

**HADLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

June 11, 2013

*Approved at the 8/13/13meeting*

PRESENT: Paul Alexanderson, Chair; Paulette Kuzdeba, Vice-Chair; Edwin Matuzsko; Gary Pelissier; Jim Hafner; Steve Szymkowicz; and Janice Stone, Conservation Staff.

**1. 7:00 PM Notice of Intent #170-219 continued.** Filed by N. Leighton for construction of an expanded deck and living room bump out to existing single family house in Riverfront Area and floodplain at *105 Honey Pot Road*. Applicant wishes to continue to next meeting, to assemble additional information requested at site visit June 4. Ed made the motion, seconded by Jim, to continue the public hearing until the July 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. All voted in favor.

**2. 7:05 PM Notice of Intent #170-220.** Filed by Foresight Land Services on behalf of Berkshire Gas, for installation of a new 12" gas main under the Connecticut River with horizontal drilling from *River Drive* opposite Huntington Road. Paul Scarpa present for Berkshire Gas, Steve Mack present for Foresight Land Services. Mr. Mack explained that there was only one feed to the Amherst-Hadley area, and with continued growth they need to supplement more gas to the area. They will be connecting Hatfield and Hadley under the Connecticut River. There is a 6" gas main there now. The new 12" will run parallel to the existing one. The project is within Riverfront Area, 100-year floodplain, NHESP habitat (NOI submitted to them), and Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW). They will put swamp mats over the portion of the BVW they cross, and will "restore in place" the portion of the BVW that they will open cut with a 3-foot trench to install the gas main. They will dig a pit further in for the direct boring, and from there it will be underground and underwater. Mr. Mack stated that no floodplain, Riverfront Area, or Bank will be altered. For the wetland restoration, they will excavate the soils and separate material for later, then put subsoil, topsoil back and seed with conservation seed mix. The BVW alteration will be about 3 feet deep, 600 feet long, for 1800 cubic feet or 50 cubic yards of soil. The tests they have done so far show a lot of clay (52' down). Mr. Scarpa stated that they intend to do the crossing at low water, probably August. It will probably take 2 days to drill, and once they start they cannot stop. Ed asked about contingencies for severe storms. If they start, they have to keep drilling and pulling the line through. It will probably take 1½ weeks to complete the job. Commission discussed with Mr. Scarpa about putting in some kind of check dams in the trench, to keep the replacement sand in the trench from draining water from the site. Mr. Scarpa agreed to install 4-5 betonite dams in the trench in the wetland area. Public Hearing needs to be continued, to await letter from NHESP. Ed made the motion, seconded by Steve, to continue the hearing to July 9<sup>th</sup>. All voted in favor.

**3. 7:35 PM Request for Determination** filed by MA Department of Conservation & Recreation, for repairs and maintenance work on the *Norwottuck Rail Trail* bridge over the Connecticut River and in the Riverfront Area. Alyssa Jacobs present from Epsilon Associates, on behalf of the DCR. Greg Imbaro, engineer for the project, and David Lenhardt from DCR. Ms. Jacobs described the repairs and maintenance being proposed, in addition to what has already been approved previously by the Conservation Commission. All work on the bridge and abutments are not in the water. Mostly repair/replacement of decking, railings, steel structure and vegetation removal. The pier work will be done from a barge on the river, with full containment to catch anything that may fall off the bridge. The work on the bridge may take 4

months. All the staging is in Northampton, where the barge will be anchored as well. Gary made a motion to approve the project with a negative determination, seconded by Edwin. All voted in favor.

**4. 7:44 PM Request for Determination** filed by Land Solutions Inc., for approval of wetland boundary delineation at *207 Russell Street*. This item cancelled, applicant not ready with materials yet.

**5. 7:45 PM Request for Determination** filed by University of Massachusetts Facilities Planning, for installation of underground water line in the buffer zone near *McGuirk Stadium*, and underground electrical conduits in two buffer zone locations near *Mullins Way and Stadium Drive*. Bruce Griffin from New England Environmental present on behalf of applicant, and Jason Vendetti from UMass Facilities Planning also present to answer questions. They described the 3 projects and locations. On the north end of campus (Mullins Way and MA Ave), an electrical conduit is being added to a 12-duct bank, encased in concrete. They will be over the existing conduits, with a little fill added on top. Some of this will be in the 35' buffer zone. Second conduit is near the childcare center. They have to remove an electrical pole and some transformers. The line is underground, on the opposite side of the driveway from the wetland, and outside the 35' buffer. They will put silt sacks on the catch basins in the area. The third line is for new potable water into the stadium (connecting with Amherst water on Amity Street). It is within the 35' buffer because they had to maintain at least 10' distance from existing active sewer and electrical lines. They will return the ground to the same level after the installation. They proposed putting 12" of sand around the water line, but the Commission was concerned that would help drain water away from the wetland along this new sand seam. Applicant agreed to put in thrustblocks or megalugs in the trench to keep the pipes from pulling apart and use in situ soil to prevent this from happening. Gary made a motion to approve the projects with a negative determination, with the change as described above. Jim seconded, all voted in favor.

**6. 8:10 PM Other Business.** Gary had to leave. Arthur McCollum not present for discussion on changes to the public trail at the USFWS Conte Refuge off Moody Bridge Rd. Continued to next meeting. Ken Lynds present to discuss *47 Bay Road* (the purple house). His clients (the Deforges) are building a house on lower Middle Street and are trying to sell this place. Mr. Lynds thought the Commission or some land protection group might like to acquire it since the backyard is wetland and floods. The group could remove the house and return it to nature. Mr. Lynds said the asking price was \$160,000 for the house on less than an acre. There is very little front yard, and when the snowplow comes by they have to shovel out from their front door. Mr. Lynds claims the house is "livable". Commission told him they were not interested in buying a house lot, or for that price.

**7. 8:25 PM Discussion** with UMass group about a possible solar project at *Hadley Farm*. Tom Shaw, Steve Hebert and Mickey Spokus were present to discuss their idea about creating a solar array that could still support some forms of agriculture. Mr. Hebert spoke about making solar more sustainable, by supporting grazing herds of animals. They are experimenting with this in South Deerfield, allowing more spacing so agriculture can co-exist. They want to try it on the Hadley Farm. Mr. Hebert pointed out on a map sections 1,2,3 and maybe 4 as sites for this new solar array. The panels are on higher posts, with enough gaps between them to allow grasses to grow. He told the Commission this is the only place in the US where people are doing anything like this. They will start with pasture around the solar panels, but may eventually be able to grow vegetables as well. They want to experiment more with different spacing. They are

experimenting in the fields now with different poles in different depths, testing structural strength. The poles are hollow, so they are pounded into the ground and will not push out as much as solid ones. Mr. Hebert claimed that in some wetland areas, installing these poles and panels will be less impact to the wetlands than the present mowing. Commission and UMass agreed the wetland boundaries had to be determined first. Mark Christos described the rack system, with panels being 7 1/2 feet above the ground. This would work for grazing cattle, sheep and goats. Horses are too tall and might rear up. They are looking at using 5-10 acres, area will be fenced. Commission suggested the view would be even worse than regular solar panels with the panels a lot higher. Mr. Christos said they had an interconnection agreement with WMECO, the net energy would be credited back to the University. There would be about 9000 panels and 2200 poles. They expect to complete the agreement with WMECO this month, then going to the Conservation Commission, Planning Board etc. It will probably take about 12 weeks for the construction phase. See handout they provided.

**8. 8:10 PM Other Business.** Upcoming APRs. Janice told the Commission the S&J Realty Trust APR on *River Drive* on the Sunderland border (about 70 acres) should be completed this month. The newly resurrected Rt 47 Scenic Byway land protection funds were used to cover the town's required 10% (\$73,000). The money was coming from CPA (\$30,000 Open Space and \$43,000 CPA General fund), so some of that money will go back into the Open Space account for future use. The Boisvert/Kelley APR (*River Drive*) should be completed by the end of the year. The town's portion of the Boisvert Cemetery Road APR was covered by a grant from the Kestrel Trust, so the Town and Commission did not have to pay for that one either. There may be a new TDR project at the *Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School*. Ed made the motion to approve the minutes for March, April, and May 2013. Steve seconded, and all approved. Update on Aronson property (Dawson Wildlife Reserve): the Conservation Restriction is being reviewed in Boston still. The Open Space Plan is moving ahead with Sarah LaCour. Bills payable. Ed made the motion to pay the first bill from the Open Space Plan consultant, for \$2200.81. Paulette seconded, all voted in favor. DEP has forwarded anonymous complaints about unpermitted activities along the Connecticut River shoreline (*River Drive*). Janice is working with them on the investigation of charges. Art on the Dike. Commissioners discussed the "art" wooden structure along the dike on the Dawson Conservation land. The agreement had been that it would not be on conservation land, but the people never came to the Commission for approval of work on Conservation land or for the Riverfront Area. Janice told to contact Thomas Long at Hampshire College. It has been described as an opportunity for people to be able to see the Connecticut River rather than just the dike, but one cannot see the River from the structure unless you climb up the highest section. It is supposed to be temporary.

**9. 9:15 PM ADJOURNMENT.** Paulette made the motion to adjourn. Ed seconded, all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted by

Janice Stone

Materials used in review and deliberation of agenda items will be found in corresponding project folder in Conservation Commission office.