

Ashby Conservation Commission
Minutes for the Meeting of November 2, 2016

The meeting was opened at 7:30 with Tim Bauman, Cathy Kristofferson, and Roberta Flashman in attendance. Bob Leary joined the meeting at 7:34.

Minutes of the meeting of October 19, 2016 were reviewed and accepted unanimously as written.

Treasurer's Report: Receipts for \$38.19 for postage were received. A request was also submitted to the Town Accountant for a refresh of our petty cash.

Correspondence:

10-21-16 Mike Bussell emailed inquiring about what needed to be done to permit a new well to be drilled at 584 Main Street. Chair responded that an RDA would most likely be needed. The Commission is concerned about the tailings from the drilling and the flushing of the well with chlorine. Want to ensure that neither of these enter a wetland.

10-21-16 Anne Gagnon of Mass FEW emailed the Chair about two pieces of land: 0 WATATIC MT ROAD, ASHBY 01431 Map 1 Parcel 4, and a parcel near the outlet of Lower Wrights Pond. There is approximately \$1800 in outstanding taxes on the Watatic parcel.

10-21-16 MACC mail announcing a +2% dues increase for FY18(to \$191.00).

10-24-16 Lindsay Martucci, Member Services Coordinator, MACC emailed the Chair requesting an update of the Ashby membership. The Chair updated the Ashby roster.

10-25-16 Environmental Monitoring Report - Week 7, Cassiopeia Solar Farm - 0 & 1128 Main Street. Note: Reports 1 thru 7 have all been received.

10-25-16 Stephanie Longley requested assistance in completing the Form 8A for the work at 1233 Main Street. Chair provided DEP # and suggested sources for other information needed.

10-25-16 eMACC Newsletter received with new of the Fall Conference. Cathy attended the conference. Cathy will share the slides when they are sent to her. The subject of the conference was forestry.

Information from the conference included:

- 1) When calculating what needs to be left uncut in a wetland or BVW, the 50% basal area that can be cut needs to be distributed throughout the area and take into account what will be left of the canopy spread.
- 2) Cutting plans will be online soon.
- 3) Change of use requires a town permit, but it was unclear who the issuing body was for such a permit.

10-26-16 Cathy sent an outlining the neighborhood concerns about the Draper property on Jones Hill Road. Roberta had recently walked the property and reported that no tree plantings had yet occurred, there was some seeding, there was some erosion but not into wetlands, and there was an additional culvert that she had not seen before. Perhaps the project is waiting for completion of a 2nd cutting to plant the seedlings. Cathy will check with the forester, Gary Gouldrup.

10 -31-16 Notice of a meeting at Mount Wachusett Community College on Friday, November 18 (9 - 11:30 am) to consider cost-effective Stormwater solutions for towns. Roberta forwarded the email to Town Admin suggesting that Highway Dept. attend.

Notice of Annual Meeting of NRWA, Thursday 11-3-16 at 7:00pm, Devens Common arrived via email.

Old Business:

Further discussion about the tax/title property list was deferred to the next meeting.

Chapter 61 Tax Status vs Conservation Restrictions tax status shows that Chapter 61 offers a significant discount in real estate taxes. Cathy talked with Lois Raymond and learned that there is now a discounted tax rate for CR or FL lands – taxed at a land value of \$800/acre. So, this is 40%% of what

the regular land value is for undeveloped backland (2,000/acre). Chapter 61(forestry) pays taxes on roughly 5% the value of the land; Chapter 61a (agriculture) pays taxes on a slightly higher value of the land, and Chapter 61b(recreation) pays taxes on a slightly higher value of the land. But clearly, undeveloped land receives the biggest tax incentive to stay undeveloped through the Chapter 61 program. The program does, however, put a lien on the property for back taxes at the time of sale and an option for the town to purchase the property at the same price as an existing offer. These encumbrances are the reason for the higher tax discount. The Conservation Restriction (CR) and Forest Legacy (FL) designations do limit development of the property far into the future, but the property remains in the private sector, and oftentimes the owner has received remuneration for the CR or FL. An owner can have CR or FL lands enrolled in the Chapter 61 program and receive the tax discount at the Chapter 61 rates.

The Commission responded through the Town Clerk to the Request for Records as submitted by Mr. Saari of Rindge, NH. No response yet from Mr. Saari.

New Business:

November 9th, 7:00 PM. The Planning Board will be holding a hearing for the subdivision located on Old Northfield Road and Route 31. After review of the plans, there was a motion made and seconded to have the Conservation Commission comment at the Planning Board hearing on the plan that the conventional plan for the lower section would not be permitted as proposed. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Discussion of the proposed online Environmental Monitoring Report produced by Cathy resulted in a decision to send the link to Mr. Babineau and see how it works for him as a reporting tool. The report was produced as a google doc and submissions made through the report go directly to a spreadsheet.

The Commission discussed the possibility of purchasing a couple of hunter orange jackets with Conservation Commission identification on them. Sizing of the jackets would allow them to be worn by any Commissioner. This would identify Commissioners when they have to walk properties. The jackets would also make Commissioners visible during hunting seasons. Cathy, who already owns a hunter orange jacket, is against such a purchase. Bob will investigate pricing at two stores, one of which can custom printing onto the jackets. Purchase would have to be made from the Cons Comm budget rather than the Wetlands Fee account. Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

Cathy showed us a new mapping program from MASSGIS. This combines google maps with ArcView data. This results in better resolution while retaining the parcel information and overlays.

South Rd fields will be monitored by Land Trust on Friday, Nov 4 @ 11am.

Hearings:

8:00 PM, Continued from 10-19-16, NOI for Bruce Adams, of Adams Construction and Realty Inc. for project at 1341 Richardson Road. Hearing was closed at 8:52. The Commission will have a special meeting at 6:45 on Nov 9, 2016 to issue the OOC.

Hearings Scheduled: None.

Site Visits:

11/1/16 Doug Leab, Piper Rd – check location for a shed. Would need a determination so can have an exemption for a shed within a lawn that is more than 50 ft. from the edge of wetlands. Bob and Cathy conducted the site visit.

Site Visits Needed:

Mike Bussell, 584 Main Street, intends to drill for a new well.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:42pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Roberta Flashman