

**TOWN OF HAMPDEN
MASSACHUSETTS**

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Conservation Commission
Bonnie Geromini
Judy McKinley Brewer
Philip Grant
Ted Zebert
Andrew Netherwood
Tim Hanley

HAMPDEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING

March 29, 2017

Attendance: Chairman, Bonnie Geromini, and Conservation Board Members Judy McKinley Brewer, Phil Grant, Ted Zebert and Andrew Netherwood were in attendance. Also in attendance was Branden Garvey, who will soon be joining the Conservation Commission.

Not in attendance: Board member Tim Hanley was not in attendance.

Bonnie Geromini made a motion to open the meeting at 7:03p.m. Phil Grant seconded the motion. All were in favor.

New Business:

- Parks & Recreation (swing bench in play scape area)
Request for Determination on the installation of a swing bench: Chairman Bonnie Geromini announced that the first item on the agenda is a Request for Determination of Applicability filed by the Town of Hampden, Parks & Recreation. Cindi Connors informed the Commission that she was there on behalf of the board members for Parks & Rec. who were unable to attend the meeting tonight. Cindi explained that the department would like to install a swing bench in between the water park and the play scape area making it easier for parents to sit down while watching their children. She informed the board that the Parks & Rec department must still go before the building department for approval. Bonnie read the work description, as written in the request, out loud to the other board members. The board briefly discussed that this is a buffer zone project. They did not believe that the installation of the swing in that location would damage the resource area.

Bonnie made a motion to issue a negative determination. Phil seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously in favor of issuing a negative determination for the installation of the swing bench.

- Minutes – The board took a few minutes to review the minutes from the special meeting on 3/8/17, and the meeting on 3/15/17. The minutes from each meeting were accepted with amendments.

- David Gallant (Lot #4 Glendale Rd.)

Notice of Intent for the proposed building of a single family home: Chairman Bonnie Geromini stated that the next item on the agenda was the Notice of Intent filed by Mr. Gallant who has supplied the Commission with his plans to build a single family home. Bonnie, Judy & Ted will be voting on this Notice of Intent.

John Masuck, from Ryan Levesque & Associates, presented himself to the board stating that he will be presenting the information regarding the Notice of Intent plans for David & Cheryl Gallant. Mr. Gallant is also present. Mr. Masuck informed the board that the site is approximately 5 acres and that the topography slopes from the street line on Glendale Rd. to the west. The wetland area is located on the northerly side of the property by the Zeroogian's property. Mr. Masuck reviewed the plan to build the proposed house, informing the board that the new structure would be built centrally to keep a distance from the resource areas. There will also be a gravel driveway, designed to meet the requirements. In the plans, a silt fence would be located outside of the 25 ft. buffer. They are also proposing an anti-tracking pad to be installed on the street to prevent erosion. If needed, erosion control matting will be installed as well. The paved portion of the driveway will be 25 ft. or longer, meeting the town's standards. The board informed Mr. Gallant that permanent markers are required for a 25 ft. buffer of resource areas (wetlands). Bonnie also mentioned that the circuit rider from the DEP has had questions regarding this property after using thermal imaging. The board had looked at the areas of concern on the site inspection, and found that what he saw on the thermal map was actually rock crop outings. He had also questioned if the front area was being mowed. Judy stated that they are allowed to mow the area 2 times per year, and it had been mowed last fall prior to Mr. Gallant purchasing the property.

Abutter Dennis Chaffe introduced himself and asked if there was a way to compensate the water draining from Mr. Gallant's property to his own. He voiced his concern over the sloping of the property and mentioned the possibility of having adding a culvert in between the two properties. Ted asked the applicant about installing a culvert beside the driveway to prevent water from flowing through to Mr. Chaffee's property. Mr. Masuck informed the board that he had no reason to think there were significant surface flows. However, if warranted they could put install a 12" – 15" culvert. Mr. Masuck stated they could revive proposal that the water remains on the property so drainage does not affect water that is going from Mr. Chaffee's land to the bordering vegetative wetlands. The board then briefly discussed whether adding another pipe would be considered a continuation of the plan, or if a new plan would be needed. Mr. Chaffee also asked where the septic system would be located. Mr. Masuck explained that the elevation of the property drops down significantly from 671,000 to 655,000, and that the septic system would be located at the lower elevation (655,000).

Judy made a motion to order silt barriers, permanent markers, minimal mowing of front area and a re-drawing if there's a culvert added. Ted seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken – Judy – yes, Ted – yes, Bonnie – yes. The board voted unanimously in favor of the Order of Conditions to be issued. Bonnie informed Mr. Gallant that the orders will be very specific and that he is required to have the orders recorded at the Hampden County Registry of Deeds prior to any work being started.

- Eversource (proposed solar site @ #227 Mill Rd.) -

Andrew Netherwood has recused himself from this matter.

Request for Determination for Eversource's proposed solar site @ 227 Mill Rd: Steve Weihe came forward and introduced himself as representing Weston & Sampson engineers. He explained that this proposed solar project is one of many throughout the Commonwealth to have

a total of 62 megawatts throughout the state. They are hoping to reach their goal by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Weihe explained that as part of the process to determine where the new solar facilities would be located, 1,200 properties owned by Eversource were screened. They looked at all factors on each parcel including the wetlands, resources and wildlife that would be affected by it. Mr. Wiehe explained Eversource had submitted a species request with Natural Heritage regarding this location @ 227 Mill Rd. It was determined that it is considered to be a box turtle habitat. He stated that it is considered to be a fairly low quality habitat for the turtles due to the area being mowed frequently. They have identified the specs and measures and are going to leave the fence 6 inches off of the ground so there will be room for the turtles to travel underneath. Bonnie informed Mr. Wiehe that the board has not received any conditions from Natural Heritage. He explained that Eversource is going to review their plan and then submit it to Natural Heritage for approval. Judy explained that approximately ½ of the area is considered to be priority habitat for the box turtles and that it is the Conservation Commission's job to make sure these conditions are implemented.

The board briefly discussed wetland protection and species protection, as well as the distinction between the different resources. Bonnie stated that the Conservation Commission is in place to enforce the Wetland Protection Act and ensure that nothing moves forward without the go ahead from NHESP. Mr. Wiehe then discussed the plan to protect the habitat for the box turtles. He explained that there will be a fence all the way around the array areas, not the property itself. It will be lifted off the ground so the turtles can easily travel underneath. He informed the board that there will not be complete exclusion from that area. Judy informed the public that Eversource must locate where the wetland resources are and make sure the delineations of the wetlands are accurate.

Susan Alston introduced herself to the board as an abutter of the property. She voiced her concerns regarding the solar site impacting the land's resources and wildlife. The board explained that there were not any problems with the delineations, if anything Eversource has been very conservative. They reviewed the proposed site is located outside the river front area and 100 feet away from the wetland resource area. The board has to certify that it is out of their jurisdiction. Mrs. Alston asked Mr. Wiehe some questions regarding the solar panels themselves, asking if they were considered to be hazardous waste. There was some discussion about using non-toxic transformers. Mr. Wiehe also informed the public that the design life of these solar panels are a minimum of 25 years.oo

Bonnie notified the public that this will be located away from the wetlands, therefore they do not have jurisdiction. She informed Mr. Wiehe that the Conservation Commission cannot vote on this matter until they receive approval from NHESP. This will be continued to the next meeting on Wednesday, April 19, 2017 @ 7:15pm.

Judy made a motion to close the meeting at approximately 8:31pm. Ted seconded the motion. The board was unanimously in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelly McCormick
Conservation Clerk