

**Town of Becket
Conservation Commission Minutes
16 January, 2018**

Commissioners in attendance: Alison Dixon (Chair), Barbara Brand, Cindy Delpapa, Karen Karlberg and Mary Stucklen.

Commissioners not in attendance: all present

Members of the public: Robert Akroyd, John Fields, Paul Merrill, David Friar, Heather Anello, Mike Spencer

Chair Dixon called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM, introduced Commissioners, read meeting guidelines and asked if anyone was recording the meeting.

The Commission welcomed newly appointed Conservation Commissioner Mary Stucklen.

Mercedes Gallagher, who passed away last week, was remembered for her service to the community including her years as a Conservation Commissioner. Mercedes was the force behind the Center Pond Weed Project. Through this work she proved hand pulling was an effective option for controlling invasive aquatic plants. Mercedes provided thousands of volunteer hours to the project. Mercedes was also the Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee representative for the town of Becket and the Committee's treasurer. It was noted there is a lovely tribute podcast available on the *Berkshire Eagle* web page. Mercedes' brother will be organizing a service in about a month.

Public input and comment for items not on the agenda. None offered.

New Business:

Request for Determination of Applicability submitted by Jane and Mark Shemtob for removal of dead and dying trees within the resource area of Yokum Pond. Project location, 24 Leonhardt Road (Map 203 Lot 18.1). Commissioners visited the site. Chair Dixon talked with the owner in December about the need to file with the Commission. John Field was present to represent the owner. Commissioners found several of the tagged trees were in the delineated wetland. J Fields said all of the trees marked are dead and expressed his view that dead trees pose a hazard because of their unpredictability. Chair Dixon explained the trees provide habitat, shade and nutrients. The trees in the delineated wetland were well away from buildings and the pathway. Concern was there had already been thinning of trees in the wetland and buffer and this project would remove more shade, habitat and sources of nutrients. In response to signs of previous tree cutting on the lot, J Fields explained an RDA was filed in 2014 for his work. J Fields said leaving the small diameter trees in the wetland is not a big concern but felt the birches and maples cannot be safely left. Commission would like to see the large birch within the wetland remain as it is valuable habitat and based on its location, it posed no danger if it fell to either the house or pathway. J Fields agreed to talk to the property owners about planting replacement trees. Cutting will be done in February while the ground is frozen as stated in the filing. Motion made to issue a negative determination #3 for tree removal at 24 Leonhardt Road, (Map 203, Lot 18.1) with the following amendments to the proposed cutting plan- the large 14" diameter birch within the delineated wetland will not be cut or removed and three native replacement maple saplings will be planted, (Brand/Stucklen). MSV with one abstention.

Request for Determination of Applicability submitted by the Town of Becket for reconfiguration of shed and portable toilets at the Center Pond Beach Parking Area. **Project location, 0 Mecum Way (Map 413 Lot 15).** Commissioners visited the site. The representative for the town asked for a continuance to allow for alterations to the proposed plan provided in the RDA. Motion made to continue the RDA for the town of Becket to reconfigure and replace the utility structure at 0 Mecum Way (Map 413, Lot 15) to the 20 February, 2018 Conservation Commission meeting, (Karlberg/Brand). MSV.

Discussion of the Enforcement Order issued to Heather Anello for violations occurring at **3235 Main Street (Map 207, Lot 66).** Commissioners revisited the site. Chair Dixon provided a copy of a map prepared by former agent Larcom of the property showing where the 200 foot riverfront area is located and the small section of the property outside WPA jurisdiction. H Anello and M Spencer explained crushed stone was brought in to maintain the existing driveway and they made every effort to stay off the lawn area. Chair Dixon noted it was difficult to definitively determine where the grass started because we did not measure the width of the existing driveway before the new crushed stone was laid. Aerial imagery from 2014 augmented with a 25 ft buffer emanating from the chimney showed it extended into the lawn area though the width of the gravel driveway measured on Monday was close to 40 ft wide. Chair Dixon recommended the enforcement order be amended, again, to only prohibit any additional activity and suggested the existing driveway width be measured in the spring. In response to question about fixing the existing road after the winter season, Chair Dixon asked they call the Commission before doing any work since this is an area in question. Motion made to amend the enforcement order to Heather Anello Spencer for property at 3235 Main Street (Map 207, Lot 66) to stop all work in jurisdictional areas under the WPA until there is a valid OOC, no more crushed stone/gravel to be brought to the site, property owners have agreed to repair, seed and remove crushed stone outside of the existing driveway/parking area after the demarcation of the new area is determined in the spring when the property owners and Commission work to determine the dimension of the existing driveway, (Karlberg/Brand). Chair Dixon amended the motion to include an OOC is issued. K Karlberg was in agreement with the addition. MSV with one abstention.

Discussion about Center Pond Weed Removal Project. A Notice of Intent is to be submitted in time for the February meeting. K Wagner and M Larcom were not able to attend because of the poor weather however members of the Center Pond Committee, P Merrell and D Friar were present. They explained the Center Pond Committee would like to begin the weed control as soon as possible. The Committee has good records of the status of the plant locations and expressed their opinion that chemical treatment is needed to allow the hand pulling to keep pace with an outbreak of invasive aquatic plants. Commissioner reported M Gallagher suggested native weevils be considered as another tool for long term control as the weevils are a native species. Chair Dixon suggested the project file with the Commission for the February meeting and the Commission can respond to the filed NOI.

Continued from 8/8/2017: Public Hearing on the Notice of Intent from Sergey and Olga Kaletin, for the construction of a gravel driveway with a length of 1,400 linear feet and a width of 10 feet in the Riverfront Area of Yokum Brook with associated vegetation removal. **Project location is 0 Yokum Pond Road, (Map 409, Lot 3, DEP #102-0431).** Commissioners revisited the site. R Akroyd was present representing the property owner and summarized the changes to the driveway orientation presented and discussed at the last meeting. The disturbance for the driveway will be limited to BVW under the new proposed orientation. Suggested restoration would be about 1 to 1.5 but would likely have to identify the location of the restoration area in the spring. The driveway through the BVW will be constructed on a 6 inch rip rap bed so runoff and interflow will not be

interrupted. Commissioner asked if there was an inventory of the vegetation to be removed for the driveway in the BVW. R Akroyd said there was not an inventory. Commission discussed the possibility of the owner asking for a partial certificate of compliance as this would keep the requirement that no other access across the wetland or BVW will be allowed under the limited project exception on the property title. R Akroyd adjusted the final plan set of 19 December 2017 to cross out a remnant erosion control line and highlighted the new location of the silt fence. Motion made to issue an OOC for DEP 102-0431 (map 409, Lot 3) for the construction of a gravel driveway, (alternative #2 as shown on final revised plan dated 19 December, 2017) in a BVW at 0 Yokum Pond Road with the following conditions: at least a 1:1 replication area be created, site of the replication will be jointly decided by Commission and property owner, or their representative, in the spring 2018, a bioswale will be constructed adjacent to the driveway on the south side, no other access will be allowed across resource areas at this site under the limited project status, Becket Standard Conditions will apply, a 6 inch underlayment of riprap will be installed beneath the driveway crossing the BVW, (Karlberg/Brand). MSV.

Approval of the minutes from the December 19th 2017 meeting. Motion made to approve the minutes of the 19 December 2017 Becket Conservation Commission meeting, (Brand/Karlberg). MSV with one abstention.

Miscellaneous: Commissioners thanked Chair Dixon for preparing the annual report and did not offer any changes. Discussed adding a small remembrance of M Gallagher for this year and next year's report can have a bigger dedication.

Update on hiring a Conservation Agent- Since the town administer left it is unclear where the process stands but Chair Dixon will attend the Selectboard meeting on 17 January to ask about the status of the hiring of the preferred candidate.

Upcoming Training / Conference dates- MACC Annual Meeting is 3 March, 2018 and Chair Dixon will arrange for four registrations.

Review any pertinent correspondence received and upcoming items. Shannon Boomsma sent a letter regarding the Tosch Enforcement Order.

Next meeting date Tuesday, February 20, 2018.

Motion to adjourn, (Karlberg/Brand). Chair Dixon adjourned the meeting at 8:44 PM.