks how much soil was brought into area. Removed top inch of soil to get rid of weeds and put back same amount so it is same elevation.

Jessica Gerke visited site and wetland is low pocket between 2 properties, historically altered during construction of cul de sac. Goal of conservation commission is to protect the functioning of the wetlands, filtering storm water, provide vegetative area and maintain wildlife habitat. No large trees have been removed, there is more usable grass per Aleksandr Zenkov.

Assessor maps link as one parcel, no markers indicating wetlands, not given information when purchasing house that a portion was conservation area. Nothing on property maps indicating separate area. Megan Day says doesn't see on Mass GIS or Mass DEP maps. No natural water sources per Aleksandr Zenkov.

Jessica Gerke states most of Stoneham's resources are too small for state, but they are resources under our bylaw. Wetland scientist can visit property to delineate per Megan Day. Most of what was likely removed was invasive species. Revegetation with native shrubs or perennials may be beneficial step. Impact to topography might affect hydrology. Elevation is the same per Aleksandr Zenkov and slightly lower than abutting fences.

Megan Day we would have to file an enforcement order if there was a change to topography, and thinks a wetland scientist would have to determine if there was a wetland. Aleksandr Zenkov states there was nothing to indicate it was a wetland, it was simply unkept.

Domenick Cimina may not have been recorded with registry, a wetland scientist would have to determine if it exists anymore. Aleksandr Zenkov asks if it would be removed from jurisdiction of Conservation. Domenick Cimina if it does exist it should be recorded on deed.

Richard Jackson said neighbor mentioned a pair of ducks would be in the yard. Aleksandr Zenkov says cardinals are in yard. Jessica Gerke we will send wetland scientist to see if there is a wetland in the yard through samples. Aleksandr Zenkov asks if he can mow it if declared a wetland? Jessica Gerke says primarily for storm water retention. It is still his property but there may be limitations. Historic past construction may have altered area so wetland scientist will have to test it. May ask for vegetation to be increased.

Norman L'Esperance says if scientist says it's not wetlands and everyone's mind is put at ease.

**Veterans Lane**

Update from Rich Kirby

Site where break in storm water pipe which caused soil to give way and carried sediment in stream. Area was cleaned, steep slope so difficult to get large equipment down. Company vacuumed up to tank at top of hill, watching vegetation to see if replacement vegetation was needed. June 4, 2024 site visit and wetland is coming back nicely. Shrubs and saplings that were damaged have rebounded. There is an area Brett Gonsalves has to repair of storm water pipe. Recommends site visit to Commission. 5:30pm July 22, 2024 Richard Jackson was at site and didn't realize there was another blowout, it is like working on the side of the mountain, slope to steep for trucks. Damage and tree clearing for road may not be worthwhile.



**TOWN OF  
STONEHAM**  
MASSACHUSETTS 02180

Conservation Commission  
(781) 279-2696  
jdecourcy@stoneham-ma.gov

**Weiss Farm**

June report from David Cowell. Pump update.

LEC inspected erosion controls on July 8, 2024

Who is inspecting pump and yearly inspections as in superseding order of conditions, Callahan inspecting on weekly basis now and working on maintenance contractor to inspect annually. It would start in April 2025. Pump operating 8 hours a day and added a grate to keep debris from entering chamber.

Biodegradable netting disintegrates, contractor is replacing sections tomorrow 7/9/24. Micro watershed or uphill of work area so water won't get there. Retaining walls installed around entire property limit water towards erosion controls. Gravel stockpiling on top of compost sock has been removed. Silt sacks and catch basins on Franklin St in reasonable shape, street sweeping occurred today. Siltation fencing maintenance was falling off stakes and has been maintained. Hancock had native plantings for weir replacement. Photographs of clockwise representation of site. Sedimentation should be caught by silt sack, additional sediment shouldn't accumulate. When silt sack is removed Rich Kirby can see if sediment is in catch basin, most will be caught by silt sack.

Martin Wantman 20 Gerald Rd asks about April pump turn on, it is not run 8 hours a day, pump was off on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, turned pump on today. Martin Wantman is frustrated, pump is to be run at 159.5 and that a pump float needs to be set. Mr. Wantman's flooding continues. Would like pump to run continuously and float should be set. For the future they had to utilize a boat to put screen in, pump access road will have to be addressed. Dense vegetation asked if there was anything other than invasive species? Rich Kirby responds he saw queen anne's lace and grasses. Rich Kirby contractor did say they would run the point until the elevation is met. Storm water management report says 2.5 days to reach that level. Pump should be running. Invasive species grow very quickly, tree of heaven. Mr. Wantman wants them to set the float around 160 and stop testing.

Jessica Gerke says we can ask about pump running schedule. Rich Kirby will text contractor and try to get more information from contractor Sean.

Richard Jackson asks size of pump? 4 inch pump and 4 inch pipe. Asks if there will be extra pump on hand. Bill Sullivan suggests having spare on hand at last ZBA meeting per Martin Wantman.

Domenick Cimina mentions pump wasn't working Friday, spoke to Dennis Sheehan this morning, Ian Gasco-Wiggin said pump is running now. Domenick Cimina says pump should be running up to 24 hours a day with float set. Rich Kirby asks if Commission is concerned that the pump needs to be running. Domenick Cimina doesn't think a four inch pipe is going to flood downstream and it's time to start running the pump. Would like to see reports, Domenick Cimina doesn't think they are paying enough attention to the pump. Domenick Cimina thinks we should talk to Attorney Galvin about running pump. Richard Jackson said there is a lot of rain coming in the next week, if they could set the float level and let it run.

Megan Day thinks DEP would have to direct them.

Martin Wantman said it used to be a meadow, 2006 remarkably altered property, would like to see restored.

**Whip Hill**

Update from Subcommittee: Contracts discussion. Architect update. 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary request. Project approvals: carpenter, gate, plants.

Megan Day asks if we can address 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary request to use property at Whip Hill. Adam Craigie mentions celebrating Stoneham 300<sup>th</sup> birthday, trolley ride from Town Common to Whip Hill manor.



**TOWN OF  
STONEHAM**  
MASSACHUSETTS 02180

**Conservation Commission**  
**(781) 279-2696**  
**jdecourcy@stoneham-ma.gov**

Illusionist at house, transportation holds up to 60 people, tie in history of Stoneham. Last stop on tour for one hour performance to learn more about Stoneham.

Jessica Gerke says were looking at Whip Hill uses and we haven't defined or expanded uses. We need to determine what we're permitted to have. We don't know how many people can be in the building at one time per fire code. It has been used for Conservation and Garden club meeting and they are 30-40 people. Concern that 60 people wouldn't fit in space.

Richard Jackson asks if they will charge for event, Adam Craigie says no charge. Richard Jackson says Christmas at Whip Hill has a lot more than 60 people. Adam Craigie says that is the precedent the holiday event. Antique bus holds up to 60 people per Adam Craigie.

Domenick Cimina says we haven't determined use, Conservation associated and can't go astray from Trust. Domenick Cimina said place has septic system, 60 may be too much for manor, mentions cost to conservation, conservation restriction should be considered. Adam Craigie offers board may pay event fee, and that Dennis Sheehan explained certain town properties are at committee's disposal. Domenick Cimina said if it costs Town money or wear and tear on building expenses, we need fee structure. Asks if Jim Previte is obligated to clean up after 60 people.

Megan Day comments guidelines of use per property approved per Megan Day. Not disturbing property, 250 people staggered per day used bathrooms. Subcommittee process carry on use as is, Santa at Whip Hill for over 20 years. Megan Day use same criteria as Santa at Whip Hill for Town committee.

Domenick Cimina may need to evaluate Santa at Whip Hill, may want to consider porta potties. What is conservation use? How far are we going to stretch it? Megan Day agrees we should bring it back to the group. When trust was established it may have been for tax purposes per Megan Day. Purposes quote- "Conservation purposes means purposes normally or otherwise reasonably associated with the use of land for the preservation or protection of the natural or built environment, including the preservation or protection of the physical, ecological, cultural or historical characteristics of land against undesirable change or human activity."

Guidelines are return property to how you found it, Megan Day said in the last 5 years there has been no issue with Santa at Whip Hill.

Dolly Wilson VP 300<sup>th</sup> Committee, wants to draw attention to history of Whip Hill. 30 people at a time on the bus so only 30 at a time. Adam Craigie mentions one time event.

George Siebold mentions septic is a stretch, some people don't want anyone up there except for Conservation purposes. The history of the woman who donated Whip Hill donated money to police station, daughter of original caretaker said property was "pristine". Volunteers should clean the place up as you drive up. Pine needles and leaves should be swept up and nice when people go up there. One event shouldn't mean septic will overflow. Caretakers should be taking care of place, he doesn't see it as he drives up there and we should make property shine.

Jessica Gerke purpose of property is more focused on habitat conservation. Not historically meant to be a manicured show piece, should be wildlife habitat and native species in a natural state. We are in the process of trying to build out master document with expectations for Whip Hill, for what is allowed and what the process is ironed out. One time event and not precedent setting is possible per Jessica Gerke. Norman L'Esperance agrees Whip Hill is part of Stoneham's history. We have to discuss if this affects purpose of Conservation.

Megan Day transitional period with property, unique situation, hung up on the definition of Conservation purposes. Opportunity to get people up to property, Town Committee requesting, Dennis Sheehan in favor, property is insured.

Jeremy Zasowski states one time event, not an outside group, Town committee, conserving history of Town. Further discussion warranted.



**TOWN OF  
STONEHAM**  
MASSACHUSETTS 02180

**Conservation Commission**  
(781) 279-2696  
jdecourcy@stoneham-ma.gov

Domenick Cimina doesn't want to be in violation of original trust agreement, keep Conservation theme of Whip Hill, definition needs to be determined. Opens Whip Hill to more people which is great, involve Attorney Galvin as to what we can approve.

Jessica Gerke leaning towards allowing use, create information sharing for particular use of property, Conservation mission sharing. Adam Craigie for co-marketing event, highlight mission of Conservation Commission.

Jen Gray on 300<sup>th</sup> committee and Finance Advisory Board states purpose and mission is to share and showcase not damage. Public support helps with property's mission.

Motion to approve for use of Whip Hill for 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee, additional conversations about physical use per Jessica Gerke seconded by Norman L'Esperance. Megan abstains. Roll call yes 4/1/1. Jessica Gerke, Norman L'Esperance, Richard Jackson, Jeremy Zasowski

Caretakers agreement approved April 8, May 1 revisions, contract wording from Attorney Galvin for agreements to have timeframe included. Megan Day wants Jim Previte and AJ Jamogchian to know what Commission's expectations are. Jessica Gerke will highlight which parts changed.

Architect was approached by Dennis Sheehan regarding usability report and capital repairs for Whip Hill house. Estimate funding from Select Board was approved. Conservation Commission would retain architect firm to proceed with study of house.

Domenick Cimina spoke to Dennis Sheehan and thought the future of house would need architect report on record. \$34,000 expense wants to make sure use is worth it. Arnold House survey was never acted upon. Whip Hill house needs work.

Jessica Gerke hopes it would provide information on how many people could be in space, and as we make it a public space what fire prevention needs to be implemented, capital expenses like roof and structural issues. ADA requirements per Domenick Cimina, determine what the house can handle.

Megan Day arpa funding will go away, believes this is a roadmap, library did same process, need documentation to know what is allowed. Motion to accept funds for architect to provide structural and use report by Norman L'Esperance seconded by Domenick Cimina. Roll call yes 6/0 Domenick Cimina, Megan Day, Jessica Gerke, Richard Jackson, Jeremy Zasowski and Norman L'Esperance

Jessica Gerke would like to get away from one off approvals, Domenick Cimina says carpenter will be repairing rotted wood and gutters. Megan Day motions to approve plant purchase and carpentry work estimate seconded by Domenick Cimina Roll call yes 6/0 Megan Day, Jessica Gerke, Richard Jackson, Domenick Cimina, Norman L'Esperance and Jeremy Zasowski

Megan Day mentions subcommittee is drafting and bringing to group items for discussion.

**Matters not anticipated**

**Approve Meeting Minutes from June 10, 2024**

Motion to approve minutes from Domenick Cimina seconded by Norman L'Esperance. Roll call yes 6/0 Megan Day, Jessica Gerke, Richard Jackson, Domenick Cimina, Norman L'Esperance and Jeremy Zasowski

Next Meeting August 5, 2024

Motion to adjourn by Domenick Cimina seconded by Jeremy Zasowski Roll call yes 6/0 Domenick Cimina, Jeremy Zasowski, Jessica Gerke, Megan Day, Richard Jackson and Norman L'Esperance