



TOWN OF WATERTOWN
Conservation Commission
Administration Building
149 Main Street
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02472

Leo Martin, Chairperson
Maria P. Rose, Vice Chair
Charles C. Bering, Member
Patrick W. Fairbairn, Member
Jamie O'Connell, Member

Telephone (617) 972-6426
Facsimile (617) 926-7778
www.watertown-ma.gov
Susan C. Jenness, Assistant

MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, June 2, 2021, 7:00 PM, Remote Meeting on Zoom

Conservation Commission Members Present: Leo Martin, Maria Rose, Jamie O'Connell, Patrick Fairbairn, Charles C. Bering

Absent: N/A

Also Present: Keenan Brinn, Mickey Marcus, Steve Martucci, Angie Kounellis, Patrick Garner, Valerie Miller, Zachary Richards, Esther Byun, Tony Palomba, Carolyn Gritter, Matt Langan, Morgan Pierson

Staff Present: Laurel Schwab, Conservation Agent, Susan C. Jenness, Assistant

Martin chaired the meeting.

- 1. Request for Extension of Order of Conditions- DEP #321-0133** Watertown Riverfront Park Restoration Project; Dan Driscoll, Applicant; DCR, Owner. Request for extension of Order of Conditions issued in 2008 and extended continuously since.

Dan Driscoll appeared for DCR reporting on the request for an extension on the Waterfront Park Restoration project. He gave updates highlighting plans for 5 new crosswalks to improve connection to the river and reservation complete with ADA compliancy. He explained that would create accessibility to the yacht club and Watertown Square and from North Beacon St to the playground. Curb ramps are planned along with updates to the sidewalks. Corrections are to be made to 17 spots suffering from erosion, and some restoration will be made to the foot path behind Perkins Hill adding porous pavement and some native plantings. Driscoll clarified they are seeking a 3-year

extension and expect bids to go out this summer for the completion of work by next summer.

Rose pointed out the project began a long time ago and asked Driscoll to be mindful of shifting standards for soil erosion and sediment control. She asked if the request for extension had to do with funding. Driscoll confirmed it was, and said the project is ready to go out to bid if this extension is approved, and that the project is at pre-construction phase now. Driscoll said that outreach will take place notifying the public that the project will be starting up, so that they can anticipate the noise and possible congestion that is associated with construction.

Motion: Fairbairn made a motion to close the public hearing and approve the request for an extension on the project. Rose seconded the motion made by Fairbairn.

Roll Call: A roll call was taken that unanimously agreed with the motion made by Fairbairn.

- 2. Public Hearing- Abbreviated Notice of Intent- Intersection of North Beacon St. and Charles River Rd.-** Proposing to attach equipment onto the existing wooden utility pole. Keenan Brinn, Applicant; Department of Conservation and Recreation, Owner.

Keenan Brinn presented the proposal to members of the CC. He explained Extenet is a provider of infrastructure support to ATT and T-Mobile for wireless reception in the community.

The project proposes installation of equipment that would span across N. Beacon St. to Athena Health, and include 12 feet of trenching that is 2 feet wide, and 36 inches deep running 100 feet across N. Beacon St.

Rose pointed out that DCR owns the land and asked if he had obtained permission from them to proceed with the project. Brinn explained that the project is scheduled to take place one year from now, and that DCR will not approve the project until he has approval from the Conservation Commission stating that all requirements have been addressed. Rose summarized that the CC could condition the project and Brinn could present documents to the Conservation Office once the owner of the land has granted permission for the project to take place. Rose pointed out that the town has a trench permit he should look into applying for before he proceeds.

Motion: Rose made a motion to close the public hearing and accept the proposal that the Conservation Commission will condition accordingly at the end of the meeting. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Roll Call: A roll call was taken that agreed with the motion made by Rose.

Public Hearing (Continued)- Notice of Intent- 0 Arlington St - to construct a 2-story commercial building and parking lot on property known as the Williams Pond parcel; Max Hatziliades, Applicant and Owner.

Mickey Marcus appeared to review the project for Max Hatziliades, the owner of the parcel. Marcus explained that he expected this meeting to be the first of multiple ones before an order of conditions would be entered. He said he hoped to discuss the project at this meeting, and that he had just gotten the third party review report from Patrick Garner, and required additional time to review Garner's inquiries with proper responses. He explained Rick Salva was part of the project team but unable to be present at this meeting, and that Valerie Miller, also part of the team, was present at this meeting. He explained that their team would like to have a site visit and further discuss the project.

Marcus explained that on the site there is a garden, between Elm St. and Arlington St. with a long history of contamination from back to the days of Hood Rubber Company, Watertown Mall, as well as town drainage. He explained that Hatziliades is planning for remediation of the site to improve current conditions, but he will not do so without some economic benefit, which is why he proposes to construct a building on the site.

He explained they would take all drainage at the site and put it over a stormceptor to remove PCB's, compounds and heavy metals, that would clean up and remediate the wetland system and improve the overall conditions of the 42,000 square foot impacted wetland.

Marcus explained he would like to converse with CC members tonight on a draft plan that falls under the category of restoration and reiterated that the site will only get remediated if there is some economic benefit to the owner.

Marcus pointed out that Patrick Garner, the expert wetland scientist hired by the Town, had a lot of comments about the work proposed adjacent to the wetlands and Sawins Pond. He offered that he could arrange Rick Salvo to attend future meetings to discuss details of the stormwater proposal.

O'Connell asked if what was now available would be sufficient to even hold a discussion. She pointed out they would need a very careful reading of the regulations to allow the project to proceed forward at this level. Rose asked why they were proposing an NOI at this point. Marcus explained they have been looking at this site, and discussing it over many years, and that the Planning Board has had some review and well as the DPW. He clarified they just got comments from the DPW on Stormwater for Elm St. He also clarified there is an upcoming meeting with the Planning Board.

Bering said he was confused about the contaminants and how that would work on this site. Valerie Miller confirmed that they would be working with LSP support on the site throughout the duration of the project to evaluate what they are working with at each step of the process. She also assured LSP support would be always present on the site to address concerns in the moment.

Marcus and Miller discussed that this site will be remediated in accordance with the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP) and a RAM (Remediation Abatement Plan) will be followed during the construction period.

They reviewed page 12 of Garner's memo regarding how they would be required to figure out if this proposal was improving conditions and protecting groundwater and wildlife habitat.

O'Connell pointed out that riverfront construction proposals need to address whether they are making improvements to the wildlife habitat or protecting groundwater. She said it is not always easy to make those determinations and that they would need to show proof of the standards.

They discussed the standards briefly such as no buildings or roads on the site, and that this was not listed as an abandoned dumping ground on the state's database. There are no impervious surfaces but lots of topsoil. They agreed they would need to qualify the wetland work.

Martin pointed out they have previously only allowed very limited encroachment into the 50 feet no build zone. He said the applicant would need specify what percent of the 50-foot NBZ was being developed, and that they lack definition at this time.

Marcus made a request to continue the public hearing and he also asked to schedule a site visit with members of the CC present.

Motion: Rose made a motion to continue the public hearing and to schedule a site visit. Fairbairn seconded the motion.

Poll: A unanimous poll was reached with all members agreeing to continue the public hearing and schedule a site visit.

3. Public Hearing- Notice of Intent- 64 Pleasant Street- Proposing interior renovations of existing buildings and reconfiguration of parking lot. Morgan Pierson, Applicant; Berkeley Pleasant Street, LLC, Owner.

Schwab advised the Commission that the Conservation Office discovered there was no file number issued by Mass DEP for this project yet, so no decision could be rendered at this meeting. She clarified that the members were able to discuss and review details of the project with the project team at this public meeting.

Esther Byun, the Project Manager, began the review of the proposal. She clarified that the building on this site is the Sasaki Building, which is a historic mill complex. The new proposal for the site is a life science lab and office building. She clarified that the design has been reviewed and discussed in detail with Schwab.

A developer's conference with Town staff and community meetings have been held and very good feedback was received about the plans. Steve Martorano of Bohler explained that discussions on this proposal began in 2020 with a vision of rehabbing the building to shift the use to lab and office. It was discovered that water and electrical upgrades were previously done by Sasaki, and the best way to deal with phosphorous removal was a full stormwater utility upgrade under the parking lot with some landscape redesign. The landscape design would be handled by Zach Richards who has worked in the building for many years. Other details include the addition of a bus stop and a Blue Bike station.

Richards pointed out the unique layout of the site, with a parking lot in front and in the middle of the building, where they will preserve a lot of the existing landscape. Matt Langan said there is a strong landscape framework coming from the ginkgo trees and day lilies that wrap around back, to an area where lush native vegetation will be added along the greenway. He pointed out the three curb cuts in the existing conditions and explained plans for removing two as a safety feature, to protect pedestrians and bikers by setting a framework for strong public accessibility with safety measures in place.

The existing conditions where you can turn right or left into parking lots will remain the same, and they plan to reduce the dimensions of parking spaces, add tandem parking and

raise the grade a bit. Work is being proposed in the 150 Buffer Zone for ½ the rear parking spots and ½ the building footprint. The wetlands boundary was delineated in 2017 by Sasaki and they will have a new delineation report to send in soon.

The following changes to the property are proposed:

- Improvements to the appearance of Pleasant St.
- Remove unloading vehicles from Pleasant St.
- Add a new Emergency Access for fire and safety vehicles.
- New utilities will feed onto Pleasant St., away from the Buffer Zone.
- The 2 new infiltration systems in the rear will remove TSS and Phosphorous and meet the Mass Stormwater Standards.
- New glassed entry into the historic building.

Rose inquired if they would be digging or excavating and what if any impact would there be to the dam. The team responded that there will be no change to the footprint of the building and no impacts to the dam. She said that they would need controls for construction taking place that close to the river.

O'Connell asked if impervious area was going to be decreased, and it was said to be by about 2,000 square feet. She pointed out if it were a historic mill building that they would need to have documentation added to the record. The team agreed to provide documentation.

Fairbairn asked for more diversity in planting and Langan said they will need to identify what is on the property now and then decide what the best choices are for creating diversity in the landscaping. Bering had no comments.

Martin inquired about infiltration, and he was told they are going through the permitting channels currently on that issue. He said he was concerned with any existing drains that feed and channel out to the river, in particular from the parking lot. The developers are working with Van Ness for parking at this time and it had been determined the site was previously very under-parked.

Motion: A motion was made by O'Connell to continue the public hearing until the next scheduled Conservation Commission meeting. Rose seconded the motion.

Poll: A unanimous poll was reached agreeing to continue the public hearing until the next Conservation Commission meeting.

4. Agent Report

- a. CPA-O'Connell reported the CPC is currently publishing a draft plan that will then go off to Town Council for acceptance of final changes. CPC is also currently calculating the amount of open space per resident.
- b. Climate and Energy Plan- A stakeholder advisory meeting was held that Martin attended. The Climate and Energy Plan will be broken into 5 topics. Martin will take part in Natural Resources working group. Community Engagement is being planned and they have discussed ways to engage high school students, other non-traditional groups, and renters through the housing authority, the Famers Market, and Faire on the Square. The 1st of 2 surveys launched recently.
- c. Pollinator update- They have been some great photos of the new DPW garden posted to social media, and a blog post is forthcoming from Pam Phillips.
- d. Ongoing Orders of Conditions
- e. Arsenal Park phase B- Glenn Howard was out of town so there were no new submissions sent in on Phase A. There are concrete pieces going in and grading around the entrance and the sign should be installed by next month. The site is looking more and more like a park.

5. Minutes-May 5, 2021

Motion: Rose made a motion to accept the minutes from the May 5, 2021, meeting as modified. O'Connell seconded the motion.

Poll: A unanimous poll was reached accepting the minutes of the May 5, 2021, meeting as modified.

6. Other Business- Fairbairn gave an update on his work at Whitney Hill that has taken place since the March Informational Meeting.

Fairbairn reminded members that a resident had suggested a sign to demarcate the third access point to the park, placed in a location that would be in clear sight, for the dog walkers approaching the park about the rules in Whitney Hill.

Fairbairn said his research continues for ways to tap into the Conservation Association, and other volunteer organizations and candidates, who are seeking to serve, by working on the improvements needed to the trails, and eventually collaboration on a trail management plan.

During the summer months, Fairbairn said he will be looking forward to accomplishing the studies on the plots at Whitney Hill over the months of June through August or September. Fairbairn said he is still in need of one adult and one member of the Commission to join him, who might also be interested as a potential predecessor to him, when he is ready to retire.

Motion: Rose made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 PM. O’Connell seconded the motion.

Poll: A poll was reached unanimously agreeing to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 PM.