

Conservation Commission Remote Meeting *Corrected*

These minutes are corrected due to a website error and are the complete and accurate minutes for the April 5, 2021 meeting.

Monday, April 5, 7:00 pm until 10:00 pm

A meeting of the [Conservation Commission](#)

Also Present:

- Tessa Dowling Conservation Agent (submitting minutes)
- Jonathan Thompson

Approved Meeting Minutes

Meeting opened: 7:01 PM

Meeting closed: 8:01 PM

1. Meeting Preliminaries

- Meeting Opened / Attendance Taken (see above).
- Minutes Approved: [Mon, Mar 1 - Conservation Commission Remote Meeting](#)

1. Public Hearing

There were no Public Hearings.

2. Administrative Matters

- **7:04: Certificate of Compliance for 1(5) Amherst Rd DEP File # 200-0178**
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General Discussion...

The Order of Conditions (OOC) for #5 (now #1) Amherst Rd was issued in January of 2016. The landowner, Jonathan Thompson submitted the following description of the work that was completed at the property under the OOC:

1. The septic was installed exactly as planned and was inspected

2. The erosion controls were used just as described.
3. The utility was moved underground under the driveway, this was also inspected by the LCC
4. The drainpipe from the pond was deemed fine and was never replaced
5. The invasive species control was attempted but bittersweet, multiflora rose, buckthorn and winged euonymus are nasty plants that are difficult to eradicate.

Robison and Tiner visited the property on March 31, 2021 and felt ready to issue a complete certificate.

There were no questions from Commission to Thompson.

Dowling screen shared the Certificate form and it was reviewed and approved by the Commission.

Dowling informed Thompson that she would send both an email and a hard copy to him the next day so that it could be registered at the Registry of Deeds.

2.

- **MOTION, moved by Isaiah Robison, seconded by Joan Deely: to accept the Certificate of Compliance for 1 Amherst Rd as presented by Dowling. .**

Pass: Aye: Isaiah Robison, David Powicki, Andrew Young, Gail Berrigan, Jono Neiger, Joan Deely. Not Present: Ralph Tiner.

The Commission issued a complete Certificate of Compliance for 1 (5) Amherst Rd (DEP file # 200-0178).

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- **7:15: NECRR RDA site visit**
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General Discussion...

The New England Central Railroad Company submitted a Request for Determination (RDA) regarding marking the "no spray" zones along the railroad track through town to protect the wetland areas. Dowling wanted to know if the Commission wanted to be on a site visit to the railroad and commented that the submitted project map

did not show the wetland areas.

Commission members said that the work was routine and they did not need to go on a site visit due having visited a large portion of the railroad track during the Eversource site visit. The Commission requested that Dowling ask the applicant if there were any changes to the plan from previous years.

Per Berrigan, the main wetlands areas are along Juggler Meadow Rd and near Long Plain Brook and Cranberry Pond.

The hearing for the RDA is scheduled for the April 19, 2021 meeting.

- **7:38: Forest Cutting Plan policy**

General Discussion...

Dowling confirms with the Commission that the policy of emailing the forest cutting plans that come in to members for review is working.

Per Powicki, DCR permitted forest cutting plans allow for stream crossings without permitting by the Commission. There can be issues with soil erosion that the Commission learns about after the fact when neighbors reach out.

Per Young, foresters are not required to notify the Commission before a tree harvest starts.

The Commission requests that Dowling asks DCR foresters to attend the next Commission meeting and give advice on what the Commission's role should be regarding forest cutting plan review.

3. Old Business

- **7:51: Trail Camera on Conservation Land**

General Discussion...

Lisa Brooks has permission from the Chair and the Commission to temporarily install a trail camera at Roaring Brook conservation area for scientific research. The Commission has a description of

the project on file. Brooks has agreed to share any quality wildlife photos from the camera with the Commission.

The Commission requests that Brooks present the findings of her research to the town after the research is completed. Dowling will relay this request to Brooks.

- **7:52: Town Conservation Land and Stewardship**

General Discussion...

The Commission scheduled an extra meeting on April 19, 2021 to focus on conservation and land stewardship in town. Berrigan has shared a list of town conservation lands. Powicki emails a link to the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust map of protected lands to the Commission and Dowling.

Per Berrigan, Kestrel Land Trust may be interested in applying for a state partnership grant and could potentially support a project to buy a new property/properties to conserve in town.

The Commission will review the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan, which reflects town goals for open spaces.

- **7:55: MACC Conference Reminder**

General Discussion...

Dowling reminds the Commission that Wetlands Protection Act funds can be used to reimburse members who want to attend the upcoming Massachusetts Associate of Conservation Commission 2021 on-line Conference.

Deely will be presenting on Japanese knotweed.

A friend of Nieger will be presenting on soil health.

4. New Business

- **7:57: National Grid Notice**

General Discussion...

The Commission received a letter from Nation Grid notifying the town that there will be routine maintenance within the utility right of way starting in April. Some of the work may be within wetland areas but involve Wetland Protection Act exempt tree work or maintenance work within the permitted structure platforms. No new wetlands areas will be disturbed.

5. Other New Business not considered as of the date of this notice

- **7:26: Upcoming Projects**

General Discussion...

RDA on Hemenway Rd.

An RDA from landowners along Hemenway Rd will soon be submitted to the Commission. Robison is familiar with the property as trees were previously cut too close to the stream. Grass Roots, Robison's landscaping company, removed invasive shrubs and planted a meadow seed mix on the property. The new project will propose building a new house over 50ft from the intermittent stream.

The proposed sites for building and septic system are flagged and straw waddles for erosion control are already in place. The Commission agrees to a site visit to the property at 5:30pm the next day (April 6, 2021).

Building Permit at 350 Shutesbury Rd.

The landowners at 350 Shutesbury Rd contacted the Commission regarding a building permit on their land. Dowling responded letting them know that there was riverfront area on their property related to Roaring Brook and that they would need to file if they were within 200ft of the brook. The landowners will be sending the Commission site plans to show they are working outside of the riverfront area. Robison can decide if a site visit is necessary and then sign off on the project.

- **7:48: Erosion Control at Permitted Projects**

General Discussion...

Berrigan noticed that erosion control barriers at the Leverett Dam and the Coke Kiln Bridge project sites are still present. The areas need to be visited to see whether vegetation has established sufficiently the the erosion control can be removed. Dowling will check the conditions on the Coke Kiln project.

Nieger recommends creating a shared calendar that keeps track of projects and required site visits. Dowling will look into creating such a calendar or other ways to organize projects.

- **7:59: Native Plant Trust seed collection**

General Discussion...

The Commission grants permission for Miho Connolly, an employee of the Native Plant Trust and the previous Conservation Agent, to collect native plant seeds from town conservation land. Connolly submitted a list of species that will be collected and the methods that are used to collect the seeds.

6. Meeting Wrap-up

- Next Meetings:

1. **Mon, Apr 19, at 7:00 PM** "Conservation Commission Remote Meeting"
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Meeting Closed at 8:01 PM.