

Town of Becket Conservation Commission
25 June 2019 Meeting Minutes

Commissioners in Attendance: Karen Karlberg (Vice Chair), Meredyth Babcock, Barbara Brand, Cindy Delpapa, David Johnson and Agent Mary Stucklen.

Commissioner not in Attendance: Alison Dixon, Henry Scarpo

Members of the public: Sarah Capurski (SK Designs), Mike Parsons (Kelly, Granger, Parsons), Jeff Wilkinson

Vice Chair Karlberg called the 25 June 2019 Becket Conservation Commission meeting to order at 6:41 PM, read the meeting guidelines and asked if anyone was recording the meeting. No recording was being made.

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

New Business:

A Request for Determination of Applicability submitted by Marc Brettler of 92 Pill Drive (Map 207, Lot 14) for the installation of a leach field. Commission visited the site. M Parson, representing the owner, summarized the project. The existing on-site system has failed. The current location behind the house poses significant access issues and is at a higher elevation than the house requiring pumping into the system. A new location was identified near the street which would require minimal impacts to install. The proposed system has been approved by the Board of Health. There is a small isolated area subject to flooding with a wetland vegetated community. The proposed project includes pumping out the existing system, rupturing the tank and filling with sand. The new system will have a two chamber 1,500 gallon septic box, a 1,000 gallon pump chamber connected to a force main out to the new leach field. The will be an impervious inner barrier at the leach field to prevent breakout. M Parsons hopes to start the work in the next few weeks and it will likely be a week-long project. M Parson was asked if a septic system in the backyard could be placed far enough from the foundation to meet code. He explained there was not enough room to meet the minimum setback. Motion made to issue a negative determination #3 for the installation of a leach field at 92 Pill Drive (Brand/Johnson). MSV. Commission requested of M Parson ask the owner to consider removing the raised path through the wet area to allow the system to revegetate or, if kept, the footprint not be increased. Since it seems like the 'log wall' lining the path will need to be moved to accommodate the septic system installation, the Commissioner requested the logs be removed to an upland area and not placed in the wetland; that heavy machinery not be refueled or stored near the wetland and be cleaned before arriving at the site to prevent an introduction of invasive species; and the straw waddles be placed onsite as shown in the plan filed with the Commission.

A Request for a Determination of Applicability submitted by Stan Taylor of 36 Sir Galahad Drive (Map 217, Lot 67 & 68) for the removal of a beaver lodge along the shoreline. Commission visited the site. S Capurski, representing the applicant, explained there was a beaver problem back in 2013 and the beaver were removed and the lodge moved off the shore under an emergency order from the Board of Health with Conservation Commission approval. The beaver returned in 2019 and were trapped out under another Board of Health emergency permit. The property owner would now like to remove the lodge as he feels it may entice the beaver to return, poses a safety issue and could break free and lodge in the nearby dam spillway. The lodge would be removed using small machinery accessing the site through existing paths. Only a few one inch saplings and a four inch tree would need to be removed. There would be no impacts to wetland resource areas and the owner would be willing to dispose of the lodge materials offsite if the Commission would prefer over disposal in the uplands. S Capurski offered that the lodge could be considered illegal fill and if multiple lodges are built it would be alteration of bank. Commission discussed the criteria used by the Board of Health to issue an emergency order since the beaver activity would not be raising water levels to threaten property, septic or wells. Commission would be interested in discussing

beaver issues with the Board of Health. S Capurski was not sure but thought the animal control person may have told the owner the lodge removal would require Conservation Commission review. A Commissioner checked with Professor John MacDonald about the lodge being an attractant and he reported it would not influence beaver recolonization as they are interested in food supply and not the presence of a lodge. The owner has already implemented a good deterrent-wrapping the tree trunks. The upcoming Lancelot dam repair will change the landscape significantly as all of the trees will be removed from the nearby berm which will further reduce potential food supply for beaver. Any tree trunks left by the beaver that pose a danger could be cut to remove the point. Agent Stucklen wanted to clarify the limitations of an RDA- the Commission may only act on the current removal request for the existing lodge and is not able to provide permission for lodge removal for three years. Commissioner Johnson recused himself from the vote as he knows the applicant. Motion made to issue a negative determination #2 to only remove the existing beaver lodge at 36 Sir Galahad Drive (Map 217, Lots 67 and 68) using a small excavator or hand tools with disposal in adjacent upland and amending the application with the applicant's representative's letter clarifying no land under water or bank would be disturbed while removing only the lodge, (Babcock/Brand). MSV with D Johnson recusing himself.

Additional Items:

Discussion: Public education of the WPA and our role as the Conservation Commission. Commissioner. M Babcock reported on the recent presentation by MA DCR Lakes and Ponds which was well attended and the workshop by the Center Pond Weed Project divers. The talk covered looking at whole lake management and touched on some new methods. Commissioner Johnson recommended having some casual chats with other town departments and committees so we can all better understand each other's roles and responsibilities. This would help with the MVP planning work too. D Johnson volunteered to take the lead to set up the chats. Consensus was to discuss this at the next meeting to sort out how each Commissioner can contribute.

Review and approval of March and May 2019 Conservation Commission Meeting minutes. Due to a lack of a quorum of members present at the March meeting, the vote to approve the March minutes will be tabled to the July 2019 Conservation Commission meeting. Motion made to approve the 28 May, 2019 Becket Conservation Commission minutes, (Johnson/Babcock). MSV with 1 abstention (KK).

New Conservation Commission Members & Vacancies. There will be two vacancy on the Commission after this meeting.

Motion to ratify an Emergency Certificate to install a pond leveler for beaver dams at mile marker 24.6 on Rte 20, (Johnson/Brand). MSV.

General Mail:

Becket Highway Department provided Agent Stucklen with an update of the beach restoration work which include cutting back the underlying fabric followed by beach nourishment.

Becket Highway also informed the Commission of a temporary driveway permit with a culvert on Lane Road. No wetland resource areas are associated with this work.

MA Association of Conservation Commission annual membership fee is due. Motion made to pay MACC annual membership dues and online handbook fees, (Babcock/Brand). MSV.

Pittsfield Registry of Deeds will be processing Orders of Conditions differently. Commissioner Karlberg recommended a notation be added to application directions explaining it is the applicant's responsibility to file with the Registry of Deeds.

Agent Stucklen received a phone call from a Sherwood Green resident concerned about some recent mosquito spraying. While the town voted at Town Meeting to not spray for mosquitoes, Sherwood Green is a private development and is not constrained by the town vote.

Agent Stucklen summarized her recent email exchange with the Bleier's about the Enforcement Order issued for a violation on Bonny Rigg Road as the restoration work was suppose to be completed by May, 2019. Mr. Blieir responded to Agent Stucklen's email explaining the wet weather made it unfavorable to do the work. Commission requested Agent Stucklen contact Mr Bleier thanking him for the status report but informing him a request should have been made to the Commission to extend the deadline because of weather issues. Mr. Bleier should also be reminded of the conditions in the Enforcement Order including the need to contact the Agent prior to beginning work and providing the Commission with the name and contact information of the wetland consultant overseeing the work.

Commissioner Babcock mentioned a possible wetland violation. She will send the details to Agent Stucklen.

Motion to Adjourn, (Babcock/Brand). MSV. Vice Chair Karlberg adjourned the meeting at 8:32 PM.

Next meeting: June 25th, 2019 in the Berkshire Room at 6:30 pm.

Commissioners thanked K Karlberg and B Brand for their dedication and service to the Commission. They will be missed.

M Babcock announced Becket did receive a \$27,000 MVP Planning grant from the state and she will serve as the point person.

Action Items:

1. Agent Stucklen to email A Blieir regarding the Bonny Rigg Enforcement Order.
2. M Babcock to send details about possible wetland violation.