

Natick Conservation Commission
Minutes
March 5, 2020

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Chairman, Matt Gardner. Members present: Doug Shepard, George Bain, Mike Downey, MK Schneeweis, Jeff Richards, Kathy Rehl.

New Cluster Zoning Bylaw – Ted Fields

Ted Fields, Senior Planner, gave an update on the proposed Residential Cluster Development Zoning. Currently it applies to parcels 20+ acres, but smaller parcels are being redeveloped at a faster pace and the revisions would capture these parcels. The town is missing out presently and this could consolidate and simplify cluster regulations in the bylaw.

Mr. Fields reviewed highlights and changes to the regulations – Sections 4 and 15 apply to Conservation more specifically.

- Two or more acres would be eligible to cluster
- 50% or more (dependent on the parcel size) of the development would be required to be protected as open space
- A preliminary plan would be required to be submitted to review layout and proposed areas to protect as open space
- Planning Board will make Conservation Analysis Finding and consult with Conservation Commission on this. Any cluster under this bylaw, if passed, will receive review by the Conservation Commission or Agent. A memo will likely be requested from the Commission stating their thoughts on applications.
- Only applies in single family zones. Town homes are allowed to be built.
- Smaller dwellings or affordable housing can get a bonus bump of more allowed units.

The open space to be protected are not roadways; it's open and left untouched. They would also be publically accessible.

Standards to preserve Open Space:

- Design specifications.
- Open Space – common or passive recreation use.
- Presence of wetlands are counted for in density regulations (still being discussed). Ted would recommend not to make a rule in bylaw; leave flexibility.

Matt Gardner asked to clarify that regulation. Pulling wetlands out of math for density counts but not open space counts. Total land area, minus wetland area, then minus setbacks. 121 Walnut Street is an example.

Notice of Intent continuation – 175 and 177 North Main Street – 233-883, 233-882

Chris D'Antonio, stated the two parcels' development is tied together. He reviewed proposal. The existing driveway at 177 North Main will be removed.

Discussed the site walk that showed disturbed areas.

Presented his revised plan:

- Added hay bales along rear property line
- There is no off street parking available so one additional spot included on-site per unit.
- Went to pervious paving for excess parking
- Three trees to be removed. Proposing 25 trees to be planted as a buffer between road and homes.
- Will use pervious pavers and roof runoff, which is 18% impervious area (20% allowed)

Chris stated regardless of what DOT does, this is a solid plan. He reiterated he doubled the size of the potential easement with DOT. It is being handled as an easement vs. a taking so the lot sizes are retained.

Kathy Rehl questioned the amount of trees (screening) density along the roadway frontage. They need to be extremely salt tolerant. Mr. D'Antonio stated there would be a 6' fence around the property. Matt Gardner is looking for the number of trees and species to stay healthy. Wants to create a separation. Mr. Gardner also suggested a split rail fence that would extend the entire yard on the property line to prevent future dumping and/or extending back yards toward the wetlands. Chris agreed in exchange for the 25 foot encroachment.

MK asked why the rear patios are also not pervious. Chris wants to keep as is in regards to maintenance. There is already a large net gain and improvement to property.

Kathy Rehl asked how the trees being left are protected. Chris stated several trees are off property. Kathy recommended fencing off trees and root pruning.

Chris stated there are no hazardous materials on site or in the buildings.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to close, George Bain moved, Doug Shepard seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to issue the standard Order of Conditions, with the following Special Conditions:

- To consult with Commission about tree species and density before planting.
- No burlap or baskets and use best horticultural practices for plantings.
- Split rail fence on rear property line.
- Markers on fence stating wetland area; no dumping.
- Fencing off trees and root pruning during construction.

George Bain moved, MK Schneeweis seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Notice of Intent continuation – 1 Randall Court – 233-834

Several issues raised by Marianne and DPW including no erosion controls surrounding catch basin, exposed culverts, etc. Commission agreed to send an Enforcement Order to stop work immediately until they come in and discuss with Commission.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to continue to March 19th, Kathy Rehl move, Jeff Richards seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to issue an Enforcement Order to stop work immediately and continue to March 19th, George Bain moved, Jeff Richards seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Notice of Intent continuation – Heritage Lane & General Greene Avenue – 233-831

Michaela Heffernan reviewed the project of the construction of 28 new army housing units. Steve Sawyer (present at the first hearing) has discussed project with Bill McDowell, Town Engineer. Head Engineer for Army Corps will be maintaining stormwater systems which includes inspection checklists.

DPW asked how stormwater will be maintained. Marianne Iarossi recapped some of DPW's comments including checking the outfalls and ensuring rip rap aprons, proper drainage, etc. Presently a 36" pipe. The entire site drains to that outfall. Needs good rip rap installed.

Kathy Rehl is concerned with the trees and doesn't like the choice of what's proposed; especially, the Birch. Mike Downey is concerned only with the root systems.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to close, George Bain moved, Mark Kate Schneeweis seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to issue standard Order of Conditions with Special Conditions:

- Swap out poplar and paper birch trees – cypress (depending on wetness), add more oak trees – red/white.
- Ensure Roundy Pond outfall is functioning properly, implement rip rap aprons
- Following best horticultural practices and avoiding compaction around trees.

MK Schneeweis moved, Kathy Rehl seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Certificate of Compliance – 5 Cemetery Street

Chris D’Antonio stated there were two OOCs and he is requesting a COC for one of them. He would like to re-hydroseed and re-rake. Will come back to Conservation and report how seed is taking (around May). Matt said to wait until he feels the conditions are right.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to issue a Certificate of Compliance, Jeff Richards moved, George Bain seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Amendment Order of Conditions continuation – 72 Eliot Street – 233-891

Scott, Eco Tech, presented summary with the requests from Commission.

- Patios permeable
- Plan
- Engineer provided what Commission requested.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to close, MK Schneeweis moved, George Bain seconded, Kathy Rehl opposed, remaining in favor 6-1-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to accept the amendments to the Order of Conditions, MK Schneeweis moved George Bain seconded, Kathy Rehl opposed, remaining in favor 6-1-0.

Request for Determination – Lake Cochituate.

Mr. Gardner read public hearing notice. The proposal is to perform pavement resurfacing of the parking lot at Cochituate State Park.

Stefanie Farrington, DCR, stated they have received permits from DCR. Project elements include:

- 83,500 sf paving
- Milling 1-2 inches and replacing asphalt
- Will replace drainage if necessary
- No impact to BVW
- Not proposing anything around perimeter.

- Silt socks would be installed around catch basins.
- Work to be performed this spring before end of fiscal year.

Commission had no issues with project.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to close, Kathy Rehl moved, George Bain seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to issue a Negative 3 Determination, Doug Shepard moved, Jeff Richards seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Dog Park Rules and Regulations

Victoria Parson's had previously drafted rules. Marianne and Matt Gardner met with groups to flush through the rules. The proposed rules will be posted on a sign at entrance of dog park. Kelly McPherson, FIDO, shared background on those who have reviewed the rules including an Animal Behavior Specialist.

- George Bain asked how to remove "bad behaved dogs". Self-monitor. Contact animal control officer if issues.
- Mike Downey asked to change "kids" to "children".
- MK Schneeweis suggested that the rules "sick dogs" and "dogs in heat" should be moved up the list to be more noticeable.
- Commercial activity to include dog walker business and training activities. Not enough room for agility.
- Matt Gardner asked to change commercial "operation" to "activity".
- Children under the age of ten not permitted in the park alone.

The Commission agreed they are pretty much the same rules as in other dog parks and agreed to add new rules if needed.

Matt Gardner asked for a motion to accept the dog rules as amended and can be amended in the future, George Bain moved, Jeff Richards seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Trails and Forest

Marianne Iarossi gave brief update on the committee restructuring which will be on a future meeting.

Recommend a new Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee to replace the Town Forest Committee and Trails Maintenance Committee. Some committees have lost energy, don't exist and one committee can replace the goals of two.

Matt was involved on drafting the Charter which suggests a number of members. The ConCom will advertise for these members.

Martin Kessel, Open Space Advisory Committee, has filled the void while Trails Committee dissolved. There are more trails in the town that need to be maintained.

Minutes

January 2nd

January 16th

Mr. Gardner asked for a motion to accept the above minutes, with edits, Kathy Rehl moved, Doug Shepard seconded, all in favor 7-0.

Kennedy School

DEP monitoring site. Stay on top of DPW with results of testing. Can do it under a NOI if wet. If dry, file RDA.

Meeting adjourned 8:45 pm.