

Hubbardston Conservation Commission Minutes

May 7, 2014

Library Basement

Meeting called to order 7:00 p.m. in the Hubbardston Library Conference Room located in the Library Basement.

Present: Steve Mossey, Tony Coppola, Larry Therrien, Tom Larson

Guests: Rebecca Budaj, Erica Summers, Mark Johnson, Tim Kihart, Paul Marquis, Wendy Howes, Alan Rawle, Andrew Vitz

First Order of Business:

Erica Summers from District 3 DOT, came in to discuss resurfacing Burnshirt Road. The total length of the project is approximately 1.8 miles. Ms. Summers stated that they would be grinding two inches off the road and resurfacing it. The Board stated that erosion control was noted and needs to be done as stated and all catch basins need to be cleaned.

Motion: Tom Larson

Second: Tony Coppola

Motion made to accept the plan for the Determination of Applicability as written with erosion control noted and catch basins clean. All in favor. Motion carries.

55 Grimes Road:

The Board requested Paul Marquis come in regarding a complaint that was called in by a neighbor stating that clear cutting had been going on. The Board issued a Cease and Desist on April 29 and requested his presence to discuss what is going on. Mr. Marquis stated that he cut dead trees on his property and those that were affected by the ice storm we had a few years back. Mr. Marquis also said that he was picking up all the debris on the property that was blown down by storms and dead branches. Mr. Larson spoke on this subject stating what had happened when he was within a 50' buffer zone with work he was doing. Rebecca Budaj, from DCR, stated that Mr. Marquis had been spoken to in the past regarding taking trees down. In a letter dated April 26, 2012, from DCR, Mr. Marquis was told that the following requirements must be met within those portions of the subject area that are within 200 feet of Lovewell Pond, "tree stumps must be left in place, no disturbance of the existing forest soils, no fill may be placed, no lawn may be planted or maintained, and the areas cut must be allowed to grow back in as a forest". Ms. Budaj stated that DCR regulate 400' from the pond and even within a 200' buffer, their regulations are very strict. Tony Coppola from the Conservation Commission, took a ride out to the property to see what had been done. Mr. Coppola stated that he saw a

fair amount of trees taken down and that the slope on his property is extreme and any drainage on the slope would be runoff into the pond. Ms. Budaj suggested that Paul Marquis call Jeff Lacey of DCR and Mr. Lacey would go out to look at the work being done and what other things Mr. Marquis was hoping to do. Mr. Marquis stated he would call Jeff Lacey and have him out to see the property.

Motion: Larry Therrien

Second: Tom Larson

Motion made to accept the April 16, 2014 minutes with no corrections. All-in favor. Motion carried.

Wendy Howes:

Wendy Howes came into the meeting stating that she had been reading the minutes from May 2013 and under the **June 4 Town Meeting** heading it stated that "it was suggested that someone from the Conservation Commission go to the Town Meeting so that they can speak with regards to the issue on the Warrant". Ms. Howe wanted the minutes to be amended to state "Conservation Commission go to the Town Meeting so that they can speak with regards the Warrant which states "Shall the Town vote to protect nesting birds and other wildlife on the fields of town-owned Conservation property by designating July 21st as the earliest mowing date and by amending the existing hay management plan (part of the Mt. Jefferson Conservation Area Land Use Management Plan) in accordance with said designation. ". The Board stated that the minutes would reflect the change.

Ms. Howe's also wanted to know how the Board felt about the mowing being changed to a later date. Tony Coppola stated that Mike Stevens spoke at the meeting and the Conservation Commission was against the date that was stated in the Warrant and preferred if the date was moved up by two weeks. The problem with the cut being at the later date on the Warrant is that the hay becomes useless and not able to be sold as feed hay. The Board stated that there should be Town Meeting minutes that Ms. Howe could look at. Mr. Coppola stated that if we stop cutting it those fields would go back. Ms. Howe was proposing the first cut after July 20 to protect the birds. Again, Mr. Coppola stated that the hay becomes bedding hay as opposed to feed hay. Many people spoke at Town Meeting against this proposal.

Drew Vitz, State Ornithologist:

Drew Vitz spoke on grassland birds and how they are declining in MA. The birds have decline 70% in the Northeast over the past four decades. Mr. Coppola asked if Bobolinks are an endangered species and Mr. Vitz stated that they are not an endangered species. Mr. Vitz stated that he is here to basically raise awareness and let us know what other states have done as well. Usually the birds leave the nest in mid- July. Other states have done a Memorial Day

cut and then a Mid-July cut. Another option is to raise the wheels by 7-8 inches so that you avoid the nests. One last option is to cut just the outside of the field and leave the inside alone. Mr. Vitz said that he would be available to help if the Board or Town would like more information. Mr. Therrien stated that he would like to table this discussion. The discussion was tabled. Ms. Howe's then stated that there would be an East Quabbin Land Trust conference on Friday, May 30 in Hardwick and all were invited. The Board thanked Ms. Howe's for coming in.

Madison Greens:

Matt Olson of Madison Greens asked for an extension for Order of Conditions that he has. After reviewing the documents the Board made a motion.

Motion: Tony Coppola

Second: Tom Larson

Motion made to extend the Order of Conditions for Madison Green. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion: Larry Therrien

Second: Tom Larson

Motion made to adjourn at 8:17 pm with no further discussion. All in favor.

Approved: _____



Date: _____

6/4/14

